

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS

January 3, 2023

Regular City Commission Meeting

Mayor Kelly presiding
Commission Chambers Room 206

CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 PM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL/STAFF INTRODUCTIONS: City Commission members present: Bob Kelly, Eric Hinebauch, Joe McKenney, Rick Tryon and Susan Wolff. Also present were City Manager Greg Doyon and Deputy City Manager Chuck Anderson, Public Works Director Chris Gaub, Planning and Community Development Deputy Director Tom Micuda, Park and Recreation Director Steve Herrig, Finance Director Melissa Kinzler, City Attorney David Dennis, Police Chief Jeff Newton, and City Clerk Lisa Kunz.

AGENDA APPROVAL: City Manager Greg Doyon pulled Agenda Item 9E. There were no proposed changes to the agenda by the City Commission. The agenda was approved as amended.

CONFLICT DISCLOSURE/EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS: None.

MILITARY UPDATES

1. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM MALMSTROM AIR FORCE BASE (MAFB).

Colonel Tory Kindrick, 341st Operations Group Commander, provided the following updates:

- The wing continues to depend on State and County snow control operations to ensure routes to the missile fields can be traveled safely in making way for Malmstrom's snow teams to clear the sites throughout the missile fields.
- The FY 2022 estimated economic impact of MAFB on the local area is over \$397 million dollars, with more than \$328 million dollars coming from direct economic impacts, which is a \$14.2 million dollar increase over last year's direct economic impact.
- President Biden signed the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2023 that includes many provisions to ease financial burdens and improve the quality of life for both the military and Department of Defense civilian workforce.
- The NDAA continues the commitment to modernizing nuclear forces, including support for the Sentinel ICBM program. On December 16, 2022, the Air Force participated in an historic Sentinel programmatic signing event that took place simultaneously in 11 locations in Montana, Wyoming and North Dakota. The Air Force project to replace the aging Minuteman III with Sentinel encompasses more than 34,000 acres of land, some of which is on property with both cultural and historical significance. The programmatic agreement finds a balance between Air Force project construction and the protection of resources within the project area.

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS

January 3, 2023

2.

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Shannon Wilson, 1201 6th Avenue South, thanked the Commission for awarding ARPA funds to community organizations.

Brett Doney, Great Falls Development Authority, invited the community to the Ignite event, January 13, 2023, 8 PM, at the Meadowlark Country Club. The event is free but registration is required in advance.

Kevin Westie, 602 35th Street North, commented that fire insurance rates have increased due to underfunding the Fire Department. He further commented that crime goes hand in hand with the Police Department being under funded. He suggested building factories and, specifically, a robot-building factory.

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS

3.

MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

None.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

4.

APPOINTMENT TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS.

Commissioner Tryon moved, seconded by **Commissioner Wolff**, that the City Commission appoint **Jennifer Jurak** to the **Great Falls Housing Authority Board of Commissioners** for the remainder of a two-year term through **June 30, 2024**.

Mayor Kelly asked if there were any comments from the public. Hearing none, Mayor Kelly asked if there was any discussion amongst the Commissioners.

Commissioner McKenney noted that the Housing Authority Board met on December 15, 2022, and recommended that the City Commission appoint Ms. Jurak to the Housing Authority Board of Commissioners.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Kelly called for the vote.

Motion carried 5-0.

5.

MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS.

None.

CITY MANAGER

6.

MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS

January 3, 2023

City Manager Greg Doyon reported the following:

- Two new probationary fire fighters will be starting the Great Falls Fire Rescue Recruit Academy training on January 23, 2023.
- The ambulance transport numbers for the month of December soared to a new high of 33 transports. That one-month number exceeds some prior year totals in terms of transporting patients to the hospital. Great Falls Fire Rescue backfills that role when the private ambulance company is unable to transport.
- Rachel Taylor has been hired as the new Deputy City Attorney and will begin employment on January 17, 2023.
- The Housing Authority terminated its management agreement with the City. The Housing Authority is autonomous, except that the City Commission will continue to appoint Board members.
- Public Works employee Eric Boyd was promoted to Traffic Division Manager effective January 23, 2023. He worked under long time manager Kenny Jorgensen who retired.
- Republic Services provided notice that it was increasing its rates to 7%, the maximum percentage under the agreement with the City. The rate went from \$30.31/ton to \$32.43/ton. Eventually that cost is passed along to the ratepayers in the City.

CONSENT AGENDA.

Commissioner McKenney requested that Item 11 be pulled for separate discussion and/or vote.

7. Minutes, December 20, 2022, City Commission Meeting.
8. Total Expenditures of \$7,512,630 for the period of December 1, 2022 through December 21, 2022, to include claims over \$25,000, in the amount of \$6,768,654.
- *9. Contracts List. *Item 9E was pulled.
10. Grants List.
- *11. Approve the Community Based Policing Agreement with the Great Falls Housing Authority and authorize the City Manager to sign the Agreement. *Pulled for separate discussion and/or vote.

Commissioner Wolff moved, seconded by Commissioner Hinebauch, that the City Commission approve the Consent Agenda as presented, with the removal of Item 9E, and removal of Item 11 for separate discussion and/or vote.

Mayor Kelly asked if there were any comments from the public or discussion amongst the Commissioners.

Hearing none, Mayor Kelly called for the vote.

Motion carried 5-0.

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS

January 3, 2023

***11. APPROVE THE COMMUNITY BASED POLICING AGREEMENT WITH THE GREAT FALLS HOUSING AUTHORITY AND AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO SIGN THE AGREEMENT.**

Police Chief Jeff Newton reported that the Great Falls Police Department has partnered with the Great Falls Housing Authority for over 25 years to provide community based policing. Due to personnel changes within the organization, this agreement is coming before the Commission to decrease the cost to the Housing Authority because of the salary schedule. The substance of the agreement is the same as it always has been.

Commissioner Hinebauch moved, seconded by Commissioner Tryon, that the City Commission approve the Community Based Policing Agreement with the Great Falls Housing Authority and authorize the City Manager to sign the Agreement.

Mayor Kelly asked if there were any comments from the public. Hearing none, Mayor Kelly asked if there was any discussion amongst the Commissioners.

Commissioner McKenney inquired the need for a policing agreement for this 356-unit housing complex versus other large-scale housing unit areas in the community.

Chief Newton explained that public housing is state and federally funded. The officer has historically been effective in working with Housing Authority staff to insure those living there have a safe environment.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Kelly called for the vote on Item 11.

Motion carried 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

12. SUNSHINE VILLAGE (SENIOR) AND BROADVIEW MANOR EAST AND WEST (FAMILY) AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROPOSAL.

Mayor Kelly declared the public hearing open and asked for presentation of the agenda report.

Kassy Buss, Bjornson Jones Mungas PLLC, reported that MT3 Community Partners, L.P., is applying for Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (“LIHTCs”) from the Montana Board of Housing to finance the preservation of Sunshine Village and Broadview Manor East and West as affordable housing, and is planning to apply for the exemption from real property taxes available to qualifying low-income housing tax credit projects under Mont. Code Ann. § 15-6-221. As a part of the requirements related to such applications, MT3 Community Partners, L.P., is required to solicit public comment on whether the proposed qualifying low-income rental housing property meets a community housing need. This is the public’s opportunity to comment on the proposal.

Ms. Buss reviewed and discussed the proposed project. The goal of the presentation is to solicit comments from the Commission and public on this proposal to be forwarded with their application to the Board of Housing that funds these projects. The PowerPoint presentation included:

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS

January 3, 2023

Sunshine Village
Broadview Manor East and West
Great Falls, Montana

MT3 Community Partners, L.P.

Presented by:
Kassy J. Buss of
Bjornson Jones Mungas, PLLC
Missoula, Montana




BJM BJORNSSON JONES MUNGAS
P.L.L.C.

Sunshine Village
Broadview Manor East and West

Location:

- * Sunshine Village - 600 13th Avenue S (72 units senior)
- * Broadview Manor East - 720 42A Street North (12 units multifamily)
- * Broadview Manor West - 710 4th Avenue NW (8 units multifamily)





Sunshine Village

600 13th Avenue South, Great Falls, MT

Sunshine Village is a 72-unit senior project, originally built in 1979. The property currently operates under a 99% Section-8 HAP contract. The project consists of one 3-story building housing one- and two-bedroom units, on a 1.66-acre lot. The building has a community room, leasing office, laundry facilities, and two elevators.



Sunshine Village
Broadview Manor East and West

Location:

- * Sunshine Village - 600 13th Avenue S (72 units senior)
- * Broadview Manor East - 720 42A Street North (12 units multifamily)
- * Broadview Manor West - 710 4th Avenue NW (8 units multifamily)





Sunshine Village

600 13th Avenue South, Great Falls, MT

Sunshine Village is a 72-unit senior project, originally built in 1979. The property currently operates under a 99% Section-8 HAP contract. The project consists of one 3-story building housing one- and two-bedroom units, on a 1.66-acre lot. The building has a community room, leasing office, laundry facilities, and two elevators.



Preservation of Current Housing

Unit Type	Unit Mix	
	# Units	\$/mo
Std. - Broadview East	60	539
Std. - Broadview West	12	687
Std. - Broadview East	0	963
Std. - Broadview West	6	963
Std. - Broadview West	6	1105

Rehabilitation and Updates

- Energy efficient upgrades, such as energy star rated refrigerators and stoves, over flooring
- LED lighting fixtures, low flow plumbing fixtures
- Formaldehyde free cabinets and counters
- Exterior updates: energy rated windows, paint, and new siding
- ADA path of travel to all common area facilities will be designated
- Resurface parking lots

Financing rehabilitation:

- Lump-sum funding (no recoup) 40% through Montana Board of Housing
- Mont. Code Ann. §15-6-221 property tax exemption for qualifying affordable housing

Affordability restrictions:

- Current HAP contracts expire in 2023
- Requesting a 20-year renewal of the existing HAP contracts
- Rent and income restrictions through a MDRH LTRA for a maximum of 30 years
- Targeting tenants at 30% and 60% ALDs



Preservation of Current Housing

Unit Type	Unit Mix	
	# Units	\$/mo
Std. - Broadview East	60	539
Std. - Broadview West	12	687
Std. - Broadview East	0	963
Std. - Broadview West	6	963
Std. - Broadview West	6	1105

Rehabilitation and Updates

- Energy efficient upgrades, such as energy star rated refrigerators and stoves, over flooring
- LED lighting fixtures, low flow plumbing fixtures
- Formaldehyde free cabinets and counters
- Exterior updates: energy rated windows, paint, and new siding
- ADA path of travel to all common area facilities will be designated
- Resurface parking lots

Financing rehabilitation:

- Lump-sum funding (no recoup) 40% through Montana Board of Housing
- Mont. Code Ann. §15-6-221 property tax exemption for qualifying affordable housing

Affordability restrictions:

- Current HAP contracts expire in 2023
- Requesting a 20-year renewal of the existing HAP contracts
- Rent and income restrictions through a MDRH LTRA for a maximum of 30 years
- Targeting tenants at 30% and 60% ALDs



Questions?

Kassy J. Buss
Bjornson Jones Mungas, PLLC
2809 Great Northern Loop, Suite 100
Missoula, MT 59808
(406) 721-8896
kassy@bjornsonlaw.com



BJM BJORNSSON JONES MUNGAS
P.L.L.C.



COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PARTNERS
CPP funding includes housing coverage and program costs. A 20% up-front fee is required for all of the current tenants.




Our mission is to create positive community impact by building affordable housing, so that families can remain healthy and successful and drive energy on wellness, family, education, and achievement.

Mayor Kelly asked if there were any questions of the presenter.

He inquired the deadline to submit comments and when the awards would be determined.

Ms. Buss responded that they are hoping to receive comments between now and March 1st for a closing around April.

Mayor Kelly asked if there were any comments from the public.

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS

January 3, 2023

Speaking in support was **Brett Doney**, Great Falls Development Authority. Mr. Doney commented that there is a need for housing production at all price points. Preserving affordable housing is incredibly important. Great Falls Development Authority will also speak in support for an allocation of tax credits from the Montana Board of Housing.

Shyla Patera, North Central Independent Living Services, provided written comments in support of MT3's application for low-income housing tax credits from the Montana Board of Housing to finance the preservation of Sunshine Village and Broadview Manor East and West as affordable housing.

There being no one further to address the Commission, Mayor Kelly closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Wolff commented that housing is needed at all price points. She thanked the organizations for stepping up and helping the community.

13. **REQUEST FROM METROPOLITAN LLC TO USE DOWNTOWN URBAN RENEWAL DISTRICT TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF) FUNDS FOR COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH FIRE SUPPRESSION AT 313-315 CENTRAL AVENUE.**

Mayor Kelly declared the public hearing open and asked for presentation of the staff report.

Planning and Community Development Deputy Director Tom Micuda reported that the applicant, Metropolitan LLC, is requesting \$68,560 of TIF funds to pay for the installation of fire alarms and a sprinkler system to fully fire protect 313 and 315 Central Avenue. The request was submitted prior to, but in association with, a building permit application to renovate the space in the building for Mountain Wave Distillery. The applicant's goal is to have a fully fire protected building for his own business, Hygienix, Brush Crazy, and upcoming distillery project.

The City Commission adopted the Downtown Building Program on July 6, 2021. The program allocated a \$500,000 spending stream from the Downtown TIF dedicated to downtown building projects. Three program categories were established. This project falls under the Life Safety Code Compliance Program. The program was modeled after other programs in Montana to create support for private investment in what are considered public goods or public benefits for downtown buildings. In this case, the public benefits for this program are to retrofit buildings to establish ADA compliance, and also to retrofit downtown buildings for fire suppression.

This request is coming to the Commission as it is above the \$25,000 staff level cap. Deputy Director Micuda read the eligibility requirements 1, 3, and 7 of the Code Compliance Program. Staff does not view the applicant's request as a special or unique opportunity, or that there are extraordinary circumstances to support the request for funding. Staff's perspective is that fire suppression is a required element of the conversion to create the distillery space. It is not a situation where somebody is coming in and retrofitting a building to deal with an existing code compliance issue, which is one of the eligibility requirements.

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS

January 3, 2023

Another discussion that has come up is whether this is a project of significance to the downtown. Staff's more conservative analysis did not believe this was a transformative project where staff could see the greater good to the greater downtown. Another discussion point was whether to change the program or approve the exception. A discussion that may come up is should staff change the program to offer up more funding and provide clarity to what extraordinary circumstances are, or approve the exception first and deal with the program second.

On November 30, 2022, the Downtown Development Partnership (DDP) met to review the applicant's request and took action to recommend that Metropolitan LLC be allowed to receive the full amount of TIF funds that were requested (\$68,560). During the meeting, DDP members cited the need for investment in fire suppression in the downtown, especially in response to the Rocky Mountain Building fire. One of the members noted that the location of this proposed TIF funded project is mid-block, which would mitigate damage to the entire block if there were ever a fire event to occur.

Other DDP members felt that extraordinary circumstances are present to allow the City Commission to approve a larger allocation of funds due to the economic challenges that have arisen in the aftermath of Covid-19. Because DDP members believed that "normal" development conditions are not currently present, the request was deemed as having extraordinary circumstances. In a similar vein, DDP members felt that fire suppression is often the component of development that can bring a project to a halt, and that fire suppression requests should be considered for additional funds.

Additionally, the DDP showed interest in revisiting the amount of Life-Safety TIF Building Program funds that can be administratively approved. Many members felt that the \$25,000 cap was not sufficient given the cost of installing fire suppression systems.

Staff is recommending that the higher amount not be approved. The agenda report outlines staff's findings and recommendations. If the Commission disagrees, Deputy Director Micuda asked that the Commission focus on review criteria 6 – Special or Unique Opportunities.

Applicant Keith Cron, 313-315 Central Avenue, commented that there is only a problem with one out of the 12 criteria staff set forth. The Commission needs to decide what the special threshold is. He pointed out that the life safety program cap is less than what is allowed for façade projects. He believes this is a unique project. There are no distilleries in Great Falls.

Applicant Cron continued that there have been massive hurdles dealing with code issues and the review process took six months. Larger scale projects have taken shorter periods of time. That is unique in and of itself. Part of the downtown revitalization program is to see unique and different businesses. He pointed out that the Commission found a unique way to fund the outside of the Civic Center building with TIF dollars. He concluded that another challenge has been the aftermath of Covid.

Mayor Kelly asked if the Commission members had any questions of staff or the applicant.

Mayor Kelly asked if staff's recommendation was based on the amount being over the \$25,000 cap, or the purpose for what the dollars will be used for.

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS

January 3, 2023

Deputy Director Micuda responded it is not the amount. There is money in the Downtown TIF to fund the applicant's request. The trigger for Commission review is that the request is over \$25,000. Staff struggled with the special or unique opportunities clause. Also, in all three of the programs, Life Safety, Façade and Environmental Safety, the Commission has the discretion to approve if it can demonstrate extraordinary circumstances.

Mayor Kelly inquired the amount allocated for prior project work.

Deputy Director Micuda responded that just over \$25,000 was allocated for the sidewalk and vault work.

Mayor Kelly inquired if there has been a request to use these dollars for ADA purposes.

Deputy Director Micuda responded that the department has not received a request related to ADA, only the fire suppression request.

Applicant Cron added that he moved forward with the ADA upgrades himself.

Commissioner Wolff received confirmation that the applicant and others have spent a significant amount of money renovating the building.

Commissioner Tryon noted that the Commission was unable to fund the full TIF amount requested for the Newberry project in May 2021, because the Downtown Urban Renewal Plan (DURP) did not provide for fire suppression systems or other life safety issues. In July of 2021, the Commission amended the DURP to allow for life safety projects. He also noted that in October of 2022, the Commission provided \$150,000 for the downtown mural lighting project.

Deputy Director Micuda responded when the DURP was amended, the pathway was pointed to create the programs and make these funding allocation decisions. The question tonight is not whether or not the allocation can be granted, because it is a legitimate request that can be granted, but in order for the Commission to grant the funding at the requested amount, the Commission has to find that there is extraordinary circumstances to make that decision. With regard to the mural lighting project, staff viewed it as a hybrid project that provided a public benefit at multiple sites.

Commissioner Tryon inquired the difference of addressing an existing building that did not comply with current code requirements, which a fire supersession system would qualify, and this renovation project that automatically triggered code compliance issues and would not be eligible for those monies.

Deputy Director Micuda responded that the intent of the program from staff's perspective is for requests for projects in older buildings that currently do not meet fire suppression or ADA requirements for up to \$25,000 funds to offset private investment. It would be instigated by someone coming in and retrofitting those improvements into a building. The distinction staff is making is the code requirements of this project's new tenant automatically triggering the improvements as opposed to updating a building for future uses and future activities. It is a subtle point, but it relates to the intent of what the program was designed to do. The Commission needs to decide if circumstances allow for a higher funding allocation.

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS

January 3, 2023

Commissioner Tryon commented it was his understanding when the Commission passed the amendment to the DURP to include life and safety, that this project would be one of the reasons to allow for a fire suppression system, which is clearly a life safety issue.

Deputy Director Micuda responded the Commission has to think of this decision in the context of what happens next. When do you make the exception versus when do you change the code or change the program.

Mayor Kelly asked if there were any comments from the public in support of Metropolitan LLC's application.

Kellie Pierce, Executive Director of the Business Improvement District and Downtown Great Falls Association, Board Chair for the Downtown Development Partnership (DDP), commented that the DDP was an integral part of helping to create these programs so Great Falls could have revitalization efforts in the downtown area. She reminded the Commission that \$500,000 was set aside for the three new programs from the Downtown Urban Renewal District TIF fund. The downtown mural lighting project was not part of that \$500,000, but from the larger TIF fund.

This project amount is outside of the limits that were set. As pointed out, the Façade program has a \$50,000 cap, whereas the Life Safety program has only a \$25,000 cap. The DDP has recommended that these amounts be revisited as they are seeing a need in the community for larger amounts to be contributed. There is buy-in from developers and investors with 50% matching funds. The DDP is in support of funding this project as an extraordinary circumstance. She referred to the Rocky Mountain building and noted that, similarly, this project is a centrally located building and that if it were to start on fire it would take down the entire block.

Melissa Smith, Downtown Development Partnership (DDP) Member at Large, urged the Commission to consider this request because there is a match, and the grant number was somewhat artificially low considering what it really costs to install a good fire suppression system. The DDP fully considered the impact and how devastating a fire in the middle of that block would be for downtown. This business is something that will revitalize downtown and will help other businesses that are already downtown, such as the Newberry.

Brett Doney commented that he is Treasurer of the DDP, but is speaking tonight on behalf of the Great Falls Development Authority (GFDA). GFDA has loaned the developer \$150,000 for the project and also approved a SBA 504 loan in the amount of \$212,000 that cannot close until the building is completed. GFDA also issued an extraordinary commitment of \$590,000 to Mountain Wave Distilling for its two locations. There are two very distinct types of downtown projects. The amounts for the programs should be looked at. Particularly, the Life Safety program, because fire protection systems are expensive. Fire protection systems are critical for protecting property. Without such systems buildings are dangerous for residents and firefighters to go into. The program was created with a generous 50/50 match. The three program projects are very different from gut-rehab projects. Bringing these downtown buildings up to code is extremely expensive. He argued that this is an extraordinary project because it is a gut-rehab. Practically every gut-rehab project downtown has required extraordinary City support. This developer is not asking for a 50/50 match, but a much lower percentage.

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS

January 3, 2023

Mayor Kelly asked if there were any comments from the public in opposition to Metropolitan LLC's application. Hearing none, Mayor Kelly closed the public hearing and asked the will of the Commission.

Commissioner Hinebauch moved, seconded by Commissioner Tryon, that the City Commission approve Metropolitan LLC's application for the expenditure of Downtown Urban Renewal District Tax Increment Financing funds in the amount of \$68,560.

Mayor Kelly asked if there was any discussion amongst the Commissioners.

Mayor Kelly commented that in every legislative session, Tax Increment Financing comes under attack by legislators. Cities and towns talk every session about the availability of very few incentive programs and funds available to help with development in those chosen TIF districts. One of the things that is always pointed out is that Great Falls has done a spectacular job of limiting the use of TIF dollars to what the legislature truly intended when TIF's were set up years ago. One of the key values that Great Falls has shown is that public hearings are held on every aspect of these projects. Not only creation of the TIF districts, but also the creation of the programs to distribute the TIF dollars.

Mayor Kelly commented that he is not going to support the request because, in his mind, the Commission has not gone through the process to change the program that it created. In his mind, this project does not qualify as a transformative event or extraordinary project. However, he would agree to the fund the request level of \$25,000.

Commissioner Wolff commented that the Commission would be setting a precedent by not funding this project, as one of the Commission's goals is to further and support economic development. It is a unique business for downtown and will increase foot traffic and revenue. She suggested approving the request, and then revisiting the programs.

Commissioner Hinebauch concurred with Commissioner Wolff, adding the Commission has that discretion. He also suggested revisiting the programs and adjusting the limits to make more sense.

Commissioner Tryon concurred with Commissioners Wolff and Hinebauch. This is clearly a life safety issue, and it fits within the DURP. The Commission can approve the request, and then revisit the program amounts. It is a blighted building with an opportunity to be renovated and create jobs. It is a legitimate use of the funds and he supports the request.

Commissioner McKenney expressed concern about approving the full amount and setting precedent.

Deputy Director Micuda responded that, what he is hearing from a majority of the Commission is the Commission could approve the deviation, and allow staff to come forward with program changes. Before those program changes come to the Commission, the issue of precedent the Commission will have to deal with is other requests may come in that go over the dollar amount.

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS

January 3, 2023

Commissioner McKenney commented this City Commission is pro-economic development and pro-jobs. Setting precedent concerns him. He would prefer revisiting the program amounts as suggested by Mayor Kelly in a public forum.

Mayor Kelly concluded that the Commission is excited about this project, and all of the other things going on downtown and the great work that is being done. His reservations have to do with process.

Commissioner Tryon commented that he hopes the Commission gets many other requests dealing with renovating downtown with each one considered individually on its merits.

Commissioner Wolff concurred with the suggestion of having the programs come back to the Commission in a public hearing.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Kelly called for the vote.

Motion carried 3-2 [Mayor Kelly and Commissioner McKenney dissenting].

14. **A CHILD'S WORLD, LLC LEASE AGREEMENT.**

Mayor Kelly declared the public hearing open and asked for presentation of the staff report.

Park and Recreation Director Steve Herrig reported that A Child's World is currently leasing a lower portion of the Recreation Center for \$1,500/month with the use of an outside play area and gymnasium upon availability. This lease has been in place since 2003.

Title 3, Chapter 4 of the Official Code of the City of Great Falls requires the Commission conduct a public hearing before final consideration of a lease of City property. Bids were not solicited for this lease since the previous lease allowed for an extension of the agreement with 30-days written notice prior to the expiration of the lease, which has been requested by A Child's World LLC.

Mayor Kelly asked if the Commission members had any questions of staff. Hearing none, Mayor Kelly asked if there were any comments from the public in support of this lease renewal.

Laurie O'Leary, Owner of EduCare Preschool and Child Care and Leap Ahead Learning Center, and new Director of A Child's World, d/b/a The Community Early Education Center, commented that they will be expanding in that space to provide more jobs and more child care slots in the community. She will be working on moving the current program up from a Star-2 level. She encouraged the Commission to renew the lease so they can continue to provide high quality child care and programming for the community.

Mayor Kelly asked if there were any comments from the public in opposition to a lease agreement. Hearing none, Mayor Kelly closed the public hearing and asked the will of the Commission.

Commissioner Hinebauch moved, seconded by Commissioner Wolff, that the City Commission approve a lease agreement of City owned property located in the Community Recreation Center with A Child's World, LLC.

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS

January 3, 2023

Mayor Kelly asked if there was any discussion amongst the Commissioners.

Commissioner McKenney inquired how many children are under A Child's World care and if there was a waiting list.

Ms. O'Leary responded that she just took over as Director today. They are working with the Great Falls Clinic and the downtown child care businesses to try to partner with them and provide child care to the downtown businesses. They are looking at partnerships where employers could potentially pay for a part of their employee's child care as a benefit. Downtown businesses are having a hard time attracting employees for extended hours and extended days. The Great Falls Clinic has expressed interest in 52 spots.

Commissioner McKenney commented that it is a challenge for those in the hospitality industry to find child care. Downtown is becoming an entertainment center hub for Great Falls. There will be a need for downtown hospitality staff to find child care.

Ms. O'Leary responded that all night child care is not in her short-term goals. They are talking about staying open later if there is a demand, and if people or organizations are willing to pay that cost to provide that care for extended hours.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Kelly called for the vote.

Motion carried 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS

CITY COMMISSION

15. APPOINTMENTS, GREAT FALLS CITIZEN'S COUNCIL.

After a brief discussion about availability, **Mayor Kelly moved, seconded by Commissioner Hinebauch, that the City Commission appoint Joe McKenney and Susan Wolff to serve on the Great Falls Citizen's Council, also known as Council of Councils, for the January 24, 2023 meeting; and, appoint Bob Kelly and Rick Tryon for the May 23, 2023 meeting.**

Mayor Kelly noted that he would be available for the October 24th meeting as well.

Mayor Kelly asked if there were any comments from the public or any discussion amongst the Commissioners. Hearing none, Mayor Kelly called for the vote.

Motion carried 5-0.

16. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

None.

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS

January 3, 2023

17. COMMISSION INITIATIVES.

City Manager Greg Doyon received confirmation that the Commission wanted to continue supporting the Montana League of Cities and Towns (MLCT) Infrastructure Coalition.

18. LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES.

City Manager Greg Doyon asked if the Commission wanted to support the MLCT's request for support in the amount of \$5,000 to assist communities at the Legislature.

Mayor Kelly added that this information campaign is to alert people to what is going on at the Legislature, such as unfunded mandates. Other cities participating so far are Butte, Bozeman and Helena.

Commissioner McKenney noted that he spent time at the Legislature and they frequently vote to suspend the rules, including providing a 2-day notice for a hearing. He inquired if someone would be representing the City on short notice.

Manager Doyon responded that the City relies on MLCT and its resources to communicate concerns about local government governance. Their request is for a media consultant to help educate the citizenry about proposed legislative changes.

Mayor Kelly added MLCT's request is to help with the costs of a media consultant to help drive the push against preemption this session that aims to take away local decision-making authority. The decision of how and when to make policy affecting local residents should be made by this Commission, not the State Legislature.

It was the consensus of the Commission to approve MLCT's request for support in the amount of \$5,000.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, **Commissioner Tryon moved, seconded by Mayor Kelly, to adjourn the regular meeting of January 3, 2023, at 8:50 pm.**

Motion carried 5-0.

Mayor Bob Kelly

City Clerk Lisa Kunz

Minutes Approved: January 17, 2023