### JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS

September 16, 2025 -- Regular City Commission Meeting Civic Center Commission Chambers, Room 206 -- Mayor Reeves Presiding

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 Deputy City Clerk Darcy Dea.

### **AGENDA APPROVAL:**

City Manager Doyon noted that a Revised Agenda added item 23. There were no proposed changes to the agenda by the City Manager or City Commission. The Commission approved the agenda as presented.

### CONFLICT DISCLOSURE/EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

### **COMMUNITY INITIATIVES**

1. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM GREAT FALLS AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

**Jordyn Shamek**, Director of Marketing and Communications, made the following announcements:

- There are five new Chamber Committees that will be co-led by a board member and community member.
- The Chamber's mission is to drive business success, connect leaders, cultivate partnerships, and shape community solutions to build a thriving future for Great Falls.

### PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

2. Ben Forsyth, City resident, commented that Commissioner Tryon's comments are not recorded in the minutes of a prior meeting and he is contradicting himself by taking both sides of an issue. Mr. Forsyth expressed concern that the harms of marijuana are growing, flooding the hospitals, damaging the education system, and hurting the medical systems and our economics. He further commented that \$2,000 came in from marijuana tax and is now \$312,000, which is approximately 3% of the cost of treating medical marijuana at our hospital. It is affecting people statewide. The Department of Public Health and Human Services has a subdivision called the Hospitalization Discharge Data System that keeps track of all the hospitalizations in the State of Montana and the cause of those hospitalizations. The data indicated that one community in Montana had 22% under the age of 10 hospitalized from the harms created by marijuana. He wants to see the Commission do more to correct the harms of marijuana.

**Jeni Dodd,** City resident, expressed concern about the City Manager's proposed creation of a Strategic Development Officer position at the cost of nearly \$170,000. She commented that if he wants another city bureaucrat, the funds should be taken directly from the \$205,000 plus benefits the City Manager is paid and from the Assistant City Manager position. It is insensitive to the taxpayers that during these challenging economic times the City insists upon unnecessarily increasing its spending by creating new city positions.

All of the housing the City claims Great Falls needs because of growth is not backed up by any growth statistics. The Census Bureau claims Great Falls has lost population since the 2020 census. The City also keeps touting the Sentinel project as proof it needs more housing. She was at the commission meeting where the Sentinel project spokesman said that he did not anticipate the project would create any additional demand for housing in Great Falls. The City claims all this additional housing will attract growth, but that is putting the cart before the horse. Ms. Dodd questioned where people will work, how they will pay the mortgage or rent without decent paying jobs because there is little industry here if housing attracts people to Great Falls. Ms. Dodd commented that the City Manager had admitted that Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and direct payments to Great Falls Development Authority (GFDA) have not seemed to deliver the desired results.

Ms. Dodd opined that the GFDA received millions over the years, including City COVID funds. GFDA has refused to provide public information she had requested, despite it being required to because it receives public funding. GFDA has done little for economic development in Great Falls that would not have occurred without it. It also seems the Commission and City staff are trying to create a Great Falls that is not realistic. Bozeman, Missoula and Kalispell did not give away tax dollars to create growth and growth happened because of other factors that Great Falls does not possess and cannot be bought.

Sheila Rice, City Resident, commented that she is presenting on behalf of the Homeless to Housing Hub, a sub-committee of the Continuum of Care. Ms. Rice reported that as of September 16, 2025, the Baatz block opened 24 permanently supportive apartments that will make a huge difference. She expressed appreciation to NeighborWorks and especially Opportunities Incorporated, who will be the lead service provider. St. Vincent has opened Hope Harbor, a three-bedroom home for newly employed homeless men. Family Promise has received a planning grant for the Homeless to Housing Hub from the Montana Health Care Foundation. Last year there were three months continuous with not one Veteran on the streets. At the September Continuum of Care Meeting, agencies reported 502 homeless individuals on the by name list. Average length of stay is seven months. The January Point-in-Time Count showed 31 unsheltered individuals outside during the coldest time of the year. The Great Falls Public School District reported 118 homeless students. Permanent supportive housing works and has substantial outcomes.

**Terry Thompson**, Cascade County Elections Administrator, reported that House Bill 719 requires voters to provide their year of birth on the ballot envelopes. Ballots will be rejected if voters neglect to provide their year of birth and the Elections Department will contact individuals who do not provide the year of birth or signatures on the envelope via telephone or letter. Ms. Thompson suggested that voters contact local legislators if they object to this new requirement.

### NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS

#### 3. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

None.

## **BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

#### 4. APPOINTMENT TO THE AUDIT COMMITTEE.

Mayor Reeves reported that Christine Jewett was appointed to the Audit Committee on September 5, 2023 to a three-year term expiring on June 30, 2026. In February Ms. Jewett resigned from the Committee due to employment conflicts. The advertisement for this vacancy was done through the City's Website and the local media. An application was received from Matt Pea on August 19, 2025.

Mr. Pea attended the Audit Committee meeting on September 10, 2025 and the Committee members were able to review his application and ask questions. The Committee made a formal motion to recommend the appointment of Mr. Pea.

Commissioner Wilson moved, seconded by Commissioner Wolff, that the City Commission appoint Matt Pea to the Audit Committee to fill a private citizen position for a three-year term through June 30, 2026.

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 commented that Mr. Pea has experience of being a volunteer on local boards and fiscally responsible.

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

Motion carried 5-0.

#### 5. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

None.

## **CITY MANAGER**

#### 6. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Referring to a previous speaker's comments about TIF and direct payments to GFDA not delivering the desired results, City Manager Greg Doyon clarified that he said, "these efforts have not seemed to deliver results the community wants and expects."

Manager Doyon reported that Jeremy Jones has been promoted to the Deputy City Manager position and will start October 13, 2025. The process to fill that position took time because he was not ready to make a move after the initial interviews of external and internal candidates. He needs to be confident that a person will fit a role because Department Head positions are critical to the effective operations of the City. Mr. Jones further prepared himself for the position by pursuing a Master of Public Administration and going through Leadership Montana. Mr. Jones has leadership experience and knows the department head team, commissioners and community. After Mr. Jones has experience in the position, there could be a possibility of restructuring what the Deputy City Manager oversees in the City.

Manager Doyon expressed appreciation to Interim Deputy City Manager Bryan Lockerby. Manager Doyon added that Mr. Lockerby indicated that he did not want the position of Deputy City Manager; however, he will continue working on Scheels Aim High Big Sky Aquatic and Recreation Center and Park and Recreation challenges.

On behalf of the Commission, Mayor Reeves welcomed Mr. Jones to the Deputy City Manager position.

Commissioner Tryon clarified that the Deputy City Manager position was not a new position that was created, and the Commission does not make decisions with regard to hiring department heads or city employees. He added that Manager Doyon has the ability to find the right people for important positions, and he deserves credit for taking time, being thoughtful and deliberate with hiring a Deputy City Manager.

Commissioner Tryon mentioned that he has heard complaints about how much the city manager and department heads make. He clarified that they earn that money. Those people who complain about those salaried positions would complain if someone brought up their salary and how they are paid too much.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

- 7. Minutes, September 2, 2025, City Commission Meeting.
- **8.** Total Expenditures of \$4,911,868 for the period of August 14, 2025 through August 27, 2025, to include claims over \$25,000, in the amount of \$4,250,178.
- **9.** Contracts List.
- **10.** Approve Final Payment for the 4th Ave N Street Reconstruction project, in the amount of \$97,929.38, comprising \$96,950.09 to United Materials of Great Falls, Inc. and \$979.29 to the State Miscellaneous Tax Fund, and authorize the City Manager to make the payments. **OF 1826.0**
- 11. Approve Final Payment for the 32nd Ave NE Water and Storm Sidewalk Repair in the amount of \$4,017.85, comprising \$3,977.67 to United Materials of Great Falls, Inc. and \$40.18 to the State Miscellaneous Tax Fund, and authorize the City Manager to make the payments. **OF 1786.5**
- **12.** Approve Final Payment for the Water Treatment Plant Solids Mitigation project in the amount of \$302,899.21, comprising \$299,870.22 to Sletten Construction Company and \$3,028.99 to the State Miscellaneous Tax Fund, and authorize the City Manager to make the payments. **OF 1698.1**
- **13.** Approve Change Order No. 1 for the Central Ave/3rd Street Drainage Improvements Phase 2 project with Capcon LLC. in the amount of \$62,285 and increase the total contract amount from \$3,352,727 to \$3,415,012. **OF 1779.1**
- **14.** Approve Change Order No. 1 to United Materials of Great Falls, Inc. for the River Drive Trail Replacement project, in the amount of \$8,135, and authorize the City Manager to execute the change order documents; and approve final payment in the amount of \$152,190.87 to United Materials and \$1,537.28 to the State Miscellaneous Tax Fund and authorize the City Manager to make the payments. **OF 1838.0**

- **15.** Award a construction contract in the amount of \$721,300 to United Materials of Great Falls, Inc. for the Carter Park Street Reconstruction project, which will complete ADA updates around Carter Park, and authorize the City Manager to execute the contract documents. **OF 1806.4**
- **16.** Award a construction contract in the amount of \$945,000 to MJD Contracting, LLC for the Water Treatment Plant Corrosion Control Implementation project due to DEQ enforced Lead and Copper Rule Revisions and authorize the City Manager to execute the contract documents. **OF 1527.9**
- **17.** Approve the Construction Agreement with Garrett Parks and Play in the amount of \$99,220 for Poured-in-Place Surfacing at Morony Park utilizing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and authorize the City Manager to execute the documents.
- **18.** Set Public Hearing for October 7, 2025, on Resolution 10603 to consider a request to expend an additional \$382,690 in Downtown Urban Renewal District Tax Increment Financing funds for the Mansfield Theater Ceiling Repair, Theater Seat Replacement, and Civic Center Elevator repair projects.

Commissioner Wolff 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 Tryon referred to agenda item 18 and expressed concern about the renovations and money spent on the Mansfield Theater ceiling and seating and being considered an outdated facility. He added that there were prior conversations about whether Events is something the City should continue to subsidize out of the General Fund.

Manager Doyon responded that he has not heard that it is considered to be an outdated facility. This is a venue unlike anything available in the community and the City needs to invest in this space.

Finance Director Melissa Kinzler added that the money being requested is a match for Montana Historical Preservation grants, and this is just a way to do needed repairs.

Commissioner McKenney referred to agenda item 18 and commented that he has similar concerns as Commissioner Tryon as well as additional concerns; however, he would save those for the public hearing.

Commissioner Wolff noted that she was excited about the three final payments.

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

Motion carried 5-0.

#### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### 19. CITY OF GREAT FALLS ELECTRIC SUPPLY CONTRACT.

City Manager Greg Doyon reported that he is asking the City Commission to grant him the authority for the next 30 days in the event he can secure a more competitive electric rate through Guzman Energy. The goal is to lock in a cheaper electric rate for a period of five years so there is a predictable and stable rate. The market rates were not competitive over the last two attempts to consider a blend and extend.

Mayor Reeves received clarification that 30 days is the date Manager Doyon is comfortable with.

Commissioner Wilson moved, seconded by Commissioner Tryon, that the City Commission authorize the City Manager, for a period of up to 30 days, to execute the necessary supply agreements with Guzman Energy for electricity supply to the City of Great Falls, contingent upon the consultant's recommendation of a competitive rate and receipt of a formal proposal, and to extend the agreement period through June 30, 2030.

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 commented that he is comfortable with the 30-day window and receiving a lower rate.

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

Motion carried 5-0.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

### ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS

## 20. ORDINANCE 3279, AMENDING TITLE 13, CHAPTER 24, REFERENCING THE CITY OF GREAT FALLS STROMWATER MASTER PLAN.

Public Works Director Chris Gaub reported that this ordinance would update the City Code to allow for the adoption of an updated Stormwater Master Plan. The Master Plan has not been updated since it was first published in 1989.

The Plan provides a comprehensive analysis of the City's stormwater system. It highlights deficiencies and evaluates various projects to address issues. These efforts promote preservation of waterways and decrease damage to property from drainage issues. It is also important for compliance with the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System permit, or MS4 permit.

The proposed update takes into account all the progress made over the past 36 years and considers current and future growth areas.

Public comment period was held, including an open house meeting, and revised the Master Plan to incorporate suggestions and minor corrections where practical. There were no major changes introduced.

Ordinance 3279 would update the code that currently references the City's 1989 Storm Drainage Master Plan to instead state: the "most recent edition" of the Master Plan, which positions the City to formally adopt the updated Master Plan via a Resolution.

Staff recommends the Commission accept Ordinance 3279 on first reading and set a public hearing for October 7th. After the public hearing, the Commission will be requested to both adopt Ordinance 3279 and adopt the most recent edition of the Stormwater Master Plan via a Resolution.

Commissioner Wolff moved, seconded by Commissioner Tryon, that the City Commission accept Ordinance 3279 on first reading and set a public hearing for October 7, 2025.

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

Hearing none, Mayor Reeves called for the vote.

Motion carried 5-0.

# 21. RESOLUTION 10583, TO LEVY AND ASSESS PROPERTIES WITHIN THE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT.

Finance Director Melissa Kinzler reported that on July 15, 2025, as required by State Statute 7-12-1132 (3) MCA, the Business Improvement District (BID) presented a proposed Work Plan and Budget and recommended a method of levying an assessment on the properties within the district that best ensures the assessment on each lot or parcel is equitable in proportion to the benefits to be received for Fiscal Year 2025/2026. Following the public hearing held on July 15, 2025, the City Commission moved to adopt the FY 2026 Work Plan and Budget for the BID.

The actual assessment for 2025/2026 based on the assessment formula will generate \$377,732.80 in assessment revenue. This is an increase of \$76,256.09 from the previous year. The 2025/2026 assessment per lot or parcel is indicated on the assessment projection summary Exhibit "A" incorporated herein and made a part of Resolution 10583.

Staff recommends the City Commission adopt Resolution 10583 to levy and assess properties within the BID.

# Commissioner Tryon moved, seconded by Commissioner Wolff, that the City Commission adopt Resolution 10583.

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 commented that downtown has changed over the years in a positive way and developers want to see a healthy downtown.

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

Motion carried 5-0.

## 22. RESOLUTION 10584, TO LEVY AND ASSESS PROPERTIES WITHIN THE TOURISM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT.

Finance Director Melissa Kinzler reported that on July 15, 2025, as required by State Statute 7-12-1132 (3) MCA, the Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) presented a proposed Work Plan and Budget and recommended a method of levying an assessment on the properties within the district that best ensures the assessment on each property is equitable and in proportion to the benefits to be received for Fiscal Year 2025/2026. Following the public hearing held on July 15, 2025, the City Commission moved to adopt the 2025/2026 Work Plan and Budget for the TBID.

The assessment amount requested by the TBID through their Work Plan and Budget was \$757,675. The actual assessment for Fiscal Year 2025/2026 based on the assessment formula will generate \$743,944 in assessment revenue. Last year, the total assessment billed was \$760,254. This will be a decrease of \$16,310. The 2025/2026 assessment per property is indicated on the assessment projection summary as Exhibit "A" incorporated herein and made a part of Resolution 10584.

Staff recommends the City Commission adopt Resolution 10584 to levy and assess properties within the TBID.

# Commissioner Wilson moved, seconded by Commissioner Wolff, that the City Commission adopt Resolution 10584.

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

**Shannon Neweth,** Content Director and Film Liaison for Great Falls Montana Tourism, expressed support of Resolution 10584. Ms. Neweth commented that Great Falls Montana Tourism's assessments are collected from travelers by its Great Falls Lodging properties during their stay of 30 days or less and this district is self-created by lodging properties to further overnight stays. The budget is \$13,731 less than projected in the approved plan. Great Falls Montana Tourism Board of Directors meets this Thursday

and will be taking action to amend the budget to align with this reduction. The proposed adjustments are focused on scaling back efforts to accomplish this with less funding.

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

Commissioner Wolff received clarification that some hotels are exempt from the lodging tax if people stay for more than 30 days.

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

Motion carried 5-0.

## 23. RESOLUTION 10607, CANCELLING THE NOVEMBER 4, 2025 GENERAL ELECTION OF CERTAIN MUNICIPAL OFFICERS.

Cascade County Elections Administrator Terry Thompson reported that the City of Great Falls is scheduled for a General Election on November 4, 2025, for one ballot issue, one Municipal Court Judge – Department B, one mayor, two city commissioners, and for each of the nine Neighborhood Council Districts with a total of five positions within each district.

Mont. Code Ann. (MCA) § 13-1-403 sets forth, in pertinent part, if the number of candidates filing for election is equal to or less than the number of positions to be filled, the election administrator shall notify the governing body of the local government in writing that the election is not necessary and the governing body may by resolution cancel the election.

Ms. Thompson notified the City on September 12, 2025, that she had not had any declared write-in filings by the August 6, 2025 deadline. Therefore, the races for Neighborhood Council Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 are eligible for cancellation.

If Resolution 10607 is adopted, the following candidates would be elected to their respective positions by acclimation following completion of the General Election to be held on November 4, 2025:

- Neighborhood Council 1 David Saslav, Pat Goodover II, Trevor Cummings, Arthur Taft, and Abigail St. Lawrence
- Neighborhood Council 2 Andrew Sonnemaker, Ciara Ashcraft, Timothy Croft, Frank Speidel, and Wayne Young
- Neighborhood Council 4 Lisa Meyers, Sandra Guynn, Neil Tredray, Ronald Paulick, and James G. Whitaker
- Neighborhood Council 5 Dylan Lennox, Thomas Kotynski, Greg Milton, Howard Plouffe, and Luella Vogel
- Neighborhood Council 6 Michelle Cornellier, Richard Cornellier, and James F. Rickley

- Neighborhood Council 7 Allison Tangen, Troy Lane, Trevor Mikkelsen, Sandra Rice, and William Wadman
- Neighborhood Council 8 David Price, Johnnie Scott, Michael W. Brainard, and Karen Grove
- Neighborhood Council 9 Amanda Baugus, Barney Danishefsky, Dana Kirkmeyer, Theresa (Terri) Ryan, and Judie Suden

The Neighborhood Council Districts with less than five candidates would be filled by appointment of the governing body pursuant to MCA 13-1-403(5)(b).

The races of one mayor, two commissioners, Municipal Court Judge – Department B, Neighborhood Council 3, and a ballot issue would remain on the November 4, 2025 ballot.

The cost savings would be in the programming fees to create the ballots by the county's vendor.

In the 2023 legislative session HB536 passed and was signed by the Governor with an effective immediate date. The bill amended 13-10-204, 13-10-211 and 13-15-206 MCA. It was an act revising laws relating to write-in candidates, requiring all write-in candidates to file a declaration of intent. This means only votes cast for official declared write-in candidates are counted and reported in the election. Therefore, elections held after the 2023 legislative session, only the declared candidate votes were counted. The Mickey Mouses were not.

However, the administrative rules were not amended after the 2023 session to remove the write-in lines for races that did not have an official declared write-in candidate. Example: neighborhood councils would have five write-in lines below the last candidate's name because there are five available positions.

In the 2025 legislative session HB207 passed and was signed by the Governor with an immediate effective date. The bill amended 13-1-403 (2) (a), 13-1-502 (3), 13-10-211 (1) and 13-1-403 (2) (a) MCA.

HB207 amended the write-in candidate filing deadline for a local government election no sooner than 105 days and no later than 90 days before. A declaration of intent must be filed by 5:00 p.m. on the 90<sup>th</sup> day before the election. The deadline to file as a declared write-in candidate for the general election was moved up to August 6th from September 2nd. There were no declared write-in candidates for any offices in the City Municipal General Election.

The Secretary of State has recently drafted new administrative rules that cover all the changes related to HB536 and HB207, which means only if an office has a filed write-in candidate or a write-in line is required by statute, shall a write-in line be printed below the last candidate for the office. A write-in line is required by 13-10-403 in a Presidential Preference Primary and required by 20-15-220 for Community College Trustee elections.

Unfortunately, unless voters follow the election laws passed by the legislature in 2023 and 2025 regarding write-in candidates, they will not understand why the write-in names are no longer appearing on the ballot.

Mayor Reeves received clarification that if he did not have an opponent this upcoming election, a mayor position would not appear on the ballot.

Commissioner Tryon moved, seconded by Commissioner McKenney, that the City Commission adopt Resolution 10607.

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 expressed concern that people will think that the election was canceled.

Mayor Reeves concurred with Commissioner Wolff's concern. He added that for the little savings, it will cause confusion if people see mayor, city commissioner, neighborhood councils 3, 5 and 7 on the ballot and they will wonder what happened to the other neighborhood councils.

Commissioner Wilson commented that she believes this is going to disenfranchise citizens in thinking that neighborhood councils will not be around anymore. Having it on the ballot is going to let people know they have a neighborhood council for their area.

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

Motion carried 3-2 (Mayor Reeves and Commissioner Wilson dissenting).

#### CITY COMMISSION

24	. MISC	CELLAN	IEOUS	REPORTS	S AND A	NNOI	UNCE	MENTS.

None.

#### 25. COMMISSION 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 September 16, 2025, at 8:12 p.m.

Motion carried 5-0.	
	Mayor Cory Reeves
	Deputy City Clerk Darcy Dea

Minutes Approved: October 7, 2025