

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION

January 2, 2024

City Commission Work Session
Civic Center, Gibson Room 212

Mayor Reeves presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 PM

CITY COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Cory Reeves, Susan Wolff, Joe McKenney, Rick Tryon and Shannon Wilson.

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Greg Doyon and Deputy City Manager Chuck Anderson; City Attorney David Dennis and Deputy City Attorney Rachel Taylor; Public Works Director Chris Gaub; Finance Deputy Director Kirsten Wavra; Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry; Municipal Court Judge Steve Bolstad and Court Supervisor Morgan Medvec; Fire Chief Jeremy Jones; Police Captain Rob Moccasin; and, Deputy City Clerk Darcy Dea.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

1. LIBRARY IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE.

Library Director Susie McIntyre reviewed and discussed the following PowerPoint:



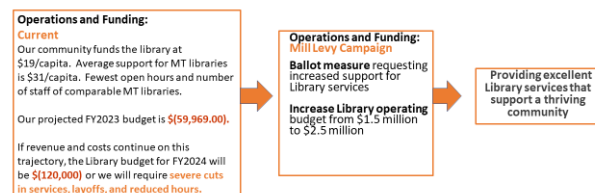
What kind of community do we want?

- ❖ An **informed** community where everyone has access to the quality information they need to live, learn, govern, and work.
- ❖ An **educated** community where parents are supported to be their child's first teacher, children start school ready to read, and students have access to resources to thrive as they grow to adulthood.
- ❖ A **connected** community with a safe, strong downtown.
- ❖ A **thriving** community where people have quality of life.

2022 Master Plan: Operations and Funding

- **What We Learned**
 - Community **values the library**, but it **isn't financially supported** at the level of value
 - **Parking** is a key issue also impacting library usage
 - Some residents don't feel **comfortable/safe** coming to the library
 - The community is interested in a **variety of Library services**
- **Recommendations to Address Issues**
 - Develop multiple pathways/strategies to **increasing library funding** to a minimum goal of getting up to the average MT library of similar size (\$31.00 per capita).
 - Use part of this increased funding to **address parking and safety concerns**.
 - Expand Library services to **meet community needs**

Master Plan Operations: From Vision to Reality



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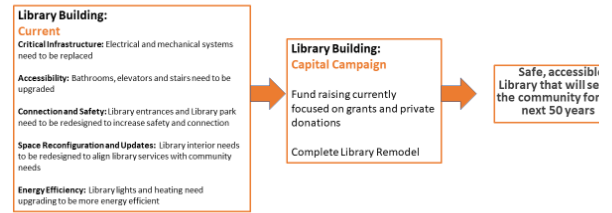
2022 Master Plan: Facilities Vision for the Future

• Remodeled Library

- Vibrant anchor for a **thriving downtown**
- Energy efficient, sustainable building that will **last for another 50 years**
- Enhanced **social infrastructure** that builds community connection

Total Estimated Construction Cost: \$15 million

Master Plan Facilities : From Vision to Reality



Library Mill Levy: Special Election June 6

Shall the City of Great Falls be authorized to amend Article I, Section 3 of the Charter of the City of Great Falls to levy up to 17 mills, an increase of 15 mills, raising approximately \$1,594,500 for the purpose of providing funds for the operation, maintenance and capital needs of the Great Falls Public Library.

[] **FOR** amending the Charter of the City of Great Falls to increase the authorized mills to levy for the operation, maintenance and capital needs of the Great Falls Public Library from two (2) mills to seventeen (17) mills as provided for in Ordinance No. 3254.

[] **AGAINST** amending the Charter of the City of Great Falls to increase the authorized mills to levy for the operation, maintenance and capital needs of the Great Falls Public Library from two (2) mills to seventeen (17) mills as provided for in Ordinance No. 3254.

Total Mills requested = 15 MILLS ≈ \$1,594,500.00

INCREASE THE ANNUAL TAX ON A \$100,000 HOME APPROXIMATELY \$20.25
INCREASE THE ANNUAL TAX ON A \$200,000 HOME APPROXIMATELY \$40.50

Milly Levy Passed:

Vote of 7,223 (52%) for to 6,604 (48%) against (difference of 619 votes)

- We understand these are **difficult economic times** and that it is a difficult for many people to have increased property taxes.
- We are working to be **clear and open** about how funds are being spent and what we are accomplishing.
- We understand that we are **funded by our community** and we are **answerable to our community**.

Levy Implementation: Adjustments to timeline

- Original goal of opening 7 days a week starting in April
- Library Board will be evaluating staffing and developing a new timeline for hiring and implementation at their January Board Meeting
 - We **didn't fully understand** the extent that the Library fund would need to be built up in the Library fund to prevent future **cash flow problems**. (We will need 60% of the FY2025 operational budget in the Library fund on June 30, 2024 in order to avoid cash flow issues in FY2025.)
 - Our **expenses are significantly higher** than when we made the original budget. Electrical costs have increased significantly. Most union staff received an 8% raise. We had to offer higher salaries to the two new non-union employees.

Library Cash Flow

Cash Flow	Revenue	Expense	Fund Balance
FY2023			\$ (489,464.97)
July	\$ (33,651.20)	\$ 145,884.03	\$ (177,232.14)
Aug.	\$ (32,327.46)	\$ 179,731.28	\$ (229,828.32)
Sept.	\$ (41,000.34)	\$ 117,202.08	\$ (153,626.82)
Oct.	\$ (61,530.06)	\$ 110,079.25	\$ (105,077.63)
Nov.	\$ (72,907.88)	\$ 109,190.94	\$ (68,794.39)
Dec.	\$ (520,291.26)	\$ 159,606.36	\$ (429,479.49)
Jan.	\$ (135,363.36)	\$ 37,494.94	\$ (107,349.71)
Feb.	\$ (44,676.27)	\$ 107,868.62	\$ (443,139.36)
March	\$ (32,381.82)	\$ 138,506.78	\$ (317,034.40)
April	\$ (45,089.89)	\$ 107,582.46	\$ (254,541.63)
May	\$ (40,960.47)	\$ 161,763.81	\$ (133,738.49)
June	\$ (310,954.35)	\$ 189,240.12	\$ (455,452.72)

Cash Flow	Revenue	Expense	Fund Balance
FY2024			\$ (455,452.72)
July	This will be updated with actual numbers based on modified implementation plan.		
Aug.			\$ (29,262.47)
Sept.			\$ 25,826.79
Oct. (donation)	\$ (184,717.39)	\$ 121,466.53	\$ (197,943.87)
November	\$ (27,357.23)	\$ 125,850.98	\$ (199,450.72)
December (donation return)	\$ (1,356,036.74)	\$ 423,192.95	\$ (1,232,294.51)
January	\$ (90,359.01)	\$ 130,924.30	\$ (1,171,729.02)
February	\$ (1,859.01)	\$ 150,924.30	\$ (1,022,464.30)
March	\$ (1,859.01)	\$ 211,781.35	\$ (812,740.99)
April	\$ (1,859.01)	\$ 150,924.30	\$ (663,675.49)
May	\$ (1,859.01)	\$ 150,924.30	\$ (514,610.09)
June	\$ (1,302,333.79)	\$ 150,924.30	\$ (1,466,218.28)

FY2023: Library received monthly General Fund Subsidy \$29,166.67.

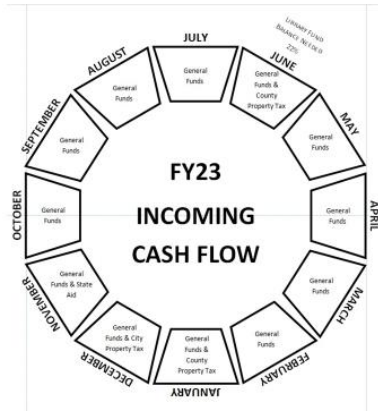
FY2024: No general fund subsidy. 97% of funding from property taxes received in December & June.

FUTURE CASH FLOW:

At the end of each fiscal year, Library Fund will need to have 60% of operating budget for next fiscal year.

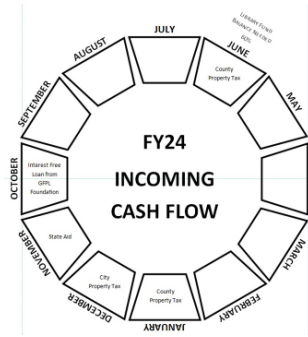
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Great Falls Public Library Cash Flow

- FY2023:**
- Library received monthly General Fund Subsidy \$29,166.67.
 - 58% of revenue from property taxes received in December & June.

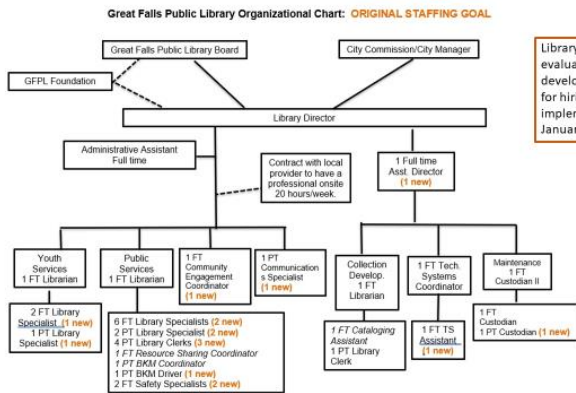
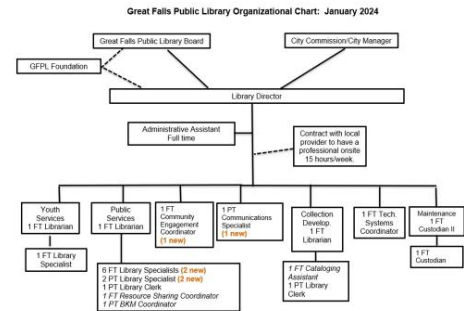
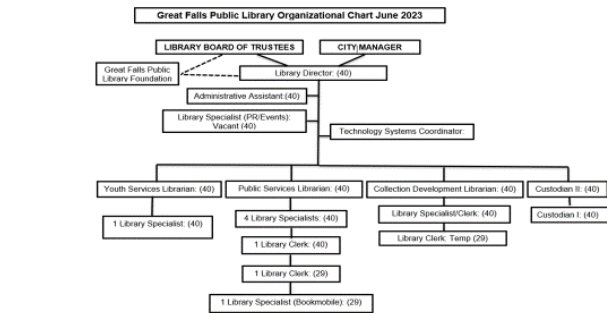


Great Falls Public Library Cash Flow

- FY2024:**
- No general fund subsidy.
 - 89% of revenue from property taxes received in December & June.

FUTURE CASH FLOW:
At the end of each fiscal year, Library Fund will need to have 60% of operating budget for next fiscal year.

LIBRARY MILL LEVY IMPLEMENTATION: Hiring Plan



Library Board will be evaluating staffing and developing a new timeline for hiring and implementation at their January Board Meeting

Library Crossroads

Mill Levy Passes:

- Funding for increased staff and services
- Continuing and expanding early literacy and afterschool programs for children and parents
 - Expanding homebound services and programming for people who are disabled and seniors
 - Providing computer and technology classes and expanded support for job seekers
 - Providing a College Readiness Program for teens that includes literacy programs, test prep, and application assistance
 - Expanding our hours to be open seven days a week providing more service to all community members
 - Expanding Bookmobile services to six days a week providing more services to daycares, schools and seniors
 - Improving library safety so that parents, seniors and families feel welcome at the library
 - Providing free parking to reduce barriers to using the library

Mill Levy Doesn't Pass:

- Limited funding resulting in decreased staff and services
- Reduced early literacy and afterschool programs for children and parents
 - No homebound services and programming for people who are disabled and seniors
 - No computer and technology classes and reduced support for job seekers
 - No College Readiness Program for teens (literacy programs, test prep, and application assistance)
 - Reducing our hours to be open only five days a week providing less service to all community members
 - Failing to meet Montana Public Library Standards disqualifying the library from receiving State Library Aid of around \$30,000
 - Bookmobile service maintained at only 3 days a week providing inadequate service to daycares, schools and seniors
 - Failing to adequately address library safety so that parents, seniors and families feel welcome at the library

Continuing and expanding early literacy and afterschool programs for children and parents

- Organizing Library spaces to accommodate new staff
- Promoting Dolly Parton Imagination Library
- Hiring 1 FT Library Specialist & 1 PT Library Specialist as part of Levy Hiring Plan
- Planning expanded programs
- Planning Summer Reading 2024
- Seeking feedback regarding additional services



Providing a College Readiness Program for teens that includes literacy programs, test prep, and application assistance

- Organizing Library spaces to accommodate new staff
- Seeking feedback regarding additional services
- Planning "We Learn" programming series
- Hiring 1 FT Library Specialist & 1 PT Library Specialist as part of Levy Hiring Plan



Green = completed
Orange = in process
Purple = coming soon

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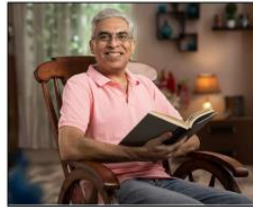
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Expanding homebound services and programming for people who are disabled and seniors

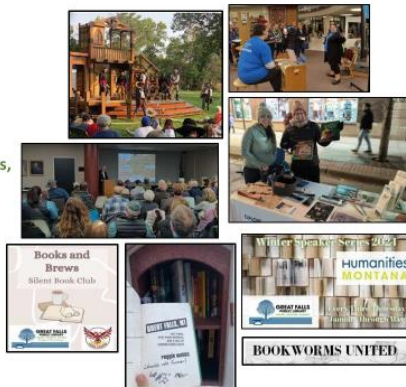
- Meeting with Meals on Wheels about possible collaboration
- Developing expanded Bookmobile schedule (additional stops and homebound service times)
- Updating Homebound services procedures
- Recruiting volunteers to assist with Homebound service



Green = completed
Orange = in process
Purple = coming soon

Expanding programming for adults and families

- Hired 1 FT Community Engagement Coordinator
- Providing expanded programming (author talks, LFL program, community partnerships, more book clubs, humanities series...)
- Seeking feedback regarding additional services
- Book-A-Librarian program



Green = completed
Orange = in process
Purple = coming soon

Improving community awareness of Library services

- Hired 1 PT Communications Specialist
- Increased community communication (press releases, website updates, social media, radio, etc.)



Green = completed
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Purple = coming soon

Reducing barriers to Library Use

- Providing free parking



Green = completed
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Providing computer and technology classes and expanded support for job seekers

- Library spaces organized to accommodate new staff (phones, desks, computers...)
- Hired 1 FT Community Engagement Coordinator
- Hiring 1 FT Technology Assistant as part of Levy Hiring Plan
- Collaborating with GFC-MSU & Job Service
- Book-A-Librarian program
- Seeking feedback regarding possible classes



Green = completed
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Expanding digital services resources

- New Advantage program for MONTANALIBRARY2GO (Libby App), investing \$1,600 per month to buy extra copies of popular eBooks and eAudiobooks for GFPL Library patrons started July 1, 2023
- MANGO LANGUAGES launched in September 2023
- LINKEDIN LEARNING launched November 1, 2023
- Continuing CHILTON AUTO REPAIR
- Seeking feedback regarding additional services



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Improving Library safety so that parents, seniors and families feel welcome at the Library

- Continuing collaboration with Mary Rivers Whole Health to provide a mental health professional in the Library every weekday afternoon (ARPA funding)
- Enforcing updated Library Patron behavior policy Park Task Force engaged community members and developed report.
- Engage with community organizations addressing safety issues.
- Providing continuing safety & behavioral training to staff
- Hiring 2 FT Safety Specialists as part of Levy Hiring Plan



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Expanding our hours to be open seven days a week providing more service to all community members

Expanding Bookmobile services to six days a week providing more services to daycares, schools and seniors

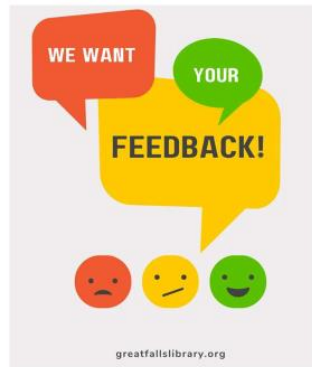
- Library spaces to be organized to accommodate new staff (phones, desks, computers...)
- Hired 2 FT & 2 PT Library Specialist
- Hiring 1 PT Bookmobile Driver as part of Levy Hiring Plan



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Measuring Success: **DRAFT** Smart Objectives

Timelines and baseline numbers will be finalized when the Library Board approves a new Levy Implementation Plan.

Adult Programming & Community Engagement:

- By XXX, increase average monthly attendance at general adult programming by 40%.

Online Engagement:

- By XXX, increase number of social media followers by 10%.
- By XXX, increase monthly engagement on social media by 10%.
- By XXX, increase monthly web sessions and web visits by 10%.

Youth Services Programming and Community Engagement:

- By XXX, average monthly attendance at Kids Place programming (family programs and programs for children 0 – 12-years old) will increase by 15%.
- By XXX, the average number of monthly Kids Place programs will increase by 10%.
- By XXX, average monthly attendance at Young Adult programming attendance (programs for youth 0-18 years old) will increase by 10%.
- During Summer Reading 2024, participation of children 0 – 12-years old will increase by 10%.
- During Summer Reading 2024, participation of youth 0-18 years old will increase by 15%.

Measuring Success: **DRAFT** Smart Objectives

Timelines and baseline numbers will be finalized when the Library Board approves a new Levy Implementation Plan.

Technology:

- By XXX, increase average monthly unique users of Library Wi-Fi (bookmobile & main library) network and public computers by 10%.
- By XXX, increase average monthly Library Wi-Fi (bookmobile & main library) network and public computers usage sessions by 18%.

Collective Development Objectives:

- By December 2024, increase efficiency of Technical Services Department ordering/receiving/cataloging as measured by staff time spent on each step of the process.
- By December 2024, improve patron access to materials as measured by staff satisfaction surveys.

Measuring Success: **DRAFT** Smart Objectives

Timelines and baseline numbers will be finalized when the Library Board approves a new Levy Implementation Plan.

Patrons Cards:

- By XXX, increase the average monthly new card sign-ups by 5%.
- By XXX, increase the number of Library Card Holders by 5%.
- By XXX, increase the number of Library Card Holders by 15%.

Library & Bookmobile visitors:

- By XXX, increase the average number of monthly Library visitors by 15%.
- By XXX, increase the number of monthly Bookmobile visitors by 40%.

Circulation:

- By XXX, increase electronic circulation by 10%.
- By XXX, increase overall circulation by 15%.
- By XXX, expand use of Library's electronic databases (Chilton, Mango Languages, LinkedIn Learning) by 25%.

Patron Interactions:

- By XXX, increase the average monthly direct assistance interactions provided to patrons by 10%.

Measuring Success: **DRAFT** Smart Objectives

Timelines and baseline numbers will be finalized when the Library Board approves a new Levy Implementation Plan.

Long-term goal: XX% of students in Great Falls will start kindergarten ready to learn to read.

NOTE: This goal will require effort across the community. The Library will assist in this effort by meeting the following objectives.

- By XXX, the Library will host at least one event per quarter that expands marginalized parents' awareness of their role as their children's first teachers. (Examples: Conversations Count and/or Mind in the Making training at Cascade County Detention Center, Paris Gibson's Young Parents, YWCA, Cascade County Juvenile Detention Center, Cameron Center)
- By December, of 2024, increase Dolly Parton's Imagination Library sign-ups by 25%. Currently, we have 1,900 sign-ups. 1.25 x 1,900 = 2,375 kids (Kids also age out of the program when the turn 5)

Questions

Further Information

- Great Falls Public Library Strategic Plan
<https://www.greatfallslibrary.org/files/2023/07/2023-2026-strategic-plan.pdf>
- Great Falls Public Library Master Plan
<https://www.greatfallslibrary.org/files/2023/07/2023-2026-master-plan.pdf>

Mayor Reeves inquired if the library collaborated with the Benefis or Great Falls Clinic with regard to enrolling children in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. He further inquired if the library would be bringing forth a bond.

Library Director McIntyre replied that the library has not collaborated with either medical facility because of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) issues and both facilities being understaffed. The library has no plans to bring forth a bond. There are plans to do a remodel; however, that would be funded through a capital campaign such as private donations, governmental and private grants.

Commissioner Wilson mentioned that the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act created a \$2 billion Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grant and the closing date for applications is November 2024.

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Commissioner Tryon inquired how the library would make up the difference for the approximate \$390,000 more than what was on the ballot that the voters approved.

Library Director McIntyre responded that would need to be a conversation between the Commission, Library Board and community. The library would need 60% of the FY2025 operational budget in the Library fund on June 30, 2024 in order to avoid cash flow issues. The mills are worth more; however, the library's electrical costs have tripled and staff costs went up significantly.

Commissioner Tryon explained that City staff needs to determine how to fund the dire needs of public safety with the upcoming budget. Commissioner Tryon explained that he would like to see the 7 mills per the 1993 management agreement allocated for public safety. He inquired how the library would move forward with its plans for operational costs if the 7 mills was used for public safety. He commented that Library Director McIntyre had indicated that the library might be faced with some severe cuts in services, layoffs and reduced hours; however, the City may be faced with the same issues if there is not a way to determine how to fund public safety. Commissioner Tryon expressed concern about the Library Board not fully understanding and budgeting for the increase of electrical costs, union staff receiving an 8% raise and what the Library fund would need to prevent future cash flow issues.

Library Director McIntyre responded that the Library Board was not aware that electrical costs would triple and union staff would receive an 8% raise when the original budget was put before the Commission in December 2022. The discussion about electrical costs tripling was in the spring and historically, library union staff received 3% to 5% raises. The Library Board would not have known that the Collective Bargaining Agreement that the Commission approved in July would give library union staff an 8% raise. With regard to the cash flow issue, Library Director McIntyre explained that there were conversations between the library, Finance Department and City Manager's Office; however, she made an erroneous assumption that the general fund would cover it. This was the first time that there was a Library Levy in 20 years and the Library Board did not predict how big the cash flow would be.

Commissioner Tryon explained that because the Library Board did not anticipate these costs in the budget and ballot language, the 7 mills per the 1993 management agreement could potentially be put back into the general fund in order to fund public safety needs. He inquired how the library would meet the 60% by June 2024.

Library Director McIntyre responded that the library would have to stay within its budget and hiring additional staff has been pushed back to April 2024. She would not be asking for a subsidy in the general fund. A proposed spending plan with the funding the library currently has would be brought before the Library Board at its next meeting. The Library Board understands that hiring was pushed back in order to have enough salary savings to have the 60% by June 2024. She added that if the Commission decides to renegotiate the 1993 management agreement, it is important to remember that a majority of the community voted for expanded library services.

Commissioner Tryon responded that the community did not vote on the 1993 management agreement and may not have understood all of the nuances of the mill funding. The City has been triaging public safety and it needs to be addressed. Commissioner Tryon concluded that his main priority with the upcoming

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budget process would be funding public safety services up to the level they need to be.

Commissioner McKenney suggested that Library Director McIntyre, Library staff and the Library Board continue working through their challenges.

Commissioner Wolff commented that she served on the Library Board and is aware of the hard work that the board does. The library provides many services that make a difference, including the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. She added that one may not always know what questions to ask when trying to achieve success. Commissioner Wolff suggested that Library Director McIntyre continue working closely with the Finance Department and City Manager's Office. She commented that there would be difficult budget decisions; however, there is a need to do something with public safety. She received clarification that the bookmobile's main stops in the City are assisted living and daycare facilities. Commissioner Wolff commended Library Director McIntyre for her efforts and successes that have already been done.

2. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW – STUDY COMMISSION.

City Manager Greg Doyon reported that the Local Government Review was initiated by the Montana Constitution and required every 10 years. The purpose is for a study commission to look at the structure of local government and determine whether there should be a change. The City has a Charter authorized under the State of Montana and dictates the form of government that it has. State Law dictates the types and forms of government that local jurisdictions that are incorporated can have.

A resolution must be adopted by the City Commission calling for an election on the question of conducting a local government review and establishing a study commission to do so and be submitted to the County Elections Administrator by March 11, 2024. At the June 4, 2024 primary election, voters in the City will be asked whether they wish to have their form of local government reviewed. If a majority of the electors are satisfied with the Commission-Manager form of government, the process ends here. If a majority of the electors vote in favor a local government review, the study commission members would begin filing declarations for nomination as a study commission candidate for the November 5th general election. The study commission would research the current form of government and provide recommendations in 2026/2027. There would be a process by which the community would adopt the new form of government. The amount of \$150,000 in the draft memo would potentially be increased because there would be additional expenses. There is no space in the Civic Center for a study commission and an alternative location would be needed. A study commission could also retain employees and services, which would be a cost for taxpayers.

City Manager Doyon concluded that City staff would continue to work on the resolution, adjust some amounts and would be before the Commission prior to the March 5, 2024 Commission Meeting.

Commissioner Tryon received clarification that the only thing the Commission needed to do by March 11, 2024, was to adopt a resolution calling for an election on the question of whether the voters wanted to empower a study commission to conduct a local government review.

DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL UPCOMING WORK SESSION TOPICS

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City Manager Greg Doyon mentioned that City staff is continuing to work on the audio aspect of the Owl Video device.

City Manager Doyon reported that a semi-annual budget review and CourseCo golf course update will be topics for the January 16, 2024 work session. A Park and Recreation fee update and lead and copper rule update will be topics for the February 6, 2024 work session. A House Bill 355 – award and funding recommendation discussion and storm water master plan update will be topics for the February 20, 2024 work session.

Commissioner McKenney requested that downtown parking challenges be added to an upcoming work session topic list.

Mayor Reeves added that other communities in Montana do not have parking charges or provide free parking. It would be worth exploring options to downtown parking.

Commissioner Wilson suggested exploring more Americans with Disabilities (ADA) parking downtown.

Commissioner Wolff added that several citizens are not tech-savvy with regard to the Passport Parking Mobile App and could also be a burden for those who do not have the app. She requested that an energy-consulting contract be added to an upcoming work session topic list.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Reeves adjourned the informal work session of January 2, 2024 at 6:40 p.m.