

**JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS**  
**November 6, 2024**

Regular City Commission Meeting

Mayor Reeves presiding  
Commission Chambers, Room 206

**CALL TO ORDER:** 7:00 PM

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ROLL CALL/STAFF INTRODUCTIONS:** City Commission members present: Cory Reeves, Joe McKenney, Rick Tryon, and Susan Wolff. Commissioner Shannon Wilson was excused. Also present were Public Works Director Chris Gaub, Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry, Finance Director Melissa Kinzler, Deputy City Attorney Rachel Taylor, Fire Chief Jeremy Jones, Police Chief Jeff Newton, and City Clerk Lisa Kunz.

**AGENDA APPROVAL:** There were no proposed changes to the agenda by the City Manager or City Commission. The Agenda was approved as presented.

**CONFLICT DISCLOSURE/EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS:** None.

**MILITARY UPDATES**

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

**Colonel Daniel Voorhies**, Commander of the 341<sup>st</sup> Missile Wing, introduced Senior Airman Triston White. Airman White announced that he works quality assurance with the 341<sup>st</sup> Missile Maintenance group. He is from Washington State, and enjoys hiking and winter sports, and wants to do some hunting here in Montana.

Colonel Voorhies announced that October 27<sup>th</sup> marked the 62<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of having minuteman missiles on alert at MAFB. October 17-25, 2024 was their Global Thunder exercise. For Halloween, they served 700 hotdogs in less than three hours. Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, William LaPlante, and the Honorable Brendan Owens, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations, and Environment and Chief Sustainability Officer, toured MAFB with 14 of their high-level staff.

**COMMUNITY INITIATIVES**

**2. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM SHERIFF JESSE SLAUGHTER.**

Sheriff Jesse Slaughter made the following announcements:

- A \$1.5 million dollar Crisis Diversion Grant is forthcoming, with the possibility of an additional \$1.5 million. The funds will be used for mental health beds and to reinstitute the mobile response team. Due to the City-County Health Department not having the capacity, the Cascade County Sheriff's Department will hire a coordinator to manage the grant. There

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will be ongoing meetings with City officials, as the City of Great Falls will likely be the greatest end user of the program.

- He has pushed out a lot of information lately about the issues and struggles they are having with the jail. Since 1998, the County Commissioners set up the jail to run completely off revenues. Throughout the years, there has not been enough general fund money to fully fund the jail. When expenses are higher, he has to put more revenue based beds into the facility. To do that, there are less beds for citizens arrested locally. He reported that he is the only sheriff in the State of Montana that allows everyone to be arrested. Other Montana sheriffs have restrictions on who can go to jail. He is trying to avoid future restrictions and is working on big plans to secure future beds and to expand for the growing need of the community. Weekly updates will be posted on his Facebook page.

Commissioner Tryon commented that he would like Sheriff Slaughter to provide Commission updates on a regular basis. He does not think it is really understood how intricately involved our public safety in Great Falls is with the county jail. He thinks the public needs to be more aware of the issues Sheriff Slaughter is experiencing with beds at the jail. He hears from the public what good is it to have more police officers on the street if we don't have jail space for people. He asked Sheriff Slaughter to explain the City-County relationship since the City no longer has a jail.

Sheriff Slaughter reported that the law changed in the 1980's to all detainees being given to the counties. The idea being that everybody in the city pays county taxes. The relationship is that the City of Great Falls is their number one customer. He will be bringing ideas to the City because a mill levy is not on the table.

Commissioner McKenney inquired about restrictions that other communities have.

Sheriff Slaughter responded that the biggest six communities are not taking misdemeanor offenses whatsoever. Another big population that some county jails are not taking at all are people on probation or parole. As of this morning, he has approximately 150 Department of Correction probation and parole offenders in the jail. He reminded everyone that the Justice Reinvestment Act was put into place in 2019. A year later, law enforcement had been involved in 10 officer involved shootings. Eight of those incidents involved probationers. A lot of them committed homicides and other heinous acts prior to that. At that time, he and Police Chief Bowen committed to being more aggressive at keeping those people in jail. Most days, the jail runs 100 over capacity. However, he has to look at the liability and the strain that it is creating on his understaffed jail. He has to get aggressive with plans moving forward and work with his partners to achieve the goal.

In response to Mayor Reeves, Sheriff Slaughter explained that the jail was shut down in 2018 due to overcrowding. The average daily population at that time was in the 480 range. He negotiated a deal with Governor Gianforte to get rid of 160 state inmates that paid \$69 per day, and took on 50 federal inmates that paid \$115 per day. Currently, the daily average population at the jail is 440-450 inmates. To meet his budget, he had to take on more revenue beds, but also at a time with a staffing shortage.

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**PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

3. None.

**NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS**

4. **MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

None.

**BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

5. **MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

None.

**CITY MANAGER**

6. **MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

City Manager Greg Doyon made the following announcements:

- The Great Falls Public Library will be hosting a cold weather services discussion for the homeless on November 7 at 6:30 p.m.
- Great Falls was listed as one of the 25 cheapest places to live in the United States according to the Kiplinger Personal Finance letter. Our cost of living is about 13.2% below the U.S. average. This draws attention to our community and helps shape people's choices about locating here.
- He encouraged residents to become involved in the City's Growth Management Plan that is currently being developed and is posted on the Planning and Community Development webpage.
- He will be introducing community comparisons as part of his City Manager reports to give people an opportunity to view what it would cost to have a certain valued home if they lived in those other communities.
- City offices will be closed Veteran's Day. Appreciation was expressed to veterans and their families.
- The Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) provided recommendations coming out of the failed public safety levy. Updates will be regularly shared with the Commission and community.

Fire Chief Jeremy Jones reported that during the 2023 election, the proposed public safety mill levy and bond to address critical staffing and infrastructure needs for Great Falls Fire Rescue (GFFR) was not approved by the voters. This funding was intended to tackle significant public safety issues, including addressing the 41% of Great Falls that currently lacks the national standard in firefighting personnel and response times. Additionally, it would have allowed for the establishment of new

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fire stations to enhance emergency coverage and response capability across the city. Without these funds, the fire department remains limited in its ability to meet these critical needs.

In August, the Public Safety Advisory Committee concluded its assessment, which underscored the following recommendations for GFFR:

1. **Personnel Additions:** An additional 16 firefighters and one fire prevention officer are needed to adequately meet community demands and improve response times.
2. **Infrastructure Expansion:** Planning and future development of two additional fire stations to ensure full coverage and compliance with national response standards.
3. **Community Engagement:** Enhanced engagement and partnerships with the community to promote public safety education and preparedness.

These recommendations highlight urgent staffing and facility expansion needs. But, without new funding sources, GFFR cannot move forward in addressing any of these areas.

In response to these challenges, GFFR has undertaken numerous operational response adjustments to maintain the current level of service. Every facet of their operations has been reviewed to ensure they are maximizing resources effectively. However, they are now operating with an “all hands on deck” approach and have reached the limits of what can be accomplished through internal adjustments alone. Further improvements or expansions are simply not feasible under current funding constraints.

Adding to their concerns is the deteriorating condition of the GFFR training center. Without immediate plans or funding to address station and personnel coverage gaps, the ability to maintain high-level training for existing firefighters is crucial. However, the training center has recently lost its remaining firefighting training props, and has infrastructure issues that include asphalt failure causing fire trucks to sink in the mud, are preventing personnel from training to essential standards.

GFFR has successfully secured a donated rail car to improve hazardous materials response training. However, the day to day training needs, such as high-rise operations, motor vehicle extrication, technical rescue, and live firefighting exercises, are non-existent. Currently, GFFR relies on donated vacant buildings and City parking garages to makeshift training sites, which fall short of providing realistic and comprehensive training experiences.

Despite those challenges, GFFR had several achievements to celebrate:

1. Assistant Fire Chief Bob Shupe retired after 29 years of dedicated service.
2. Assistant Chief Mike McIntosh recently graduated from the National Fire Academy’s Executive Fire Officer Program, joining an elite group of 16 firefighters in the state to achieve this designation.
3. Deputy Chief Jeremy Virts was promoted to Assistant Chief of Operations. His extensive experience in EMS and operations will be invaluable in this role.
4. Four new firefighters, Eddie Scheidler, Bryce Nelson, Jake Bloom and Tim Egnoski, will be officially confirmed and pinned on November 20.

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Chief Jones encouraged the Commission's support and awareness during the upcoming legislative session of two key issues impacting GFFR and the community:

- **GEMT Medicare Reimbursement:** Increasing Medicare reimbursement rates under the Ground Emergency Medical Transportation (GEMT) program would enhance funding for emergency medical services, critical to their operations.
- **Building and Fire Code Enforcement:** Strengthening fire code enforcement would improve community safety standards and help the men and women at GFFR mitigate potential emergency risks.

Chief Jones concluded by thanking the Commission for their continued support and attention to the pressing needs and accomplishments of GFFR. GFFR remains dedicated to serving the community with the resources at hand and looks forward to exploring solutions to further safeguard public safety in Great Falls.

Commissioner Tryon asked Chief Jones to keep the Commission up to date on the progress and status of those two legislative issues.

### **CONSENT AGENDA.**

7. Minutes, October 15, 2024, City Commission Meeting.
8. Total Expenditures of \$4,686,174 for the period of October 3, 2024 through October 16, 2024, to include claims over \$25,000, in the amount of \$4,072,295.
9. Contracts List.
10. Ratify a natural gas supply contract with Energy West Resources extended for a one-year period from November 1, 2024 to October 31, 2025.
11. Approve the purchase of one Wirtgen W120FI pavement milling machine from RDO Equipment of Great Falls, Montana through Sourcewell, for a total of \$602,270.30 as budgeted through the Fiscal Year 2025 Equipment Revolving Schedule.
12. Approve a Professional Services Agreement in the amount \$176,870 with Woith Engineering Inc., for the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue North Street Reconstruction project, and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement documents as budgeted in the Fiscal Year 2025 Public Works Capital Improvement Plan. **OF 1826.0**
13. Approve a construction contract in the amount of \$996,500 with MJD Contracting, for the Hill 57 Pump Station Improvements project as budgeted in the Fiscal Year 2025 Public Works Capital Improvement Plan. **OF 1056.1**

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**Commissioner Wolff moved, seconded by Commissioner Tryon, that the City Commission approve the Consent Agenda as presented.**

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

Commissioner McKenney referred to Item 10 and inquired how often the price is adjusted and if there was a cap.

Manager Doyon responded that he would contact the consultant and provide a response. The consultant recommended extending the contract for one year as the best deal for the City until things stabilize further.

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

Motion carried 4-0.

### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**14. RESOLUTION 10564, CERTIFYING THE ABATEMENT OF A NUISANCE AND STATEMENT OF EXPENSE, ADDRESSED AS 613 9<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE SOUTH, IS COMPLETED.**

Mayor Reeves opened the public hearing and asked for presentation of the agenda report.

Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry reported that Resolution 10533 was adopted by the City Commission on February 20, 2024, and declared the subject property a nuisance and authorized City staff to force abatement if necessary. Property owner, Mr. Welling, did not complete the abatement within the designated time period set forth in the resolution.

In order to abate the subject nuisance, City staff contracted with ALR Contracting LLC to secure the residence, temporary structure and garage, remove rubbish and exterior storage, and remove three (3) non-compliant vehicles from the property. The securing, and removal of rubbish and exterior storage and non-compliant vehicles was completed on September 5, 2024. The cost of the project was \$9,450.00.

Adoption of Resolution 10564 will certify that the subject nuisance has been abated and confirms the Statement of Expense. This action is required by OCCGF 8.49.060 and 070. Notice of the consideration of this Resolution was provided to the property owner and all other interested parties via certified mail, return receipt requested on September 18, 2024, as well as regular mail, and posting the notice on the subject property (front and rear).

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Should the Commission adopt the Resolution under consideration, the subject property owner may pay the outstanding balance to the City Finance Department within five (5) calendar days. If the property owner does not pay the outstanding balance within that time, the costs will be collected as a special assessment on the subject property.

Mayor Reeves asked if the Commissioners had any questions of Director Cherry. He received clarification that a special assessment is a lien placed on the property.

Commissioner Tryon inquired the timeframe for the lien to be paid.

Finance Director Melissa Kinzler reported that the lien remains recorded against the property until the property is sold.

Mayor Reeves received clarification that the lien does not accrue interest.

Mayor Reeves asked if there were any comments from the public in favor of or in opposition to Resolution 10564.

Hearing none, Mayor Reeves closed the public hearing and asked the will of the Commission.

**Commissioner Tryon moved, seconded by Commissioner McKenney, that the City Commission adopt Resolution 10564.**

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

In response to Commissioner Wolff's inquiry, Finance Director Kinzler and Manager Doyon explained the City would be a recipient of the lien amount if it went through the County tax sale process.

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

Motion carried 4-0.

**OLD BUSINESS**

15. **LIFT STATION NO. 1 REPAIRS PROJECT – GENERAL CONTRACTOR CONSTRUCTION MANAGER (GCCM) ALTERNATIVE PROJECT DELIVERY CONTRACT ADOPTED THROUGH RESOLUTION 10487. OF 1758.1**
16. **LIFT STATION NO. 1 REPAIRS PROJECT – GENERAL CONTRACTOR CONSTRUCTION MANAGER (GCCM) ALTERNATIVE PROJECT DELIVERY CONTRACT ADOPTED THROUGH RESOLUTION 10487. OF 1758.1**

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Public Works Director Chris Gaub reported that these projects will implement recommendations from the June 2021 “*Feasibility Study for Sewage Lift Station No. 1 Supplemental Forcemain*”, including improvements and repairs to Lift Station #1 (LS1), which pumps sanitary wastewater across the Missouri River to the City’s Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). On April 16, 2024, staff facilitated a Work Session to discuss a \$9 million budget shortfall that was discovered during the design phase of the project. The General Contractor Construction Manager (GCCM) identified the budget discrepancy well before construction started and, as a result, the scope of the project was modified to focus on LS1 improvements in Phase 1. A future Phase 2 project will focus on the forcemain.

The design phase is near completion and City staff, TD&H, and Prospect Construction Inc. recommend moving forward with pre-procurement of long lead time equipment necessary for the project. Early procurement decreases the schedule and allows for greater quality control of equipment. For item 15, pre-procurement items consist of project specific pump control valves, panels, and associated services that total a not-to-exceed amount of \$585,112.03. For item 16, pre-procurement items consist of project specific pump control valves, panels, and associated services that total a not-to-exceed amount of \$1,081,777.98. Prospect Construction Inc. will be responsible for the scheduling, delivery, and storage of the equipment until it is installed. The project has received approximately \$5.9 million in ARPA grants, which have a spending deadline of December 31, 2025. This pre-procurement effort, in part, will help to ensure that ARPA dollars are spent prior to the deadline.

For item 15, the project team recommends that the Commission approve sole source procurement by the manufacturer Dezurik for this agreement, as it is in the best interest of the City to obtain reliable equipment provided by a single vendor. Dezurik is recognized worldwide as an industry leader in pump control valves manufacturing. The distributor for Dezurik is Yellowstone Waterworks based out of Billings. Their product will excel in this use and is preferred for simplicity of programming, maintenance, and existing systems integration. For item 16, the project team recommends that the Commission approve sole source procurement by the distributor Morrison Pump Company and Border States (through Integrity Pump Solutions), a business unit of Patterson, for this agreement, as it is in the best interest of the City to replace existing Patterson equipment with equipment from the same vendor. Additionally, Variable Frequency Drives and associated systems are proposed to be sole sourced from Allen Bradley. The City has accumulated spare parts for these systems to keep critical system infrastructure functional and reliable. Use of these products will ensure simplicity of programming, maintenance, and existing systems integration.

There are no foreseen adverse impacts to workloads for City staff with the approval of these items. Public Works staff will continue to provide project management and collaboration support for the project. TD&H will review shop drawings and other submittal items to ensure the pre-procured items are in conformance with the design and specifications. Prospect Construction Inc. will facilitate the pre-procurement.

The project has been selected, prioritized and executed in accordance with the Public Works Capital Improvements Program. State ARPA Minimum Allocation Grant funds (\$3,854,585.00), State ARPA Competitive Grant funds (\$2,000,000.00), and the remainder being provided by the City sewer treatment funds are programmed for funding this project.



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**Commissioner Wolff moved, seconded by Commissioner Tryon, that the City Commission approve an Early Work Amendment – Procurement Agreement to Prospect Construction, Inc. for Pre-Procurement of Project Equipment in the amount of \$585,112.03 for the Lift Station No. 1 Repairs Project and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement documents.**

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

Motion carried 4-0.

**Commissioner Wolff moved, seconded by Commissioners McKenney and Tryon, that the City Commission approve an Early Work Amendment – Procurement Agreement to Prospect Construction, Inc. for Pre-Procurement of Project Equipment in the amount of \$1,081,777.98 for the Lift Station No. 1 Repairs Project and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement documents.**

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

Motion carried 4-0.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **17. WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT WESTSIDE PUMP STATION IMPROVEMENTS AND BAR SCREEN REPLACEMENT PROJECT. OF 1633.8**

Public Works Director Chris Gaub reported that this project improves the Westside Pump Station at the Great Falls Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). At this station, raw wastewater flows from the City into a concrete channel, through two sluice gates, and through two automated bar screens. The bar screens remove large debris from the raw wastewater and deposit it in a dumpster for disposal.

The main portion of the project replaces the existing 1972 non-operational bar screen with a new one that includes a new washer/compactor. This will wash, compact, and deposit the screened material in a container, increasing the dryness of the material and reducing the volume for waste disposal. Additional components of the project consist of bypass pumping, repairing and coating the concrete channels, replacing two sluice gates, and other associated HVAC, electrical, process, and structural upgrades.

In June of 2022, the City Commission approved a *Professional Services Agreement* with Morrison-Maierle Engineering to design, facilitate bidding, and provide construction phase services for the project.

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The project was advertised three times, on September 22, September 29, and October 6, 2024 in the Great Falls Tribune. Morrison-Maierle also assisted the City by reaching out to five or more qualified contractors in the area prior to bidding. The project was also posted on the City website and the Great Falls Builder's Exchange, which advertised the project statewide. In spite of these efforts, only one bid was received, which was from Sletten Construction Company, on October 16, 2024. Sletten's bid was \$1,960,500.00 for the base bid items and \$27,300.00 for two additive items, for a total bid of \$1,987,800.00.

The project has been selected, prioritized, and executed in accordance with the Public Works Capital Improvements Program and budgeted in the Sanitary Sewer Treatment Enterprise Fund. City staff recommends approving the construction contract, including the two bid additive items, with Sletten Construction Company in the amount of \$1,987,800.00.

The project will utilize available funds budgeted in accordance with the Public Works Capital Improvements Plan.

**Commissioner Tryon moved, seconded by Commissioner McKenney, that the City Commission approve a construction contract in the amount of \$1,987,800.00 with Sletten Construction Company, for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Westside Pump Station Improvements and Bar Screen Replacement project, and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement documents.**

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

Motion carried 4-0.

### **ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS**

#### **CITY COMMISSION**

**18. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

Mayor Reeves received clarification that the building warranty will cover door issues and leaky roof at the new Scheels Aim High Big Sky Recreation Center.

**19. COMMISSION INITIATIVES.**

None.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, **Commissioner Tryon moved, seconded by Mayor Reeves, to adjourn the regular meeting of November 6, 2024, at 7:52 p.m.**

Motion carried 4-0.

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Mayor Reeves

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City Clerk Lisa Kunz

**Minutes Approved: November 19, 2024**