

BECKMAN

301 Skyline Dr. N.E. Great
Falls, MT 59404

COMMISSION MEETING July 17, 2024
CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS
GREAT FALLS CITY HALL
GREAT FALLS, MT

My name is John Beckman and I live at 301 Skyline Dr. NE., Great Falls, MT I was a graduate of the second Leadership Great Falls Class in 1981 which I think is pertinent only because I valued my lessons in that course in understanding how we all need to work together to get the best for the community

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

The reason for my appearance is to make comments on the work in progress on the safety levy.

My latest information is that the commission has or is looking at spending money to determine the reason the last safety levy was defeated.

First, I want to again clearly indicate that you will never get a good decision without talking to the people who voted and in general "LISTEN TO THE OBVIOUS"

Just prior to the safety there was a Library Levy request which was passed for election by the city commission who in some cases are now surprised by what the levy asked for.

This entire levy betrayed the public trust that the citizens had for approving the levies as there was a "wish list" of additions which was way beyond keeping the library open which was the premise of the advertising.

After this levy passed by a small margin, the public was infuriated but the actions of the city commission and the ultimate lack of control they have over the library staff and the board who is entrusted with clearing managing the funds appropriate to the library.

That Library board is dysfunctional and does not operate as a funding control.

After sitting at several library board meeting and seeing the actions of this board first hand, I was appalled at the lack of comment or discussion by commission members attending the meeting.

As a result, there has been a legal action which was denied and tax hike which reflects an increase in the value of property which in turns raises the reference taxes.

Now, as a commission you have had several meetings some of which I have attended and wonder how to fix the situation on a real need with the safety levy.

First, you need to start acting like people who are SERVING the public. This must cause some concern but this is what you committed to by running for the position.

Secondly, there is either a misrepresentation of the facts or some error in the operation of the total system as the advertisement indicated that Great Falls is a failing community. According to your own advertising and reasoning, the city is not meeting national standards. Was this discovered just yesterday? I have lived here in a house built over 25 years ago and this was a new issue to me

Third, ask for what you need, really need, need now and show some teeth in making sure we are getting everything WE are paying for. The basis of fire response is a big question in an area where we have all the facilities and nearly 1/2 are not credited in the fire response. This was YOUR RESPONSE to my question at one of the informational group meetings.

Fourth, Structure the options under the vote to give you a starting point with follow up items which can be approved as there is money available. This would help people get a handle on the rising costs of living in Great Falls and how they can hope to keep a monetary stream flowing which give them ability to pay for the NEEDED changes in hand.

An example of this would be:

1. The basic needs to supply the service needed NOW to meet the response limits of create by other agencies including ALL of the facilities in the area which service the entire county. Do not allow other people to create the guidelines you need to meeting without serious contest.
2. Improvements that take into account the actual need for the present in areas which are showing growth at the present. I.e. a new Fire Station
3. Improvements which are needed but have a smaller priority due to the current tax situation and reflect the time. Another Station
4. The restructuring of response teams to reflect the most efficient use of tax dollars. Personnel and equipment...
5. Using the resources available with a totally open mind as to how this can be modified to get a better result.
6. Discuss how the loss of agency funding was looked at in providing for services which are no longer funded and create a management team approach to the response to the removal of that funding.

We must start thinking how to get the job done with a REASONABLE cost to the public. I truly feel you can get a levy passed IF you start respecting and including the people you serve in reaching this goal.

Thank you. Questions?

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