

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS
February 4, 2025

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, Shannon Wilson and Susan Wolff. Also present were City Manager Greg Doyon, Public Works Director Chris Gaub, Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry, Finance Director Melissa Kinzler, 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 Agenda was approved as presented.

CONFLICT DISCLOSURE/EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS: None.

MILITARY UPDATES

1. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM MONTANA AIR NATIONAL GUARD (MANG).

Colonel Scott Smith, 120th Airlift Wing Commander, made the following announcements:

- 152 people will be deploying at the end of May through September.
- Construction on the new fuel facility is scheduled to begin this month.
- Currently going through the Legislature is HB 5 that allows for the state to purchase 640 acres for a military drop zone by Power, MT.

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

- 2.** Several students from Great Falls High School and CM Russell High School discussed the importance of, and the unique opportunities that resulted from, their participation in career and technical education classes and clubs.

The Commission responded with expressions of kudos, appreciation and well wishes.

Commissioner Wilson stepped out of the meeting at 7:11 pm and returned at 7:15 pm.

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS

3. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

None.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

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4. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

None.

CITY MANAGER

5. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

City Manager Greg Doyon made the following reports and announcements:

Growth & Growth Management

- Three things that he took away from the Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) annual seminar, included: high demand and low inventory of single family homes continues in this community; migration from other states and counties into Cascade County was up, rather than negative; and, wages and employment are up, and job openings are up compared to the national average.
- With growth comes change that has impact on the community. There is no better time than now to participate in the growth management plan that is underway. Infrastructure and whose responsibility it will be to pay to extend infrastructure will need to be a conversation in the future.
- This past week the Planning and Community Development growth management team held six community workshops that allowed residents to engage and provide specific feedback, and engaged with students of the Great Falls CORE School to get their perspectives.
- 929 responses to the Growth Policy survey have been received to date.

Legislature – Specific Concerns

- SB 254 is being proposed to prohibit direct or indirect expenditure of public money to hire lobbyists.
- SB 204 is being proposed to sunset or reapprove existing voter approved property tax levies. If this bill passes, it will significantly limit the stability of revenue to address long-term planning, maintenance and operation of critical services such as police, fire, infrastructure and many other essential services. It would require taxpayers to pay for another election process for approved tax levies to be reconsidered.
- SB 205 is being proposed to revise laws related to voter approval for property tax levies and bonds.
- HB 20 would require voted levies to be in dollars instead of mills. At face value, it sounds good. In practice, it would be very difficult. An example provided to the legislators was, if the City hired 10 firefighters, without the ability to utilize mills instead of dollars by year three the City would have to start to layoff the same firefighters that the voters just allowed the City to hire. It does not make a lot of sense to hire, train, equip and get firefighters out in the field only to be in a position to have to lay them off because the City does not have the necessary funding.

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- He would appreciate it if legislators understood what the impacts on local government would be. He is not sure that these efforts are going to yield the outcomes that the public is aware of.

CONSENT AGENDA.

6. Minutes, January 21, 2025, City Commission Meeting.
7. Total Expenditures of \$3,615,909 for the period of January 3, 2025 through January 15, 2025, to include claims over \$25,000, in the amount of \$3,096,932.
8. Contracts List.
9. Approve Final Payment for the Great Falls Wastewater Treatment Plant Solids Building Ventilation Upgrades to Central Plumbing & Heating, Inc. in the amount of \$53,114.41 and \$536.51 to the State Miscellaneous Tax Fund and authorize the City Manager to execute the necessary documents.
OF 1633.3
10. Approve Amendment No. 1 to the Professional Services Agreement with Terracon Inc. in the amount of \$18,645 for the Giant Springs Road Slide Repair project, and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement documents. **OF 1789.0**
11. Approve the Highpoint Networks Master Services Agreement and Statement of Work for Microsoft 365 migration, licenses and backup services in the first year amount of \$130,691.86, and authorize the City Manager to sign the agreement documents.

Commissioner Wolff 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 or discussion amongst the Commissioners. Hearing none, Mayor Reeves called for the vote.

Motion carried 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

OLD BUSINESS

12. **CENTRAL AVENUE/3RD STREET DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS PHASE 2 PROJECT.**
OF 1779.1

Public Works Director Chris Gaub reported that this agenda item is an amendment to the Professional Services Agreement for Phase 2 of the Central Avenue and 3rd Street Drainage Improvements project. This project will increase storm drain capacity and reduce downtown flooding as part of a multi-phase project. Additionally, it replaces both the water main and the street pavement along 1st Avenue South from 3rd Street to 5th Street. By doing all three of these utilities, future disruptions will be minimized to businesses and others in this area. This project is scheduled to go to bid in March with construction scheduled for May through November of this year.

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On April 4, 2023, the Commission awarded Great West Engineering a contract for engineering design services. On August 6, 2024, the Commission approved Amendment #1, which allowed Great West to incorporate the water main replacement and street reconstruction into the design.

Today, staff is requesting approval for Amendment #2. This would add Public Outreach and Construction Administration services to Great West's contract. The services are being requested due to the complexities of working in the downtown area and due to the limited bandwidth of City Engineering staff.

Public Outreach is needed due to the impact on local businesses. This will include meetings with representatives for the parking garages, bus depot, retail stores, and others. Their input will be incorporated into a construction-phasing plan. The downtown Business Improvement District will also be consulted and briefed on construction activity. Bi-weekly public construction meetings will be conducted for the duration of the project.

Construction administration will include hosting weekly on-site coordination meetings, review of shop drawing and submittals, observation of the construction site activities, and other services as outlined in the Agenda Report.

Funding for this amendment would come from ARPA funds. Staff recommends that the Commission approve Amendment No. 2 to the Professional Services Agreement with Great West Engineering.

Commissioner Wolff moved, seconded by Commissioner Tryon, that the City Commission approve the Professional Services Agreement Amendment No. 2 in the amount of \$122,897 to Great West Engineering, for the Central Avenue/3rd Street Drainage Improvements Phase 2 project, and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement documents.

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 \$2.5 million in Downtown Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds is for all phases of the downtown storm water projects. The Downtown Development Partnership (DDP) previously approved use of the Downtown TIF funds for this purpose. Money is being transferred from the Downtown TIF fund into the storm drain fund for those different phases of the construction project.

Commissioner Tryon received clarification that approval of this amendment to the Professional Services Agreement with Great West Engineering pertains to this project only. Approval of Amendment #2 provides for all the public outreach, and to oversee construction administration services for this project. Public Works staff does not have the bandwidth to oversee construction administration for all projects.

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

Motion carried 5-0.

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NEW BUSINESS

13. MALMSTROM AIR FORCE BASE (MAFB) INSTALLATION RESILIENCE STUDY, PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT. OF 1821.0

Public Works Director Chris Gaub recognized MAFB representative, Colonel de la Vega, in the audience.

He reported that this agenda item is consideration of a Professional Services Agreement for the MAFB Installation Resiliency Study, funded by a federal grant from the Department of Defense Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (or OLDCC). OLDCC is providing \$396,000 and the City is providing a 10% match with in-kind services.

This study will be a win-win for both MAFB, a vital community partner, and the City of Great Falls. The goal is to help the community support and protect the Sentinel mission by improving MAFB's mission resilience through improvements to surrounding infrastructure. The infrastructure resilience component will evaluate existing utility, broadband and transportation systems, and identify opportunities to make systems more robust. The study could potentially validate infrastructure needs that would help both MAFB and the City of Great Falls and recommend infrastructure projects to alleviate this issue. These projects could potentially assist with infrastructure that would help facilitate development in the surrounding area as well. For those projects, the City would then compete for future grants to design and then fund those construction projects.

The Compatible Land Use component will identify land uses that will help the City grow, while not inhibiting MAFB's current missile wing mission. This is a preliminary analysis that will then feed into the ongoing Growth Policy. This study will provide a modern and updated analysis of MAFB's mission, offering a fresh perspective on past policy documents, such as the 2012 Joint Land Use Study (JLUS). The JLUS was based on MAFB having an active fixed wing runway. With the runway now closed to fixed wing aircraft this study may present an opportunity to formally recognize that change, which would allow the City to plan accordingly.

City staff has expended significant time and effort on this process and believe the potential benefits are worth it. The City and MAFB have worked closely over the last couple of years on this grant. MAFB nominated the City of Great Falls for this grant in the summer of 2023. The City Manager provided a letter of support to Malmstrom's nomination package. The grant application took significant staff time to development. Once approved by OLDCC, staff then had to rewrite a lot of it to accommodate a change in presidential administration program directives. Once the application was finally approved, the City then requested proposals from consultants. Three firms submitted proposals and all three were interviewed by a selection team of City staff and Malmstrom advisors. It was determined that the qualifications of AE2S best aligned with the objectives of this study. AE2S is also partnering with Jacobs, a large nationwide firm that is experienced in these types of studies around military bases.

AE2S, the City and MAFB then developed a scope of this project to ensure that OLDCC grant requirements will be achieved and within the funding limits. The negotiated consulting fee is \$400,000, which is below the total available funding of \$440,000.

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Director Gaub noted a typographical error in the agenda report. The City would use the OLDCC grant for the full amount of the Professional Services Agreement and use in-kind staff time for the match funding of \$40,000.

If the Professional Services Agreement is approved, the City will work with AE2S to define a steering group and a stakeholder structure that will include Cascade County, Great Falls Development Alliance, and others. The study is expected to be completed by the end of 2025, with enough time to feed in to the Growth Policy update.

Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry added that the biggest thing hindering the City to expand is money. Any opportunity that the City has to leverage federal funds for the opportunity to analyze potential diverse land uses and prepare for the infrastructure needed, and to be able to utilize that to apply for similar grant monies to pay for that infrastructure, he thinks has to be an essential component of the formula of how the community grows.

He reiterated that there would be no land use changes in zoning or in future land use maps that are not approved by the City Commission. It is about creating opportunity, not hindering possibilities.

City Manager Greg Doyon also added that there was definitely some concern and difficult conversations in the past with regard to the impact of potential development around that area. He thinks this study will complement what the City is already doing. It will also help the City potentially prepare for MAFB's mission upgrade. Approval of this item is something the City can do to support MAFB. There was a concern that started a long time ago about the water quality at MAFB. The water system is not looped and it is dead-ended at MAFB. MAFB has to post treat the water once it comes out of the City's facility. Extending infrastructure to support the mission at MAFB creates opportunity for the City to extend infrastructure for development as well.

Colonel Ciro E. de la Vega, Commander of the 341st Mission Support Group at MAFB, expressed support for the OLDCC grant. Awarding this contract will enable a joint effort to improve resiliency for MAFB while complementing the City of Great Falls' interests. MAFB appreciates the teamwork that the Public Works Department has fostered with MAFB Civil Engineers and the outstanding coordination in preparing for this contract. Approval of the contract will bring numerous benefits to both the City of Great Falls and to MAFB. Malmstrom has been an integral part of the community for many years and the collaboration between the base and the City has always been exceptional. The proposed study contract, if approved, will not only enhance the resiliency of MAFB, but also contribute to the overall resilience and preparedness of the City of Great Falls, further strengthening the long standing partnership.

Commissioner Wilson moved, seconded by Commissioner Wolff, that the City Commission approve the Professional Services Agreement in the amount not to exceed \$400,000 to Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, LLC to complete the Malmstrom Air Force Base Installation Resilience Study, and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement documents.

Mayor Reeves asked if there were any comments from the public.

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Brett Doney, Great Falls Development Alliance (GFDA), commented that this study is timely, but GFDA has concerns about how the study is done. GFDA has over \$2 billion dollars of potential private investment near MAFB that will all be in the City if the Commission approves annexation. The developers are interested in annexing into the City. With regard to private property rights, GFDA wants to make sure there is a lot of opportunity for public engagement and input.

GFDA also wishes the City were doing the land use component in partnership with Cascade County. The County Commission has not been briefed and that has already caused some consternation with the Defense Alliance. He urged the City to brief the County Commission because MAFB is located in the county.

There being no one further to address the Commission, Mayor Reeves asked if there was any discussion amongst the Commissioners.

Commissioner McKenney inquired if it was safe to say that a fixed wing squadron is very unlikely in the future of MAFB.

Colonel de la Vega responded that is no longer an option for the installation.

Commissioner McKenney reiterated that the study is for infrastructure improvements for development and land use. After the study is complete, it will come back to the City Commission and it may be incorporated in the Growth Policy.

Director Cherry responded that he sees this study as an opportunity that can provide the City with better information and inform the Growth Policy effort. The County has been identified as a stakeholder, who will be more than just a passive participant in the resiliency study that is being led by Director Gaub. As the goals and objectives of the Growth Policy are drafted, the study will better inform the City to be able to make better decisions. When staff can forecast potential development options and know what type of infrastructure it is going to take, they can then break it down to determine how to pay for it. He is very excited to have a contemporary document that is endorsed by MAFB and begin to leverage what the local community has to provide.

Commissioner McKenney commented that the fixed wing aircraft has hampered land use and development in that part of the City and in the County. He can see this opening up many more opportunities than what the City and County have had in the past.

Director Cherry responded that he is excited to have a collective discussion with City, County and MAFB officials. The needs are different now that it is not a fixed wing mission. No one is looking to hinder opportunities but are looking at how to best prepare for those changes and bring those things to fruition.

Commissioner Wolff noted that she was made aware of the whole issue of the water system dead ending at MAFB and the difficulties with that about 10 years ago. She is excited to see the City moving forward with this project.

Commissioner Tryon commented that he was involved with the Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) in 2012. A concern back then, and concern he is hearing now, is that there is a public perception that

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a mandate will be handed down after the study. He asked for clarification about what the differences are between this particular project and the JLUS.

City Manager Doyon commented that the JLUS was a County sponsored project. It was the first ICBM base to have a joint land use study completed. He does remember concerns expressed about encroachment and private property rights. The scope of this project is a lot different, and the County will be involved. The ultimate intent is to collaborate on needed infrastructure that we are all cognizant is needed in that area. The City is very aware of development interests in that area. The City wants development in that area, but we have to figure out how to get the infrastructure out there. The City is trying to prepare for long-term development in that area.

Commissioner Tryon asked all involved to be cognizant that people felt that the result of the JLUS was that the needs of MAFB and land utilization around the base trumped the development concerns of people in Great Falls. He does not see that happening with this study, but wanted all to be aware of those concerns.

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

Motion carried 5-0.

14. THREE-YEAR AUDIT CONTRACT WITH EIDE BAILLY, LLP.

Finance Director Melissa Kinzler reported that on December 9, 2024, the City of Great Falls issued a request for proposal (RFP) for audit services for Fiscal Years 2025, 2026, and 2027, since the City's current auditors are no longer performing governmental audits. The City received two responses to the RFP from Eide Bailly and Wipfli, LLP.

The Audit Selection Committee met on January 8, 2025 to review and evaluate audit proposals. The Committee followed the City's RFP selection process, state statute, and the Government Finance Officers Association recommended practices.

The Audit Selection Committee and Audit Committee recommends Eide Bailly for several reasons. First, Eide Bailly had substantially more municipal auditing experience than Wipfli based on the references provided. Additionally, Eide Bailly's cost proposal was 4.24% less than Wipfli's proposal.

The Audit Committee recommends Eide Bailly be awarded the contract at a cost of \$115,400 for Fiscal Year 2025, \$119,700 for Fiscal Year 2026, and \$124,250 for Fiscal Year 2027 - a total cost of \$359,350. This price includes travel costs and the agreed upon procedures for the building permits fund. The actual audit contract is between the City of Great Falls, Eide Bailly, and the State of Montana.

Staff recommends that the City Commission award a three-year contract for audit services to Eide Bailly, LLP and approve Amendment No. 1 that was suggested by Eide Bailly, approved by the City's legal counsel and will be submitted to the State.

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Commissioner Wolff moved, seconded by Commissioner Tryon, that the City Commission approve a three-year contract for audit services with Eide Bailly, LLP at a cost of \$115,400 for Fiscal Year 2025, \$119,700 for Fiscal Year 2026, and \$124,250 for Fiscal Year 2027 and approve Amendment One of the Contract, and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement documents.

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 noted he was on the Audit Selection Committee and Audit Committee. References were checked and the company selected was the best company to perform the audits.

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

Motion carried 5-0.

ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS

CITY COMMISSION

15. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Commissioner Wolff commented that the theme of the BBER conference this year was AI. The fear that prevails is that AI is going to take away jobs. They talked about that being the opposite. New job skills will be required to enhance the ability to be more productive.

16. COMMISSION INITIATIVES.

None.

17. LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES.

None.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, **Commissioner Tryon moved, seconded by Mayor Reeves, to adjourn the regular meeting of February 4, 2025, at 8:08 p.m.**

Motion carried 5-0.

Mayor Reeves

City Clerk Lisa Kunz

Minutes Approved: February 18, 2025