

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION
October 4, 2022

City Commission Work Session
Civic Center, Gibson Room 212

Mayor Kelly presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 PM

CITY COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Kelly, Susan Wolff, Joe McKenney, Eric Hinebauch and Rick Tryon.


STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Greg Doyon and Deputy City Manager Chuck Anderson; Deputy City Attorney David Dennis; Finance Deputy Director Kirsten Myre; Planning and Community Development Deputy Director Craig Raymond; Library Director Susie McIntyre, Foundation Board Director Jill Baker and Board Chair Whitney Olson; Municipal Court Supervisor Morgan Medvec; Fire Chief Jeremy Jones; and, Deputy City Clerk Darcy Dea.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kevin Westie, 602 35th Street North, discussed economic policies and benefits of investing in factories.


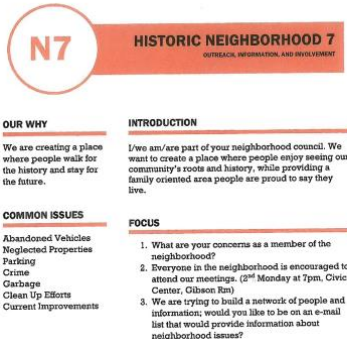

1. NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL UPDATE – NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL #7

Sandra Rice, NC 7 Secretary and Downtown Safety Alliance, reviewed and discussed the following PowerPoint:

<p style="text-align: center;">NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL 7 We walk for the history and stay for the future</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">LOCATION & MEETING SCHEDULE</p>  <p>Neighborhood Council 7 Civic Center Gibson Rm. 2nd Monday of the month at 7 pm</p> <p>Neighborhood Council 7 Boundaries The northern and western boundaries are the Missouri River, the southern boundary is 10th Avenue South, the eastern boundary is 10th Street South from 10th Avenue South to 7th Avenue South, then east to 12th Street South and north to 7th Avenue North, then east to 15th Street North and north to the Missouri River.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">WHO ARE WE?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neighborhood Council #7 represents the historic areas of Great Falls: the original Northside townsite, the historic Southside, and Downtown.• If one shops the Central shopping district, they are within the boundaries. Historic homes include the Northside walking tour and the Southside houses relocated from Smelter Hill.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NC7 has the most diverse mix of residential homes and apartments, retail shops, and industrial works of any Great Falls area.• We believe in the revitalization of the original townsites and commercial centers while passionately preserving and promoting the history that makes Great Falls a place to call home for years to come.

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<p style="text-align: center;">COUNCIL MEMBERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lisa Meyers, Chair • Troy Lane, Vice-Chair • Sandy Rice, Secretary • Linda Daggett • Trevor Mikkelsen 	<p style="text-align: center;">HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOOD #7 OUTREACH, INFORMATION, AND INVOLVEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are creating a place where people enjoy seeing our community's roots and history while providing a family-oriented area people are proud to say they live. • We believe that we can make a positive difference in our Neighborhood by connecting neighbors to the historic value of our district. We can improve the safety of our Neighborhood, help our neighbors keep the Neighborhood clean and presentable and to take pride in where we live.
<p style="text-align: center;">NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Council member has committed to contacting five neighbors a month throughout the year. 	
<p style="text-align: center;">ACCOMPLISHMENTS</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported Whittier School with fund-raising for the Radio Readers and invited students to present math and reading programs. • Hosted a Neighborhood Ice Cream Social in Carter Park with over 100 participants. • Council member Sandy Rice helped update and rewrite the Downtown Safety Alliance Safety Plan for 2021 and has committed to introducing the Plan to all nine Councils in 2022. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuisance Property ideas were forwarded to the Citizens' Council (Council of Councils) which is moving forward with them. • Several Conditional Use Permit requests were presented, asking for NC7 support. Some received full support, some conditional support and some were not supported after careful consideration. NC7 strongly supported the NeighborWorks Great Falls Baatz Building supportive housing project.
<p style="text-align: center;">NEIGHBORHOOD CONCERNS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuisance Properties – forwarded to Council of Councils • Graffiti and vandalism in Gibson Park – Speeding and Crosswalks on Park Drive – requested a Transportation Study • Fireworks – City and County ordinances need to be reconciled – forwarded to Council of Councils • Homeless gatherings, especially at 6th Street and 2nd Avenue North - this major discussion is ongoing; we brought the area churches together to encourage discussion. 	<p style="text-align: center;">2022 GOALS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host a 2nd Ice Cream Social • Continue Neighborhood Outreach • Encourage and host discussion around the homeless problem • Institute Neighborhood Watch programs

Ms. Rice provided a Historic Northside, Historic Southside Neighborhoods and Downtown handout.

Mayor Kelly received clarification that the Downtown Safety Plan was presented to all Neighborhood

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Councils and that one of the commitments of the plan is to provide educational meetings every other month at the Great Falls Public Library. In partnership with the Downtown Safety Alliance, the Great Falls Public Library is hosting a presentation on October 11, 2022 by former City Attorney Jeff Hindoien and Municipal Court Judge Steve Bolstad. They will share information about the Municipal Legal System and the upcoming City Ballot Measure to allow an additional municipal court judge.

Commissioner McKenney received clarification that the Historical Society monitors the historic renovation of older homes downtown.

Commissioner Tryon received clarification to the following:

- It is difficult instituting the Neighborhood Watch program because it is a challenge getting neighbors to commit to be a part of the program.
- Neighborhood Councils have ambassadors that meet with public safety entities to see what can be done to encourage instituting the Neighborhood Watch program.
- Neighborhood Council 7 hosts and encourages discussions about the homeless problem.

Ms. Rice commented that Neighborhood Council members have the power of persuasion; however, they cannot vote.

Commissioner Tryon responded that Neighborhood Council members input is extremely powerful, important and the first thing he considers with regard to items being presented to the Commission. He expressed support with regard to implementing the Neighborhood Watch program, as well as addressing the homeless and crime issues.

Ms. Rice encouraged citizens to live, walk and shop downtown and added that the more people there are downtown, the less crime. She would like to counteract the perception that downtown is not safe, when in fact; it is a very safe and wonderful place.

2. LIBRARY MASTER PLAN


Library Board Chair Whitney Olson explained that there has been over \$70,000 in donations invested in the 2022 Library Master Plan. The consultants worked with the Library Board and staff, as well as the citizens in the city and county to gather feedback. The consultants assessed the library's facilities and analyzed the library's staff funding and services of the library. After going through this process, it is clear that the citizens of Great Falls are not receiving the library services that they deserve. The library needs to be updated so that it can continue to serve the community as a resource for another 50 years. The board feels that the Master Plan lays out a road map to provide the community with the essential library services that it deserves and hopes it receives the support of the Commission.

Library Director Susie McIntyre expressed appreciation to the Library Board and Foundation for their efforts with regard to the Master Plan.

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Director McIntyre and Foundation Board Director Jill Baker reviewed and discussed the following PowerPoint:

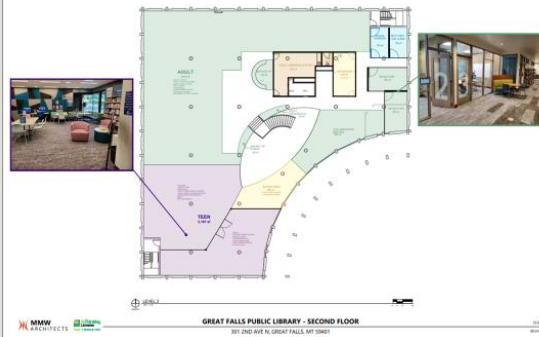
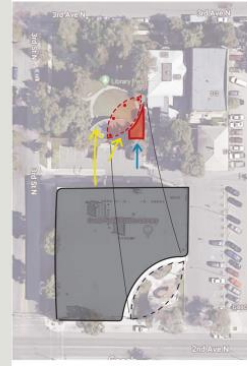
	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Importance of Library Services</h3> <p>Communities with strong libraries show increased student performance.</p> <p>Communities with strong libraries show greater resiliency to disaster.</p> <p>Communities with strong libraries have better social infrastructure and more community cohesiveness.</p> <p>Library provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to enriching resources and programming • Access to quality information and skills • Resources to reduce the digital divide and all to succeed. • Access to community resources. • Improved connections and social function • Place of refuge—families, parents, students, and others
<h3 style="text-align: center;">Master Plan: Process</h3> <p>Stakeholder Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community, Staff, and Board Discussion Sessions • Survey <p>Data Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographics and Demographic Mapping • 10-year Usage and Funding Trends • Comparison Benchmarks • Collection Utilization Analysis • Space Needs Analysis <p>Professional evaluations of facilities (structure and space)</p>	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Master Plan: Operations and Funding</h3> <p>What We Learned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community values the library, but it isn't financially supported at that level of value (and is shrinking) • Parking is a key issue also impacting library usage • Some residents don't feel comfortable/safe coming to the library <p>Recommendations to Address Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop multiple pathways/strategies to increasing library funding to a minimum goal of getting up to the average MT library of similar size. • Use part of this increased funding to address parking and safety concerns.
<h3 style="text-align: center;">Master Plan: Vision for the Future</h3> <p>Increased Hours: Open 7 Days/week (61 hours/week)</p> <p>Increase Bookmobile Service: Run 6 Days per week</p> <p>Expanded Staff for Safety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract for part-time social worker • 2 full-time safety specialists <p>Free Parking for Patrons</p>	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Master Plan: Vision for the Future</h3> <p>Expanded Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Cards for all Cascade County Students • Expanded digital resources for all patrons • Expanded Homebound Program coordinated with Meals on Wheels • College Readiness Program for teens (test prep and application assistance) • Audio/Video Recording resources for podcasting, Internet videos (YouTube & TikTok), and oral histories • MakerSpace/3-D printing resources for DIY • Expanded adult educational and recreational programming • Computer & Technology classes • Expanded support for businesses & entrepreneurs • Expanded support for job seekers
<h3 style="text-align: center;">Master Plan: FACILITIES</h3> <p>What We Learned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, the library is undersized. The layout and space allocations of the library aren't aligned with current needs/usage and lack accessibility • Youth space(s) are VERY undersized for the library/community • Park to the rear is too disconnected from the library and has lots of issues related to resident behaviors • Much of the buildings infrastructure is at the end of its useful life and in need of replacement <p>Recommendations to Address Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remodel Library <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update critical building systems including electrical and mechanical systems • Increase accessibility through improved stair/elevator access and updating restrooms • Redesign Library spaces to align with community needs • Increase energy efficiency • Reconfigure front plaza and park bandshell to address security concerns and create a more welcoming environment 	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Master Plan: Vision for the Future</h3> <p>Remodeled Library</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vibrant anchor for a thriving downtown • Energy efficient, sustainable building that will last for another 50 years • Enhanced social infrastructure that builds community connection <p>Total Estimated Construction Cost: \$15,000,000.00</p>

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Master Plan: Vision for the Future

- Accessibility (Approx. Cost \$765,000.00)**
Replacing the two original existing elevators with one multi-sided modern elevator and relocating and reconfiguring the existing stairs to provide a clear means of access from the basement up to the third floor. Upgrading and reconfiguring restrooms that allow for full access by all members of the public to each restroom and on each floor.
- Visibility, Connection and Safety – Library Park Entrance (Approx. Cost \$2,065,000.00)**
Adding North public entrance facing the Library park. Reconfiguring the Library Park to make the park a safer, more accessible space. Replacing the existing entrance vestibule closer to the parking lot and reconfiguring the entry plaza into a safe programmable space. Replacing the glazing in the existing storefront to improve thermal performance and adding new storefront to increase daylight and visibility.
- Critical Infrastructure—(Approx. Cost \$2,735,000.00)**
Replacing all the existing wiring and electrical equipment in the building, as well as updated fire alarms and city connections. Replacing the original 3rd floor air handler with a modern, up-to-code air handler and upgrading the associated chiller and ducting.
- Space Reconfiguration and Updates (Approx. Cost \$1,875,000)**
Reconfiguring the library to accommodate a larger children's area, creating more public space, improving staff work spaces, and updating lighting fixtures, furniture and finishes.



Master Plan: From Vision to Reality

- Facilities Upgrades: Capital Campaign**
 - Focused on grants and private donations
 - No current plan to ask the voters for taxpayer support (other than grants from other programs—CDBG, Infrastructure Funding etc.)
- Operations and Funding: Mill Levy Campaign**
 - Ballot measure requesting increased support for Library services

STATE OF CURRENT LIBRARY FUNDING:

Our community funds the library at \$19/capita. Average support for MT libraries is \$31/capita.

From FY2022 to FY2023, personnel costs went up by \$84,332.52 and our tax revenue increased by \$19,677.10. We made up part of that difference by cutting costs in other areas and increasing revenue by rent space to the Self-Help Law Clinic. Our projected FY2023 budget is **\$(59,969.00)**.

If revenue and costs continue on this trajectory, the Library budget for FY2024 will be **\$(120,000)** or we will require **severe cuts in services including layoffs and reduced hours.**

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LIBRARY BUDGETED REVENUE FY2023:

Great Falls Public Library Operational Budget: \$1,510,150.00

2 voted City Mills: \$199,105.56

7 City Mills by Agreement: \$696,869.44

City General Fund: \$350,000.00

County Funding by Agreement: \$177,000.00

State Funding: \$32,075.00

Other Funding: \$55,100.00

Great Falls Public Library Donation/Foundation Budget: \$254,532.00

CANNOT BE USED FOR STAFFING, CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS OR GENERAL OPERATIONS

Foundation Approved Projects (materials, technology, eResources etc.): \$138,000

Donations for specific materials (Grab & Go, Nonfiction, Children's, Westerns): \$26,852.00

Book-A-Thon for youth services: \$70,000

Donations for adult programming: \$7,500

General donations from foundation: \$2,680.00

Friends of the Library support from Book Sale: \$6,500

General donations from the community: \$3,000

Master Plan: Vision to Reality MILL LEVY

What type of Mill Levy?

- City Mill Levy
- County Mill Levy
- Multi-Jurisdictional Mill Levy
- Library District Mill Levy

How do we decide which type of Mill Levy?

- Professional polling to determine which has best chance of success
- Negotiations with Belt and Wedsworth Libraries
- Input from City and County Commissions

Master Plan: Vision to Reality MILL LEVY

When do we put the Mill Levy before the voters?

- School District Election May 2023
- General Election November 2023
- School District Election May 2024
- General Election November 2024

How do we decide when?

- Professional polling to determine which has best chance of success
- Negotiations with Belt and Wedsworth Libraries
- Input from City and County Commissions

Master Plan: Vision to Reality MILL LEVY

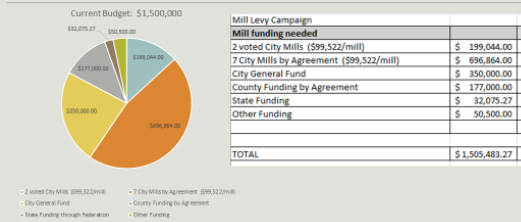
How many mills do we request?

- GFPL budget \$2,500,000 + possible funding for Belt and Wedsworth Memorial Libraries.
- Analysis of current funding and needed service levels (completed for GFPL as part of Master Plan)
- Will Mill Levy funding supplement or replace current funding?

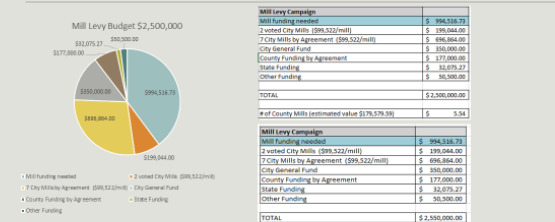
How do we decide how many mills to request?

- Professional polling to determine what level of funding voters will support
- Negotiations with Belt and Wedsworth Libraries
- Decisions by City and County Commissions

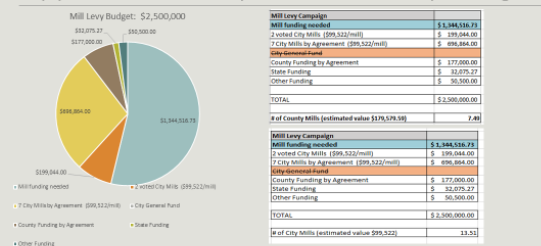
Supplement or Replace: Current Budget



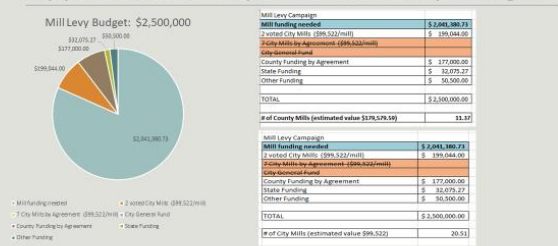
Supplement or Replace: Mill Levy Budget



Supplement or Replace: Mill Levy Budget



Supplement or Replace: Mill Levy Budget



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<p style="text-align: center;">Input requested from City Commission</p> <hr/> <p>Preferred timeline for Library Mill Levy?</p> <p>Will funds from the Library Mill Levy supplement or replace current City of Great Falls financial support for the Library?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Questions</p> <hr/>
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Director McIntyre explained that if a mill levy were done in the spring of 2023, the ballot language would be needed in October 2022 so that signatures could be gathered by mid-January.

Commissioner Wolff explained that she fears that there would be less support in the county and would mean a different structuring of who the library serves and in order for her to make an educated suggestion, she would need answers about the negotiations with Belt and Wedsworth Libraries.

Director McIntyre responded that she will be meeting with the Cascade County Commission and will be on the next board agenda for Belt and Wedsworth Libraries.

Commissioner McKenney expressed concern with regard to the possibility of having two levies on a single ballot at the same time.

Commissioner Tryon received clarification that the library personnel cost increased because of an increase in salary and health insurance and the Library Master Plan is available on the City's website.

Director McIntyre explained that if she has to wait until 2024 for a Mill Levy, extra general fund subsidies could be utilized so that the library could continue to provide service.

City Manager Doyon recommended coordinating between the city and county to do a district wide levy because the amount of patrons that utilize the library are not City residents. He added that this would also relieve pressure on the general fund for public safety.

Commissioner Hinebauch received clarification that the library would become its own entity and no longer be a City Department if it were a library district. Belt and Wedsworth libraries would also have to agree to a library district and have indicated that they have no interest in doing that. He inquired how long the library budget has been \$1.5 million.

Director McIntyre responded that the two voted City mills and seven City mills by agreement increase slightly each year and the County funding by agreement of 177,000 has remained the same since 2011. She added that she would provide updates to the Commission after meeting with the County Commissioners.

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Mayor Kelly commented that this is a decision that the community has to make about what they value. He is always in favor of putting a question of this magnitude in front of voters. The Commission is aware of the value of the library and would support a ballot if needed. The current funding of the two voted City mills, seven City mills by agreement and general fund is sufficient for status quo until the professional polling determines what level of funding voters will support. He commented that having two levies at the same time is not a good idea.

Mayor Kelly expressed appreciation to Director McIntyre for her efforts bringing the library into the 21st Century and recognizing the need for expanding staff for public safety needs. He added that the library is not just about books anymore; it is important, critical and a necessary part of the community and Director McIntyre has helped create a place of community. The Commission supports the library's mission going forward. Mayor Kelly further expressed appreciation to Commissioner Wolff for her expertise as a liaison for the Library Board.

Commissioner Tryon inquired about the polling operation.

Foundation Board Director Baker responded that public resources and time could not be utilized to advocate for a ballot initiative and the Library Foundation or private donations would pay for polling. The library has reached out to firms that have dealt with other libraries across the country to receive bids and is working with firms that can provide data within the next couple of months.

DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL UPCOMING WORK SESSION TOPICS

City Manager Greg Doyon reported that the October 18, 2022, work session will consist of Solid Waste Study and Quarterly TIF Application updates. An ARPA proposed awards update will be a topic for an upcoming special work session.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Kelly adjourned the informal work session of October 4, 2022 at 6:50 p.m.