

**JOURNAL OF SPECIAL COMMISSION WORK SESSION**  
**March 5, 2024**

City Commission Special Work Session  
Civic Center, Gibson Room 212

Mayor Reeves presiding

**CALL TO ORDER:** 4:30 PM

**CITY COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:** Cory Reeves, Susan Wolff, Joe McKenney and Shannon Wilson. Commissioner Rick Tryon arrived at 4:48 p.m.

**STAFF PRESENT:** City Manager Greg Doyon and Deputy City Manager Chuck Anderson; City Attorney David Dennis and Deputy City Attorney Rachel Taylor; Finance Director Melissa Kinzler; Park and Recreation Director Steve Herring and Deputy Director Jessica Compton; Public Works Director Chris Gaub, City Engineer Jesse Patton, Development Review Coordinator Mark Juras and Environmental Division Manager Nate Besich; Municipal Court Judge Steve Bolstad and Court Supervisor Morgan Medvec; Information Technology Director Todd Feist; Assistant Fire Chief Bob Shupe; Police Chief Jeff Newton; and, Deputy City Clerk Darcy Dea.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**1. SEMI-ANNUAL LITIGATION UPDATE**

Mayor Reeves explained that this portion of the meeting will be closed to the public pursuant to Mont. Code Ann (MCA) § 2-3-203(4)(a) to discuss strategy to be followed with respect to a pending litigation matter because an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the City's litigating position. The meeting will be re-opened at the conclusion of the litigation strategy discussion.

**Mayor Reeves moved, seconded by Commissioner Wolff, to close the meeting from the public to discuss pending litigation in executive session pursuant to MCA § 2-3-203(4)(a).**

Mayor Reeves called for the vote.

Motion carried 4-0.

At 4:35 p.m., the meeting continued in executive session in the Gibson Room with the City Commission, City Manager, Deputy City Manager, City Attorney, Deputy City Attorney and Deputy City Clerk, for the purpose of discussing pending litigation and strategy.

- EXECUTIVE SESSION - -



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The meeting reconvened into an open meeting. Mayor Reeves called the special meeting back to order at 5:25 p.m.

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City Attorney Dennis reported that discussion included updates and strategy with regard to outstanding, potential and pending litigation and claim matters.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**



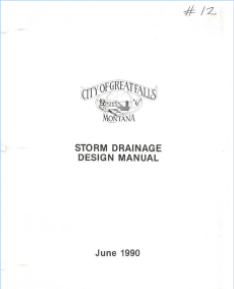

**Ben Forsyth**, City resident, provided and discussed a handout pertaining to the purpose of Initiative No. 190. Mr. Forsyth expressed concern about the harmful effects of marijuana.

**Roberta Beute**, City resident, provided and discussed a Prairie Ridge Estates bid form, E911 GIS Data Collection and Conveyance Agreement and aerial map. Ms. Beute expressed concern that her property was never platted. She explained that the subdivision bid form indicates that the land should have been platted for duplexes; however, it was platted for single-family dwellings. Because her property cannot be located on the aerial map, it makes it difficult for emergency responders to find houses.

City Manager Doyon suggested that Ms. Beute provide her contact information to Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry so she could discuss these issues with him.










**2. STORM DRAIN DESIGN MANUAL (SDDM) UPDATE**

Public Works Development Review Coordinator Mark Juras reviewed and discussed the following PowerPoint:

 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>City of Great Falls Storm Drain Design Manual (SDDM) Update March 5, 2024</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Agenda</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Purpose - What/Why</li><li>• Progress Update</li><li>• Next Steps</li><li>• Q&amp;A</li></ul> 
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Purpose - What/Why</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Updates 1990 SDDM</li><li>• Provides design guidance and outlines requirements</li><li>• Protects health, safety, welfare, property, and local water bodies through control of storm water quantity / quality</li></ul> 	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Purpose - What/Why</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Storm water quantity<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mitigates flooding risk</li><li>• Detention storage</li><li>• Peak flow attenuation</li></ul></li><li>• Storm water quality<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mitigates environmental impacts</li><li>• Erosion control</li><li>• Treatment per MS4</li></ul></li></ul> 



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 <p align="center"><b>Purpose - What/Why</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monuments current process</li> <li>• Unifies Engineering &amp; Environmental Division requirements into one Manual</li> <li>• Consistency with OCCGF, permit checklists, and City Standards for Design &amp; Construction</li> <li>• Incorporates current MS4 Permit requirements</li> </ul> 	 <p align="center"><b>Purpose - What/Why</b></p> <p><b>What's new/different:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Preferred Contractor Program</li> <li>2. Regional Treatment Facility Policy</li> <li>3. Industry Standard Updates</li> <li>4. Standardized Permit Application</li> <li>5. Clarify thresholds</li> </ol> 
 <p align="center"><b>Progress Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised draft completed</li> <li>• Public outreach             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written comments</li> <li>• Open house</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Final draft completed</li> </ul> 	 <p align="center"><b>Next Steps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resolution             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt SDDM</li> <li>• Future revision provisions</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ordinance             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update OCCGF references to SDDM</li> <li>• Clarify applicability</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Future action(s)             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fee Resolutions, other</li> </ul> </li> </ul> 
 <p align="center"><b>Questions?</b></p>	

Commissioner Wilson inquired if there is coordination between the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), Cascade County and City with regard to the MS4 permit.

Environmental Division Manager Nate Besich responded that the City has a good relationship, works cooperatively and coordinates with the MDT and County on a regular basis.

Commissioner Tryon received clarification that the SDDM will be updated to the current MS4 requirements and would need to be updated again when MS4 permit requirements change. Since 1990, the MS4 permit requirements have been enforced by the Public Works Environmental Division and through the Official Code of the City of Great Falls (OCCGF). Most of the updates are not significant and do not change the performance criteria.

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With regard to the “Purpose – What/Why Mitigates flooding risk” slide, Commissioner McKenney received clarification that the City is mitigating at a five-year storm rate and a 100-year storm would be released at a five-year rate.

Commissioner Wolff inquired about detention pond storage, like the one at the University of Providence soccer field.

Development Review Coordinator Juras responded that the goal of a detention pond is to slow down storm water from hitting streets and infrastructures.

Commissioner Wilson inquired about illicit discharge events.

Environmental Division Manager Besich responded that the City logs 20 to 30 illicit discharge events per year; however, most events are insignificant.

Public Works City Engineer Jesse Patton explained that the underground pipe storage at the University of Providence’s soccer field was one of the City’s larger storm mains and is sized for a 100-year event.

Commissioner Tryon received clarification that the requirements for detention ponds, especially in subdivisions, has prevented development in the City. The SDDM does not address this; however, it might be addressed in the Growth Policy Manual.

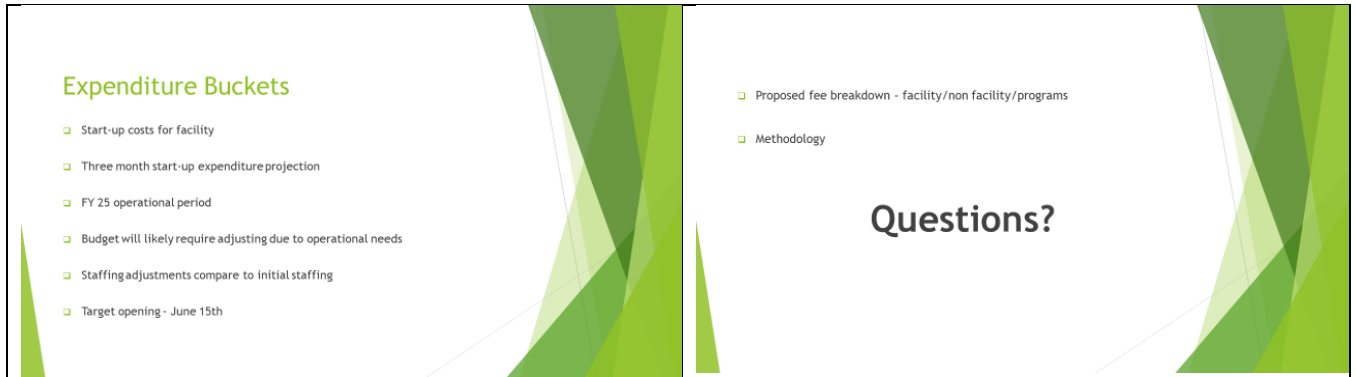
Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry added that the biggest issue now is the significant capital costs associated with providing such infrastructure. City staff will meet with the Development Review Audit Committee, as well as explore different funding mechanisms, such as Special Improvement Districts (SIDs), in order to support those infrastructure improvements.

**3. PARK AND RECREATION FEE UPDATE**

Park and Recreation Director Steve Herrig reviewed and discussed the following PowerPoint:



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Director Herrig explained that the start-up cost for the Scheels Aim High Big Sky Recreation Center (AHBS) would be approximately \$375,000. A three-month start-up expenditure projection is a deficit of approximately \$180,000; however, it would more than likely be one to two months.

Commissioner Wilson inquired if closing the Community Recreation Center would coincide with opening the AHBS facility.

Director Herrig responded that programs at the Community Recreation Center would shut down the first part of May and the daycare would continue to operate until a decision is made to either lease or sell the building.

Commissioner Wolff inquired if the proposed fees were compared with other facilities in the community.

Director Herrig responded that the proposed fees were compared with the Peak and City staff believes the fees are in line so everyone in the community would have an opportunity to use the AHBS facility.

Commissioner McKenney inquired about marketing plans to inform the community of the June opening. He added that there is only one opportunity to market the AHBS's grand opening.

Director Herrig responded that after the adoption of the proposed Park and Recreation fees, there could be press releases, interviews with the media and passes could be sold.

Commissioner Tryon inquired about the "Expenditure Buckets – Budget will likely require adjusting due to operational needs" and "FY25 operational period" slide. He further inquired if a large deficit in the Park and Recreation budget is anticipated.

Director Herrig responded that there needs to be budget adjustments for expenditures going towards the AHBS facility and there is a \$200,000 operational deficit in the Park and Recreation budget due to the AHBS facility.

Commissioner Tryon inquired if general fund subsidies would be considered to make up for the \$200,000 deficit.

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Director Herrig responded that fee adjustments, the aquatics fund or parks special revenue fund could be considered to make up for the \$200,000 deficit. He is not anticipating any large increases in the Park and Recreation's budget, other than for staffing.

Mayor Reeves inquired about prior discussions that the general fund would potentially have to be used to offset some of these deficits.

City Manager Doyon responded that in prior discussions there were two facilities, the pool program and Community Recreation Center. The recreation center will have a deficit; however, the fund balance for aquatics has been robust because the Morony Natatorium is no longer up and running. In his experience, when it involves aquatics, there will more than likely be an ongoing subsidy from the general fund to support operations of the facility. Rates for the AHBS facility could be adjusted depending on the community response with regard to utilization of the facility. The \$750,000 solution to possibly remedy some of the public safety issues may have to be cut from the general fund. Having a combined facility with multiple revenue streams and year round aquatic access will be beneficial to the City. Once the AHBS facility opens, there will be monthly expenditure and revenue meetings, in case there needs to be any programming or expenditure adjustments.

Commissioner Tryon inquired about the \$750,000 being possibly cut from the general fund.

City Manager Doyon responded that the City has not fully recovered from the Covid experience and will more than likely start FY25 with a deficit again. The City needs to break that cycle, which would require general fund departments to reduce their budgets in order to prevent using the fund balance to offset the shortage in revenues.

Commissioner Tryon commented that asking general fund departments to cut their budgets rather than adding the minimal amount of budget asks for public safety should be a huge concern to everyone. He concluded that the proposed Park and Recreation fees look good.

City Manager Doyon added that there is an unusual fee adjustment in the rates for a non-resident charge for utilizing the AHBS facility because taxpayers already support that through the Park Maintenance District assessment.

**4. COURSECO GOLF FEES AND AGREEMENT EXTENSION**

Park and Recreation Director Steve Herrig explained that the agreement and partnership with CourseCo is going great. He introduced CourseCo President/CEO Michael Sharp and General Manager Jeff Stange.

CourseCo President/CEO Michael Sharp explained that the City put out a Request for Proposals (RFP) in 2018 for the golf courses and CourseCo has been partners with the City since 2019. The partnership has far exceeded expectations and has been a model private-public partnership. A testament of CourseCo's good work is a lack of complaints from the community about the operations, facilities, fees and conditions of the golf courses. CourseCo owns, leases and manages 44 golf courses predominantly on the west coast, and specializes in public municipal golf courses. CourseCo has never had a contract canceled or not

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renewed and its core values include financial performance, community engagement, stakeholder communication, environmental sustainability and stewardship. The current contract ends next year and CourseCo desires to continue to work with the City. The two golf courses in Great Falls are well supported by the community and golf will continue to grow. CourseCo is working with the City on challenges, such as inflation and equipment needs.

CourseCo General Manager Jeff Stange reported that the rates are very modest increases. Green fees are a dollar increase and aligns historically with green fee increases. The dollar increase will allow CourseCo to cover some of the inflationary challenges. CourseCo is disciplined about the expenditure side of that, which allows the City to operate profitably and provides a return. CourseCo has built a 100 percent self-sustaining model over the years and has not had to have additional funds to operate. Golf passes increased between 1.9 and 2.8 percent, which is a modest increase that allows for meeting revenue goals that are needed. CourseCo looks at the market here and surrounding areas in Montana to get a feel for where the rest of the state is. CourseCo believes the costs are in line and allow for an affordable recreational activity for the community. CourseCo's philosophy is to do small increases on an annual basis instead of large increases over several years.

Mayor Reeves commented that the City appreciates the partnership with CourseCo.

**DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL UPCOMING WORK SESSION TOPICS**

City Manager Greg Doyon reported that topics for the March 19, 2024 work session will include a library board update, as well as a public safety advisory commission establishment update. A growth management plan RFP update and utility rate review will be topics for the April 2, 2024 work session.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further discussion, Mayor Reeves adjourned the informal special work session of March 5, 2024 at 6:47 p.m.