

**JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS**  
**December 17, 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, Susan Wilson, and Susan Wolff. Also present were City Manager Greg Doyon, Public Works Director Chris Gaub, Finance Director Melissa Kinzler, ARPA Project Manager Sylvia Tarman, City Attorney David Dennis, 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 City Manager did note an updated suggested motion for agenda item #14. The Agenda was approved as presented.

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

**COMMUNITY INITIATIVES**

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

Cascade County Sheriff Jesse Slaughter expressed appreciation to City partners for safety equipment, drones, investigative help and man-hour assistance in a tragic and complex investigation of a missing Conrad woman. He is grateful for how well the City and County work together.

He reported that the Cascade County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) is working on more interoperability capabilities, and have invested in dual band radios to have a full radio system integration with City partners.

The CCSO moved to the same 10/40 work schedule as the Great Falls Police Department. The schedule works better for staffing and training. The CCSO is also integrating policies and procedures as much as it can to match the GFPD, so that both organizations are following the same rules.

Sheriff Slaughter reported that, due to the pre-trial program, he is starting to see some positive relief in the overall numbers at the jail. He and County Attorney Josh Racki are looking at the budget to determine if they can open up the pre-trial program to people that are on probation, and are also considering what pre-trial options they can open up for the Municipal Court Judges. He is also renegotiating some contracts that may open up more beds at the jail.

Commissioner Tryon congratulated Sheriff Slaughter and Chief Newton for the successful conclusion of Operation Tacoma Sunrise that dismantled a large fentanyl trafficking ring. He inquired if there was progress made to address concerns between the Municipal Courts and the jail that Sheriff Slaughter reported on at the November 6<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting.

## JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS

December 17, 2024

Sheriff Slaughter responded that he will be meeting with the judges to iron out some things and work on solutions after the holidays.

Commissioner Wilson thanked Sheriff Slaughter for attending her Neighborhood Council meeting. She was informed that Sheriff Slaughter attended all of the Neighborhood Councils and will do so again in 2025.

### PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

- Anne Bulger**, Library Board Trustee, took exception and responded to several comments Commissioner Tryon made at the November 19<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting pertaining to an e-mail campaign and sticker. She suggested Commissioner Tryon control his own narrative and requested that he stop making accusations and insinuations about others that are not based in fact.

**Shannon Newth**, Content Director and Film Liaison for Great Falls Montana Tourism, commented that this fall a production called Pellett was filmed in Shelby and Great Falls that is based on a true story of a gentleman's grandfather who was murdered in the 1950's. This production generated overnight stays, stimulated the economy, and provided jobs for some crewmembers. Great Falls Montana Tourism supported their efforts by meeting with producers ahead of time, location scouting and coordinating resources. On behalf of Great Falls Montana Tourism, she extended sincere gratitude to the community members and partners that stepped in to make Pellett happen, especially among some major last minute changes. The Pellett movie is expected to come out in 2025.

**Ron Paulick**, City resident, thanked the members of the Commission for giving another year of their lives in service of Great Falls to make it a better place for all residents to live. He knows trying to satisfy 60,000 people in Great Falls is not an easy task. He wished the Commission a happy holiday.

**John Hubbard**, City resident, spoke in opposition to increasing taxes, the Coronavirus being genetically engineered on purpose, and vaccines being poisonous. He referred to President Biden as a treasonist and wants him in jail.

### NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS

- MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

None.

- RECOGNITION OF NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL #5 CHAIR ERIC RAY.**

Mayor Reeves recognized Chairman Eric Ray for his unwavering commitment, exceptional leadership, and heartfelt service to the citizens of Neighborhood Council District #5, reviewed his many accomplishments since 2012, and presented him with a plaque.

Mr. Ray discussed his successful recruitment efforts of new council members and assured the Commission and City staff that what has been experienced the past 12 years will be a continuum in which they will follow the formats that have built Neighborhood Council #5, complete with speakers

**JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS**  
**December 17, 2024**

and candidate forums.

Commissioners Wolff, Tryon, Wilson and McKenney also thanked Mr. Ray for his outstanding public service to the community.

**BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

**5. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

None.

**CITY MANAGER**

6. City Manager Greg Doyon wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

**CONSENT AGENDA.**

7. Minutes, December 3, 2024, City Commission Meeting.
8. Total Expenditures of \$2,863,748 for the period of November 21, 2024 through December 4, 2024, to include claims over \$25,000, in the amount of \$2,115,631.
9. Contracts List.
10. Approve Amendment No. 1 to the Professional Services Agreement in the amount of \$88,800.00 to Roadway Asset Services, LLC. for the Road Overall Condition Index project. **OF 1819.0**
11. Approve the Final Payment for the Public Works Backup Generator project, in the amount of \$8,808.57 to United Electric and \$88.98 to the State Miscellaneous Tax Fund and authorize the City Manager to make the payments. **OF 1733.9**

**Commissioner Tryon moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson, 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 received clarification that the Nutcracker settlement referred to on page 21 of agenda item 8, was the settlement amount issued to the event organizer after deducting expenses from revenue collected by Civic Center Events, per the terms of the contract.

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

Motion carried 5-0.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS**

**December 17, 2024**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**12. CHANGE ORDER #1: CIVIC CENTER INFRASTRUCTURE RENOVATIONS OF 1750.2**

ARPA Project Manager Sylvia Tarman reported that the Civic Center Infrastructure Renovations project includes upgrades to the Transformer and Boilers, as well as other electrical upgrades in the building. The Transformer/Boiler upgrades were identified as a Tier 1 ARPA project, along with the HVAC upgrades, in April of 2022. The Boiler Project was originally combined with the HVAC upgrades for a project allocation of \$623,000, while the Boiler project was originally allocated \$125,000. Once the design and investigations were completed, staff combined the Transformer and the Boiler into one project, and the HVAC upgrades into its own project. Bids for both projects came in at approximately \$1.4 million dollars.

The Transformer/Boiler project includes replacing the boilers, moving the transformer outside of the building, and upgrades the electrical service to support these improvements. Most of the involved systems are original to construction of the building, well past their service life, or are out of compliance with modern building codes. The City awarded the design contract to Cushing Terrell in November 2022, and awarded a construction contract to AT Klemens in April of 2023 for a total of \$1,407,300. Work began on the boilers in April of 2024. Work has progressed steadily, and most of the major components have been installed. To make space for an air-handling unit in the boiler room, a few steam and copper lines needed to be re-routed. Also, extra labor was needed to remove the concrete pads under the boiler, as they were deeper than expected. These are minor changes to the scope of the project and account for less than 0.005% of the overall project cost. The vast majority of the installation has been completed, and more minor connections and electrical work is all that is left. The biggest piece remaining is doing the electrical cut over when the new transformer is ready to be switched over. This will require a power outage of approximately three days, and is likely to happen in January of 2025.

Staff discussed the need to handle any possible change orders now. Barring any major issues with the cutover, staff is relatively assured that this should be the only change order for this project. City Staff and Cushing Terrell have reviewed the changes, and are confident that this Change Order is necessary and valid; and recommend that the Commission approve the Change Order in the amount of \$5,817.40, bringing the overall contract total to \$1,413,117.43.

**Commissioner Wolff moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson, that the City Commission approve a Change Order in the amount of \$5,817.40 for AT Klemens for the Civic Center Infrastructure Renovations project utilizing American Rescue Plan Act funds, and authorize the City Manager to execute the Change Order 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 5-0.

**JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS**

**December 17, 2024**

**13. FURNITURE ORDER FOR POLICE DEPARTMENT EVIDENCE BUILDING PROJECT. OF 1684.3**

ARPA Project Manager Sylvia Tarman reported that the GFPD Evidence Building Expansion project was identified as a Tier 1 ARPA project in April of 2022. The project went out for bid at the end of 2023, and a construction contract was awarded in February of 2024. Construction began in August, and is currently on a winter shutdown. Staff has been working with Western Office Equipment to provide the select few pieces of furniture needed for the project, and has provided an estimate for the order. This estimate also includes a price for receiving, storing, and installing the furniture. This furniture order includes filing drawers for the office area, work stools for the evidence processing areas, and a conference table and chairs for the upstairs meeting space. The Evidence Department staff is re-using the bulk of their existing furniture, and the majority of the evidence storage shelving is included under the construction contract; therefore, this purchase is for the limited amount of furniture GFPD does not have for the new spaces.

The project team has reviewed the proposal and are confident that it will satisfy the needs of the project. Staff recommends that the Commission approve the furniture order from Western Office Equipment, purchased through the State TIPS/Omnia contract, in the amount of \$8,590.36.

**Commissioner Wilson moved, seconded by Commissioner Wolff, that the City Commission approve the furniture order for the Police Department Evidence Building in the amount of \$8,590.36, purchased under the State TIPS/Omnia contract.**

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 5-0.

**14. ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL REPORT (ACFR) AND AUDIT REPORT, FISCAL YEAR 2024.**

Finance Director Melissa Kinzler reported that the City's Audit Committee met on December 5, 2024, and approved the FY 2024 Great Falls Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. There were no current year audit findings and no prior year audit findings in the report. The ACFR document is a 200+ page bounded document available in the Finance Department and is on the City's website.

This is the final year of a three-year audit contract with Pinion, LLC, formerly known as Anderson ZurMuehlen & Co., P.C. Pinion will no longer be performing audit services for the City of Great Falls or others. The City issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for audit services for Fiscal Year 2025 and beyond.

Director Kinzler thanked Deputy Finance Director Kirsten Wavra, Finance staff, and City Departments for their help in compiling the information and putting together the ACFR.

**JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS**  
**December 17, 2024**

Sarah Stanger of Pinion reported that the audit engagement has two parts: audit of the City's financial statements and major federal award programs and a separate agreed upon procedures engagement over the City's building code program as required by the State. Ms. Stanger reported that the ACFR is necessary to obtain the Government Finance Officers Association's (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement, and she noted that the City has been awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting every year since 1994.

She discussed the four sections of the ACFR: Introductory, Financial, Statistical, and Single Audit.

Ms. Stanger concluded that Pinion issued a clean audit opinion, and there were no findings, comments or recommendations made. The federal programs that were tested were ARPA and the Assistance to Firefighter grant.

**Commissioner Wolff moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson, that the City Commission accept the Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report and Independent Auditor's Report and authorize staff to submit the related reports to other government agencies and financial institutions as necessary.**

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 Wolff thanked City Departments for their fiscal prudence.

Commissioner McKenney quoted a comment from the auditor to the audit committee, "Working with your finance department is refreshing. They are professional and everything is in order." He expressed appreciation to Finance staff.

Commissioner Tryon hopes the next audit firm will put in the diligence that he has witnessed with Pinion auditors.

City Manager Greg Doyon thanked Director Kinzler and her staff. He also thanked the audit committee that consists of citizen members to help review the City's financial statements and meet with the auditors and staff to gain a better understanding of how the City accounts for taxpayer funds. He clarified that Pinion is no longer auditing governmental entities, in large part because of the Government Accounting Standard Board's standards for conducting audits. The financial requirements have become very onerous for firms to take on governmental auditing. He is expecting proposals to the RFP to be from national firms at double the cost. That is the reality of the regulatory environment that local government actually works in. The cost and the requirements that are being placed on local government is really discouraging local firms from being a part of that process in an affordable way.

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

Motion carried 5-0.

## JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS

December 17, 2024

### 15. CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT FOR CIVIC CENTER ELEVATOR MODERNIZATION PROJECT. OF 1832.0

ARPA Project Manager Sylvia Tarman reported that the Montana State Legislature enacted the State-Local Infrastructure Partnership Act of 2023 (“SLIPA”) through House Bill 355. This act authorized a \$20 million allocation to the Montana Department of Commerce (Commerce) to be distributed to local governments via formula. The City of Great Falls has been allocated \$755,461. The Civic Center Elevator Modernization Project was approved by the Commission as part of the list of other SLIPA projects on March 5, 2024. Contracts for the individual projects were approved at the September 3, 2024 Commission meeting.

The modernization of the Civic Center Elevator has been a priority project for a number of years, and was originally identified to be completed with ARPA funds. However, other project budgets came in higher than expected, so the elevator project was delayed. The City of Great Falls applied for and received \$90,000 from the State SLIPA funds. The City also requested and was granted a \$30,000 allocation of funding from the Downtown Tax Increment Fund (“TIF”). These infusions were meant to cover the entirety of the project.

Since approval of the project, the City contracted with Cushing Terrell in the amount of \$18,000 to provide the design, bid package, and construction support for this project. The project went out for bid in early November, and the bids were opened on December 4, 2024. The bid was broken up into two packages. The main package included the modernization of the elevator itself, including replacing the power unit, replacing hoistway and traveler cabling, and replacing the elevator controls package. An Additional Alternative (Ad Alt) was also included for replacing the door operators and gate switch.

The secondary package was for completing the necessary electrical work, including replacing the pit lights and outlets, relocating light switches and conduit, and installing fire alarms and programming. The intent was to get bids from elevator companies on the main package and Ad Alt, and get bids from electricians on the secondary package. This approach was taken because elevator companies typically will not subcontract to other companies, and it would be less expensive to contract directly with an electrician.

Unfortunately, the City only received one bid on the main package, and no bids on the secondary package. Fortunately, the bid received came in at a reasonable price. Montana Elevator and Escalator Company provided a bid price of \$104,994.75 for the Base bid, and \$18,168.00 for the Ad Alt. Both Montana Elevator and Cushing have strongly advised completing the Ad Alt at the same time as the base work. The existing door controllers are dated and operating on old technology. If those components are not update with the new control system, there is no guarantee they will talk well with the new technology or may fail in short order. Because the controls renovation directly impacts the operation of the doors, and because the door operator is one of the most heavily used mechanical items in the elevator assembly, Cushing Terrell strongly recommends replacement of the door operators at the same time as the controls and pump unit.

Staff reached out to Liberty Electric Inc. for a quote because they have done extensive work within the Civic Center and are familiar with the systems in their current state. Liberty provided an adequate and fair quote for the required work, which came in at \$20,134. Staff is confident that Liberty understands the requirements of the project and can deliver within the project timeframe.

**JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS**

**December 17, 2024**

This project is being awarded with SLIPA funds in the amount of \$90,000. The 25% matching funds are being provided by the Downtown TIF in the amount of \$30,000. Cushing Terrell was contracted to provide the design, bid package, and construction support for this project in the amount of \$18,000. Staff recommends moving forward with the base bid, Ad Alt, and electrical package. This brings the overall project total to \$161,296.75. City staff requested an unallocated contingency of approximately \$60,000 from the TIF at the time of application. Staff is proposing to use this unallocated contingency to cover the overage on this project, in the amount of \$41,296.75. As a result, this project will be funded solely with SLIPA and TIF funds; no City funding will be required to support this project.

**Commissioner Wolff moved, seconded by Commissioner Tryon, that the City Commission award a contract in the amount of \$123,162.75 to Montana Elevator and Escalator Company for the Civic Center Elevator Modernization project utilizing SLIPA and TIF funds, and authorize the City Manager to execute the construction contract 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 5-0.

**Commissioner Tryon moved, seconded by Commissioner Wolff, that the City Commission award a contract in the amount of \$20,134 to Liberty Electric Inc. for the Civic Center Elevator Modernization project utilizing SLIPA and TIF funds, and authorize the City Manager to execute the construction contract 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 5-0.

**16. FINAL ARPA ALLOCATIONS.**

**I. CHANGE ORDER #1 FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT EVIDENCE BUILDING PROJECT. OF 1529.6**

**II. CHANGE ORDER #2 FOR THE CIVIC CENTER COURT RELOCATION PROJECT. OF 1750.3**

ARPA Project Manager Sylvia Tarman reported that, per the US Treasury Department guidelines, all ARPA funds must be allocated by December 31, 2024 and construction must be complete by December 31, 2026. It is in the City's best interest to allocate the remaining ARPA funds as construction contingency, as any change orders or other additional obligations will not be allowed using ARPA funds after the 2024 deadline and any un-allocated funds must be returned to the



**JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS**  
**December 17, 2024**

Treasury Department. Therefore, City staff is recommending allocating the final remaining ARPA funds as construction contingency funds to the two largest ongoing projects, the City Court Relocation and the Police Department (PD) Evidence Building.

The PD Evidence Building and the Civic Center Court Relocation projects were identified as Tier 1 ARPA projects in April 2022. These projects have been through design, bid, award, and various stages of construction since winter of 2023. Both project budgets were adjusted once the design and bid stages were complete. The PD Evidence Building project was originally budgeted at \$1.5 million, but was updated to \$4.5 million. The Court Relocation project was originally budgeted at \$1.3 million, but was updated to \$3.5 million. Both projects were awarded to Wadsworth Builders for construction in early 2024.

After accounting for all known expenses, the remaining ARPA funds comes to \$198,040.91. Staff is recommending approval of Change Order #1 in the amount of \$75,000 for contingency funds for the PD Evidence Building project, bringing the contract total for Wadsworth to \$3,619,750.00. This project is already partly underway and has some existing contingency in it, but this additional infusion will help support the remainder of construction when it resumes in March of 2025.

Staff is also recommending approval of Change Order #2 in the amount of \$123,040.91 for contingency funds for the Court Relocation project, bringing the contract total for Wadsworth to \$2,521,215.91. A few more items, including metal detectors, have not been ordered yet for the main part of the project.

Staff has also been working with Wadsworth to come up with plans and an estimate to convert the existing courtroom space in the basement into a meeting room to replace the lost meeting space from the Missouri Room, which will be part of this project. While a few details are still being finalized, the current estimate for that work is approximately \$86,000.

**Commissioner Wilson moved, seconded by Commissioner McKenney, that the City Commission approve Change Order #1 in the amount of \$75,000 with Wadsworth Builders for the Police Department Evidence Building project utilizing American Rescue Plan Act funds, and authorize the City Manager to execute the contract documents.**

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

Commissioner Tryon received confirmation that these actions wrap up all remaining ARPA funds. He commented that the City was able to do a lot of great projects with the approximately \$19.5 million dollars of this one-time ARPA funding.

ARPA Project Manager Tarman responded that two projects really illustrate Commissioner Tryon's point. For over 20 years, the GFPD Evidence Building has been asked for and hoped for. That project broke ground and will become a reality. The other project is the Transformer/Boiler project that consists of infrastructure no one really sees. The boiler and the transformer that are in the basement are original construction – 1938. That equipment is very far out of code and almost nobody works on them anymore. Getting to a more modern and efficient system will help the building in serving the public better.

**JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS**  
**December 17, 2024**

Commissioner Tryon added that the Municipal Court Relocation project is also huge, in that we will now have a modern Municipal Court that this city can be proud of.

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

Motion carried 5-0.

**Commissioner Wolff moved, seconded by Commissioner Tryon, that the City Commission approve Change Order #2 in the amount of \$123,040.91 with Wadsworth Builders for the Civic Center Court Relocation project utilizing American Rescue Plan Act funds, and authorize the City Manager to execute the contract documents.**

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

Commissioner Wolff thanked Manager Doyon, ARPA Project Manager Tarman and Grant Administrator Tom Hazen for the great management of the ARPA funds and resulting projects for the community.

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

Motion carried 5-0.

**ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS**

**CITY COMMISSION**

**17. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

Commissioner Tryon wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.

**18. COMMISSION INITIATIVES.**

None.

**19. LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES.**

None.

**JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS**  
**December 17, 2024**

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, **Commissioner Tryon moved, seconded by Mayor Reeves, to adjourn the regular meeting of December 17, 2024, at 8:10 p.m.**

Motion carried 5-0.

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Mayor Reeves

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City Clerk Lisa Kunz

**Minutes Approved: January 7, 2025**