

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS
February 18, 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, 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.

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

1. **Melissa Smith**, City resident, commented that many people do not believe in promoting white supremacy. The “hate has no home here” campaign objected to a very specific, targeted campaign by self-identified neo Nazis promoting and recruiting for an ideology that many people and leaders in Great Falls rejected. People have, and are experiencing, manufactured division nationally and in Great Falls. She urged City leaders to counteract this division when encountered, including on social media.

Jeni Dodd, City resident, commented that, as a taxpayer, she supports SB 204 that would require levies to sunset, and HB 20 that would require voted on levies to be stated in dollars rather than mills. She is opposed to the City lobbying against these bills, including the use of taxpayer dollars to hire a lobbyist. She suggested it is management’s job to develop a budget for the duration of a levy and stick to it. Ms. Dodd opined that the City lost credibility by not putting the public safety levy before the Library levy. She concluded that she hasn’t received an answer to her inquiry about the amount of money the City is wasting on vehicle fuel and maintenance costs by allowing certain employees to commute with City vehicles.

Jim Wingerter, City resident, District Administrator for the Department of Transportation, commented that there have been 20 snowplows hit to date, including 4 in the Great Falls area. When those accidents occur, it takes resources off the streets. He asked for help in spreading the word to be safe when traveling the Montana roads in the wintertime, be aware of snowplows, and make good choices to help keep all drivers safe and the plows on the roads.

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS

2. **MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

None.

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BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

3. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

None.

4. APPOINTMENTS TO THE GREAT FALLS PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD/ZONING COMMISSION.

Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry reported that on December 4, 2024, City staff assisted Chairman Dave Bertelsen in facilitating interviews of seven applicants for the Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission. Chairman Bertelsen's recommendations were considered by the Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission at a subsequent meeting. The Board voted to recommend appointment of Jim Wingerter, David Cantley and Michael Gorecki to three-year terms through December 31, 2027.

Director Cherry quoted Chairman Bertelsen, "This was, without a doubt, the best group of applicants I have seen during my tenure as Board Chair. It's almost too bad we only have three positions to fill."

Any one of the applicants that the Commission appoints will provide immense value to the Board. He encouraged those applicants that are not selected this evening to stay interested. There will be more opportunities.

This group of individuals will be instrumental in helping with the Growth Policy process and amending zoning regulations to reflect the Growth Policy,

Commissioner Wolff moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson, that the City Commission appoint Jim Wingerter, David Cantley and Michael Gorecki for three-year terms through December 31, 2027 to the Great Falls Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission.

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

The Commission members expressed appreciation to all of the applicants, and noted that all are outstanding professionals and community members.

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

Motion carried 5-0.

CITY MANAGER

5. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

City Manager Greg Doyon made the following reports and announcements:

1. Public Works

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- The negative degree weather to almost 50 degrees above by Sunday will put stress on the water supply line infrastructure, which might mean some additional water line breaks.
 - The WW2-era 33rd Street Tank rehab project is complete, and will be refilled with 4.75 million gallons of water. Public Works is awaiting results of two water quality tests before reconnecting to distribution, which could be done by the end of this week.
2. The Growth Policy survey has received 1,270 responses to date. He encouraged everyone to complete the survey that can be accessed online at futuregreatfalls.com.
 3. Legislature – Several bills propose to remove the decision-making ability of the taxpayers. SB 266 would allow triplexes and fourplexes where single-family homes are currently permitted. Land use decisions should be made locally.
 4. Public Works initiated meetings with the City’s water rights consultant and water rights attorney to review report findings and outline next steps to update the City’s water portfolio. He is pleased with the work they are doing to secure the water rights necessary to grow to meet industrial demands in the community.
 5. Great Falls Police Department
 - Adam Hunt and Eric Munkres have been promoted to the rank of Sergeant.
 - Paul Kummer and Taylor Crouch have been promoted to the rank of Master Police Officer.

Manager Doyon concluded that it was a very competitive process. He sincerely appreciates the hard work put forth by everyone in this promotional cycle.

CONSENT AGENDA.

6. Minutes, February 4, 2025, City Commission Meeting.
7. Total Expenditures of \$2,045,714 for the period of January 16, 2025 through January 29, 2025, to include claims over \$25,000, in the amount of \$1,538,575.
8. Contracts List.
9. Grants List.
10. Approve Change Order #2 in the amount of \$25,652 to A&R Construction, LLC for the Great Falls Animal Shelter Remodel Project utilizing funds from the Animal Shelter H.U.G. fundraising project, and authorize the City Manager to execute the change order documents. **OF 1831.0**
11. Set a public hearing for March 4, 2025 on Resolution 10568 to Establish Golf Fees.
12. Set a public hearing March 18, 2025 on Resolution 10567, a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to expand a nonconforming use to construct a building addition onto the existing church located in the R-2 zoning district upon the property addressed as 800 Sacajawea Drive.

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Commissioner Tryon moved, seconded by Commissioner McKenney, 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 Wolff referred to agenda items 8 and 9 and expressed appreciation to the Park and Recreation Department and its partnerships.

Mayor Reeves called for the vote.

Motion carried 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

13. CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT: PHASE 2 CDBG 32ND STREET ADA UPGRADES PROJECT. OF 1788.2

Public Works Director Chris Gaub reported that Agenda Item 13 is the Construction Contract for Phase 2 of the 32nd Street South ADA Upgrades project. This project will replace sidewalk at intersection corners and install new sidewalk through existing gravel alleys along 32nd Street South from 5th Alley South to Central Avenue. It creates an ADA compliant corridor that connects the neighborhoods from Central to 10th Avenue South.

Public Works determined that this area would benefit from receiving updated corners and alley aprons due to a future mill and overlay project planned for 32nd Street South. Following our ADA Transition Plan guidelines, the future mill and overlay project of the street increased the already high priority for this area, making this location a great candidate to receive ADA upgrades.

This project will replace approximately 1,800 feet of curb and gutter, 5,000 square feet of concrete sidewalk, and install 36 ADA compliant corners and 8 ADA compliant alley aprons.

The Engineering Division designed the project and will perform the construction inspection and contract administration for this project.

Public Works Engineering works closely with the Finance Department to design and prepare CDBG projects that will greatly benefit the ratepayers and prudently use these funds. This is one of two CDBG projects that the City plans to complete by the end of April to maintain timelines with HUD for the CDBG program.

This project was advertised in the *Great Falls Tribune* twice. One responsible bid was received by United Materials of Great Falls, Inc.

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Commissioner Wolff moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson, that the City Commission award a contract in the amount of \$870,085.00 to United Materials of Great Falls, Inc. for the 32nd Street South ADA Upgrades, CDBG, Phase 2 Project, and authorize the City Manager to execute the necessary 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 Wolff received clarification that this project extends 32nd Street to the south that was worked on last year.

Commissioner McKenney expressed concern with receiving only one bid, less competition and price control.

Director Gaub responded that he did not want to speculate. Points to consider include the handwork versus machine work that has to be done, and working during winter to complete the project by the end of April to meet CDBG timelines.

Commissioner Wolff expressed appreciation that the weather report may accommodate this project. There being no further discussion, Mayor Reeves called for the vote.

Motion carried 5-0.

14. **CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT: 7TH AVENUE NW STREET RECONSTRUCTION, 11TH STREET NW TO 12TH STREET NW PROJECT. OF 1806.3.**

Public Works Director Chris Gaub reported that Agenda Item 14 is the Construction Contract to reconstruct part of 7th Avenue NW Street. It also will replace sidewalk and complete the ADA connections between 11th Street NW and 12th Street NW on 7th Avenue NW.

The Public Works and Finance Departments worked together to locate an area within the City that would benefit from a CDBG funded project. This area requires several updates, including sidewalk repair, sidewalk infill, ADA compliant pedestrian ramps, as well as meeting the CDBG criteria of being a low to moderate-income area. This area is also a bus route, which increases its priority in the ADA Transition Plan.

This project will replace approximately 1,000 feet of curb and gutter, 5,000 square feet of concrete sidewalk, 4 ADA compliant corners and 1 section of new road.

Stahly Engineering completed the design and City Engineering will inspect this project. This will be the second of two CDBG projects that are planned to be completed by the end of April to maintain timelines with HUD for the CDBG program.

This project was advertised in the *Great Falls Tribune* twice. Two responsible bids were received ranging from about \$570,000 to \$870,000. United Materials of Great Falls submitted the lowest responsible bid.

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Commissioner Wilson moved, seconded by Commissioner McKenney, that the City Commission award a contract in the amount of \$569,812.50 to United Materials of Great Falls, Inc. for the 7th Avenue NW Street Reconstruction, 11th Street NW to 12th Street NW Project, and authorize the City Manager to execute the necessary 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 Tryon noted the \$300,000 disparity in the two bids.

Director Gaub again indicated he would not speculate, but would ask his engineering team their thoughts.

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 Wilson reported that this past year she donated the proceeds of her Commissioner salary as follows: \$1,705 to Housed Great Falls, \$300 to the Senior Center, \$500 to Helping Hands, and \$150 to Park and Recreation to purchase a security camera because of the recurring vandalism of the Free Little Library in her neighborhood park. She will pay for the monitoring costs after the camera is installed. That total of \$2,655 comes from her salary of approximately \$21 dollars and stipend amount of approximately \$81 dollars every two weeks. With the increase in insurance rates expected this year, she expects to not have a salary left by the end of her term.

Mayor Reeves commented that the Commission members do not serve to make money. However, the last time the Commission had a pay adjustment was in 1988. The current proceeds from his bi-weekly salary is \$36 dollars. He is not asking for a significant bump in pay, but he does think it is time the Commission address the stipend amount.

Commissioner Wolff expressed appreciation to the Fire, Police and Public Works personnel that are outside working in these cold temperatures taking care of the community.

Commissioner Tryon expressed appreciation to Manager Doyon for the weekly Zoom meetings with the lobbyist and legislators. The City of Great Falls has some challenges that will show up during the budget this year. The last thing the City needs is the legislature dictating what the City can and cannot do in terms of zoning, budget, and levies. He encouraged everyone listening to contact legislators to tell them the best thing they can do while they are in Helena is to support local control. The people of Great Falls know more about what the needs are here than legislators who meet for 90 days every two years. Over 90 percent of the legislators in Helena do not live in Great Falls, and have no idea about what the needs are of Great Falls, what the issues are, or what the budget challenges or other challenges are.

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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 18, 2025, at 7:44 p.m.**

Motion carried 5-0.

Mayor Reeves

City Clerk Lisa Kunz

Minutes Approved: March 4, 2025