

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS
October 7, 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 and Deputy City Manager Bryan Lockerby, Public Works Director Chris Gaub, Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry, Finance Director Melissa Kinzler and Grant Administrator Tom Hazen, City Attorney David Dennis, Human Resources Director Gaye McInerney, Police Chief Jeff Newton, and City Clerk Lisa Kunz.

AGENDA APPROVAL:

The City Manager noted there should be three appointees when the Commission makes their motion for Agenda Item 18. 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.

MILITARY UPDATES

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

Colonel Maureen Maphies, Deputy Commander, 120th Airlift Wing, provided the following updates:

- The Site survey has been delayed to January, in correlation with the arrival of the first aircraft.
- Five pilots are qualified, and four pilots are in training.
- The closing for the drop zone property is expected to occur in December.
- The ramp upgrades are complete for the arrival of the new C-130J aircraft.

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- Due to furloughs, celebration events did not occur for Gen. Buel Dickson who retired as of September 30th, relinquishing command of the Montana Air National Guard to Gen. Trace Thomas. Wing Commander, Col. Scott Smith, moved up to Chief of Staff that Gen. Trace Thomas was holding. Jason Green is the Wing Commander as of October 4, 2025.
- Appreciation was expressed for community support of the 136 deployers and aircraft that returned home in September.
- Three airmen are currently deployed and 16 airmen will be deployed in the near future.

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

2. **Ben Forsyth**, City resident, commented that he has appeared before the Commission approximately 20 times to discuss what he describes as scientifically proven harms of marijuana. He expressed concern that the Commission's inaction on the issue amounts to support for those harms. Mr. Forsyth compared several Montana statistics with national averages and concluded that the rate of child neglect in Montana is disproportionately high.

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS

3. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

None.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

4. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

None.

CITY MANAGER

5. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

City Manager Greg Doyon updated the Commission as follows:

Great Falls Animal Shelter

- At a recent two-hour free rabies vaccination clinic, the Great Falls Animal Shelter vaccinated 210 animals in two hours.
- The Great Falls Animal Shelter held a "Raise the Woof" comedy night to raise funds to maintain the facility, vaccination events and taking care of the animals.
- Tomorrow kicks off the Bissel Pet Foundation's Empty the Shelters event that runs through October 15, 2025.

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Ongoing hiring processes

- Jeremy Jones has been appointed as the next Deputy City Manager and will start October 31, 2025.
- Initial interviews are ongoing with Park and Recreation Director candidates.
- Jeremy Virts has been named the Interim Fire Chief for the next 30-days. The position will be rotated monthly between two leadership team members.

Manager Doyon also announced that, pursuant to the authority granted to him by the City Commission, he executed a blend and extend contract on September 17, 2025, with Guzman Energy to supply energy to the City at \$69.95/megawatt hour for a 33-month term through June 30, 2028. All the other terms previously agreed to remain in effect. He is expecting approximately \$115,000 in energy savings over the term of the contract.

The Public Works Department took delivery today of two new snow plow trucks that were ordered in 2023.

Manager Doyon recognized Darren Yatsko, Street Division Foreman, on his retirement from the City and expressed appreciation to Darren for his 30-years of service.

CONSENT AGENDA

6. Minutes, September 16, 2025, City Commission Meeting.
7. Total Expenditures of \$3,698,955 for the period of August 28, 2025, through September 10, 2025, to include claims over \$25,000, in the amount of \$3,000,789.
8. Contracts List.
9. Approve the Final Payment for the Mansfield Theater Ceiling Repair Project in the amount of \$22,024.50 to Custom Plaster, LLC, and \$225.50 to the State Miscellaneous Tax Fund, and authorize the City Manager to make the payments. **OF 1833.1**
10. Set a public hearing for November 4, 2025, on Resolution 10604 to amend Resolution 10545, modifying the existing Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for Ponderosa Solutions LLC, located at 6501 18th Ave N., to allow for the handling of additional hazardous substances.
11. Approve a Professional Services Agreement with Matrix Consulting Group in the amount of \$94,792 for the Great Falls Comprehensive Fee Study, Cost Allocation Plan, and Park and Recreation Operational Efficiency Review, and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement.

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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. Hearing none, Mayor Reeves asked if there was any discussion amongst the Commissioners.

Commissioner McKenney referred to Agenda Item 11 and suggested this is the perfect time to work on marketing the Scheel's Aim High Big Sky facility, getting more memberships, and looking at rates to reduce the subsidy from the general fund.

Commissioner Wolff commented that the Scheel's Aim High Big Sky facility is a huge facility that offers lots of services. She doesn't understand why anyone would think the facility would not be in the red after one year. She encouraged positive communication and messaging about the facility.

Manager Doyon clarified that taking a look at marketing the Scheel's Aim High Big Sky facility is an element of the contract with Matrix. He provided background information on the grant opportunity that the Commission pursued. It brought back an indoor pool complex combined with a recreational center to integrate different revenue streams into one facility. After committing to the grant, Covid dramatically impacted inflation rates, materials, and costs for chemicals. Another impact during that time was an adjustment to energy rates, which was not part of the original pro forma. It was very clear that the City would always have to subsidize any facility the City constructed, combined or not, or independent or not. The question is how much of a subsidy is required to operate that facility successfully, either with improved marketing or looking at a different operating model all together. His hope is that this study will ask the hard questions of the community and realize the costs for fees and services. The neighborhood pools also need updates and there are other amenities at end of life that the City will have to have conversations about with the community.

Mayor Reeves called for the vote.

Motion carried 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

12. CITY OF GREAT FALLS STORMWATER MASTER PLAN. OF 1361.1

- I. Ordinance 3279, amending Title 13, Chapter 24, Referencing the City of Great Falls Stormwater Master Plan.**
- II. Resolution 10600, adopting the City of Great Falls Stormwater Master Plan.**

Mayor Reeves declared the joint public hearing open and asked for presentation of the agenda report.

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Public Works Director Chris Gaub reported that the requested action is to conduct a public hearing and subsequently adopt the updated Stormwater Master Plan via Ordinance 3279 and Resolution 10600. The Master Plan has not been updated since it was first published in 1989.

This item was first presented at the Commission meeting on September 16, 2025. To recap, the Plan provides a comprehensive analysis of the city's stormwater system. It highlights deficiencies and evaluates various projects to address issues. These efforts help preserve our 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 of the progress made over the past 36 years and considers current and future growth areas. This update also provides the first city-wide digital stormwater model, which will assist staff in infrastructure planning and also with responding to developer requests for system capacities.

Staff held a public comment period, including an open house, and revised the Master Plan to incorporate suggestions and minor corrections where practical. No major changes were introduced.

Ordinance 3279 would update the City Code that currently references the City's 1989 Storm Drainage Master Plan to instead state: the "most recent edition" of the Master Plan. Resolution 10600 would then formally adopt the updated Stormwater Master Plan.

Mayor Reeves asked if the Commissioners had any questions of Director Gaub. Hearing none, Mayor Reeves asked if there were any comments from the public in support of Ordinance 3279 and Resolution 10600.

Jake Clark, Great Falls Development Alliance (GFDA), commented an updated storm water master plan is great news. For a variety of different development in Great Falls, GFDA continues to run into storm water as a challenge to getting things done. Having some predictability and a plan that developers can look at to see if an area of town they are looking at developing is on pace to have those issues being addressed by the City is really helpful information. It is helpful for developers considering large scale or housing projects to see the current storm water infrastructure in place, and if improvements are forthcoming or not. This gives predictability to the development community and is well received.

Mayor Reeves asked if there were any comments from the public in opposition to Ordinance 3279 or Resolution 10600. Hearing none, Mayor Reeves closed the joint public hearing and asked the will of the Commission.

Commissioner Wilson moved, seconded by Commissioner Wolff, that the City Commission adopt Ordinance 3279.

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

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Commissioner McKenney inquired how this plan would fit with the upcoming growth policy.

Director Gaub responded that the plans will work together to be successful.

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

Motion carried 5-0.

Commissioner Tryon moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson, that the City Commission adopt Resolution 10600 adopting the City of Great Falls Stormwater Master Plan.

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

Hearing none, Mayor Reeves called for the vote.

Motion carried 5-0.

13. REQUEST FROM JOSEPH AND JESSICA BOSO FOR ANNEXATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF ZONING FOR PROPERTY ADDRESSED AS 1420 17th AVENUE SOUTHWEST.

- I. Resolution 10595, to approve the annexation of the subject property and the adjoining right-of-way of 18th Alley Southwest.**
- II. Ordinance 3277, to assign R-3 Single-Family High Density zoning district for the subject property.**

Mayor Reeves declared the joint public hearing open and asked for presentation of the agenda report.

Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry reported that Resolution 10595 proposes the annexation of property at 1420 17th Avenue Southwest and the adjoining 18th Alley Southwest right-of-way, along with approval of the Annexation Agreement. Ordinance 3277 is presented to assign R-3 Single-Family High Density zoning to the property.

The applicants, Joseph and Jessica Boso, initiated this annexation in order to connect their home to municipal water and sanitary sewer services. A letter was signed in advance permitting early connection, with the understanding that failure to complete annexation would require disconnection at their expense.

The subject property is a 0.34-acre lot contiguous to existing city limits and within a previously annexed area. The requested R-3 zoning aligns with both the existing single-family home and the surrounding development pattern.

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Both staff and the Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission recommend approval of the annexation and zoning designation, subject to the following three conditions: Compliance with all applicable codes and ordinances; Execution and recording of the Annexation Agreement; and Future development consistent with R-3 zoning standards.

Mayor Reeves asked if the Commissioners had any questions of Director Cherry.

Hearing none, Mayor Reeves asked if there were any comments from the public in support of Resolution 10595 and Ordinance 3277.

Hearing none, Mayor Reeves asked if there were any comments from the public in opposition to Resolution 10595 and Ordinance 3277.

Hearing none, Mayor Reeves closed the joint public hearing and asked the will of the Commission.

Commissioner Wolff moved, seconded by Commissioner Tryon, that the City Commission adopt Resolution 10595 to annex the property legally described as Lot 4A, Block 7, University Addition and approve the accompanying Annexation Agreement, subject to the Conditions of Approval being fulfilled by the applicants.

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

Hearing none, Mayor Reeves called for the vote.

Motion carried 5-0.

Commissioner Wilson moved, seconded by Commissioner McKenney, that the City Commission adopt Ordinance 3277 to assign R-3 Single-Family High Density zoning to the subject property, subject to the Conditions of Approval being fulfilled by the applicants.

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

Hearing none, Mayor Reeves called for the vote.

Motion carried 5-0.

14. RESOLUTION 10601, TO ALLOW THE USE OF UP TO \$300,000 IN GREAT FALLS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TAX INCREMENT FINANCING INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT FUNDS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS AND THE ACCOMPANYING DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT.

Mayor Reeves declared the public hearing open and asked for presentation of the agenda report.

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Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry reported that this item is a public hearing for Resolution 10601, which would authorize the use of up to \$300,000 in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds from the Great Falls International Airport Tax Increment Financing Industrial District (GFIA TIFID), along with approval of the accompanying Development Agreement.

The request comes from the Great Falls International Airport Authority to support Phase II of its Industrial Development Project. This phase will extend water, sewer, electric, and data infrastructure to properties west of the Cascade County Detention Center, enabling the development of four to six new 2,400-square-foot industrial bays targeted for manufacturing and aviation-compatible tenants.

Phase I, approved by the Commission in 2021, was completed in 2024 and has already resulted in active leasing, including a Peterbilt dealership.

Staff has evaluated the application under applicable state law, the adopted GFIA TIFID Plan, and the City's TIF funding criteria. Additionally, the proposal was reviewed by the City's third-party legal counsel, Dorsey & Whitney LLP, who confirmed the project's eligibility for TIF funding under Montana Code.

The Airport is not seeking additional incentives or abatements beyond this TIF contribution, and there are enough funds in the district to satisfy the application.

Staff recommends approving Resolution 10601 and the related Development Agreement.

John Faulkner, Airport Director representing the Airport Authority, 2800 Terminal Drive, reported that the Airport Authority has authorized a Development Agreement and approved construction of Phase II condos, consisting of up to six units planned for spring. Airport Director Faulkner noted robust demand for industrial and production space.

Over the past year, especially in response to tariff-related pressures, many businesses have expressed interest in locating production facilities in Great Falls as a strategy to hedge tariff risks. The Authority has received repeated inquiries from companies seeking immediate occupancy; however, when informed that new space could be available only in 18 months, most choose to relocate to other communities.

To address this, the Authority concluded that it is essential to develop inventory in advance to attract and retain businesses. The current development will provide approximately 100,000 square feet of light industrial space, featuring 2,400-square-foot flexible bays designed for small-scale operations such as welding, coating, and light manufacturing.

At present, there are five industrial sites for sale in Great Falls, but none combine City utilities with a 15-foot clear span, making this project a unique product line for the region. The Authority expects this site to serve as a catalyst for broader economic development, especially as the missile upgrade project brings in new small businesses needing production facilities in coming years.

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The Airport Authority has also signed a lease with a new aviation company, to be publicly announced later this month. The company manufactures airport components and multiple airplane product lines and plans to expand to include a hangar and production facility with up to 12 employees.

Airport Director Faulkner emphasized that having ready-to-occupy space is invaluable for fostering economic growth in the community.

He concluded that the water line extension for this project will loop into existing stubs, improving maintenance and reliability. The extension will serve five additional five-acre lots, with over 200 acres beyond that available for future development, ensuring many years of growth capacity.

Mayor Reeves asked if the Commissioners had any questions of Director Cherry or Airport Director Faulkner.

Hearing none, Mayor Reeves asked if there were any comments from the public in support of Resolution 10601.

Jake Clark, Great Falls Development Alliance (GFDA), noted that many of the businesses requiring industrial zoning and the types of spaces supported by this TIF request typically do not build or own their own facilities. Instead, these businesses rely on leased space due to the nature of their business models.

Mr. Clark emphasized that the Airport Authority's development addresses a specific market need by creating flexible light industrial space suitable for a broad range of businesses. The GFDA supports the project, viewing it as both a sound investment and a bold, strategic risk undertaken by the Airport Authority to promote economic growth in the community.

Mayor Reeves asked if there were any comments from the public in opposition to Resolution 10601. Hearing none, Mayor Reeves closed the public hearing and asked the will of the Commission.

Commissioner Wolff moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson, that the City Commission adopt Resolution 10601 to allow the use of up to \$300,000.00 in Great Falls International Airport Tax Increment Financing Industrial District funds and approve the accompanying Development Agreement for infrastructure improvements for Phase II of the Industrial Development Project.

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

Commissioner Tryon commented he appreciates the work of the Airport Authority and what it is doing for the community. He pointed out this is the perfect use of TIF funds.

Commissioner McKenney received clarification that the TIF District is the entirety of the airport property, which has all been annexed into the City.

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Commissioner McKenney inquired if developers could buy the airport property or if it could only be leased.

Airport Director Faulkner explained that all airport land originated through federal grants, meaning it is federally restricted and cannot be resold without repayment to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). As a result, the Airport Authority does not sell property outright.

Instead, the Authority typically leases land on a long-term basis, allowing lessees to own the improvements (such as buildings) situated on the leased parcels. In some cases, the Airport Authority constructs condominium-style units, which can then be purchased as improvements located on leased land.

Per FAA regulations, airport land may be leased for terms of up to 40 years.

Commissioner Wilson commented that this is a great project and great use of TIF funds.

Commissioner Wolff commented that, being the liaison on the Airport Board the last four years, it has been delightful to learn about the airport and all the things that they are doing.

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

Motion carried 5-0.

15. RESOLUTION 10603, TO ALLOW THE CITY OF GREAT FALLS TO USE UP TO AN ADDITIONAL \$382,690 IN DOWNTOWN URBAN RENEWAL DISTRICT TAX INCREMENT FINANCING FUNDS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE MANSFIELD THEATER CEILING REPAIR, THEATER SEAT REPLACEMENT, AND CIVIC CENTER ELEVATOR REPAIR PROJECTS.

Mayor Reeves declared the public hearing open and asked for presentation of the agenda report.

Grant Administrator Tom Hazen reported that the Mansfield Theater hosted the dedication of this Civic Center on April 19, 1940. Since that day the Mansfield has hosted musical assemblies for the Great Falls Public School System, Great Falls Symphony performances, private parties, and town hall meetings. This venue has been visited by celebrities such as George Carlin, Itzhak Perlman, and Yo Yo Ma. This theater has performed all these duties with the original seats and ceiling in place that was installed over 85 years ago.

Additionally, the Civic Center Elevator provides access to the second and third floors of the Civic Center for patrons with mobility limitations. The current Elevator systems were installed in 1983.

The combined forces of age, use, and the elements began to directly threaten the ongoing viability of the Mansfield Seats, the Theater Ceiling, and Civic Center Elevator. The

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Seats grew increasingly uncomfortable and, when broken, expensive to repair. The Ceiling suffered water damage leading to discoloration and instability. The Elevator suffered numerous mechanical failures and service interruptions. Early quotes and estimates placed the cost of these three projects at \$1,128,800.00.

Staff began identifying funding sources for these projects. The Montana Historic Preservation Grant provided \$250,000.00 for the repair of the ceiling. The Montana State Local Infrastructure Partnership Act (SLIPA) provided \$577,500.00 to the Seats and Elevator projects. Finally, a request for \$400,000.00 of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) from the Downtown Urban Renewal District was approved. In total, \$1,227,500.00 of outside funding was collected to fund these renovations.

Unfortunately, several months later, when construction bids were opened, the total final cost of the projects came to \$1,610,190.00 reflecting a funding shortfall of \$382,690.00. This information was presented at the March 18, 2025 Work Session. Staff recommended accepting the bids and going forward with the projects despite the shortage. Staff also presented that it would undertake a capital campaign and request donations and contributions from corporate and individual donors. If that failed, a second TIF request would be submitted. The primary aim being to avoid usage of City general funds. The contracts were approved, and staff began contacting potential donors. Ultimately, the capital campaign proved ineffective, and Staff prepared an increased TIF request and presented it to the Downtown Development Partnership on August 27, 2025. The Partnership unanimously approved the City's request to use TIF funds to cover the \$382,690.00 funding gap.

The balance of the Downtown TIF is \$5,376,464.95 as of today, October 7, 2025, and accrues approximately \$2 million annually.

Outside TIF counsel has verified that this proposal meets the State and Local requirements for TIF eligibility. The Montana Code Annotated states that tax increments may be used by local governments to pay costs for "publicly owned buildings" and "public improvements" if these installations are identified in an urban renewal plan. The City of Great Falls Amended and Restated Downtown Urban Renewal Plan includes increasing the utilization, preservation, and rehabilitation of the Mansfield Theater and Great Falls Civic Center as goals for TIF utilization. The Civic Center and Mansfield Theater are economic drivers in the downtown area. Conventions or performances held in these venues generate revenue for hospitality businesses and other local enterprises. These results align with the ambition of the Renewal Plan to develop a regional destination in downtown Great falls.

In summary, TIF implementation will allow the City to satisfy contractual obligations undertaken to repair the Mansfield Theater and Civic Center Elevator. TIF usage will allow the City to complete these projects without reducing the general fund.

Additionally, there is sufficient balance in the TIF to meet this obligation and any other outstanding approved activity. Finally, this activity is eligible by State and Local

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eligibility requirements. For these reasons, staff recommends that the Commission adopt this resolution and allow for an additional \$382,690.00 to be used for these projects.

Mayor Reeves asked if the Commissioners had any questions of Grant Administrator Hazen.

Commissioner Wilson inquired the alternative if the Commission didn't approve the use of TIF funds.

Grant Administrator Hazen responded the general fund or alternative funding possibilities.

Mayor Reeves asked if there were any comments from the public in support of Resolution 10603.

Hearing none, Mayor Reeves asked in there were any comments from the public in opposition to Resolution 10603. Hearing none, Mayor Reeves closed the public hearing and asked the will of the Commission.

Commissioner Wolff moved, seconded by Commissioner Tryon, that the City Commission adopt Resolution 10603.

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

Commissioner Tryon revisited concerns he had previously expressed regarding underperforming enterprise funds and the need for the Commission to maintain focus on core city services and reducing general fund subsidies.

He referenced the February 4, 2025, Commission retreat, where a discussion centered on prioritizing essential services, eliminating general fund subsidies, and exploring options to close or privatize certain non-performing city operations. At that meeting, Commissioner Tryon had noted that the Commission already knew which enterprise funds received subsidies from the general fund and had suggested determining the extent of those subsidies and potential cost savings from discontinuing such services before entering this year's budget cycle.

He also cited the June 26, 2025, Special Work Session, during which the Commission again discussed the need to review subsidized funds and consider alternatives to ongoing general fund support. He recalled City Manager Doyon's comments that the Events Division lacks the capacity to produce its own shows and would require a revised business model for coordinating Civic Center facility use.

An RFP was subsequently issued, and the Matrix Consulting Group was selected to evaluate event fees for the Civic Center.

Commissioner Tryon remarked that this issue has not received sufficient follow-up.

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He expressed concern that the Commission is now considering using Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to continue the project. While he acknowledged that the project qualifies for TIF funding and should be completed, he cautioned against establishing a pattern of relying on general fund dollars or TIF funding to sustain such projects. Commissioner Tryon further noted that, although technically eligible, several people believe this use of TIF funds stretches the program's original intent.

Mayor Reeves received certainty from Grant Administrator Hazen that this will be the last time that this project will require TIF funding.

Commissioner Wolff emphasized the importance of recognizing the distinct functions of the convention center and the theater spaces. She noted that not all community interests are sports-related, and that many residents' lives are centered around music, theater, and the arts.

Commissioner Wolff highlighted that a local couple recently donated \$500,000 to support the youth orchestra, demonstrating strong community investment in the arts. She encouraged the Commission to take a holistic approach when considering the use and development of these facilities and expressed her anticipation for the results of the Matrix Consulting Group study to better understand how the spaces can be maximized and shared in partnership with other entities.

Commissioner Wilson expressed concern that three separate projects were presented together for consideration. She stated that the elevator replacement should have been addressed first, followed by the ceiling repairs, with the seat replacement considered last in priority.

Commissioner Wilson acknowledged that the elevator and ceiling projects represent critical infrastructure needs, but she questioned whether new seating qualifies as an infrastructure improvement.

Commissioner McKenney stated that he reached a different conclusion regarding the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for the proposed projects. He noted that local governments and TIF districts have increasingly become viewed as targets of legislative scrutiny, with some legislators asserting that certain communities have stretched TIF use beyond its intended purpose.

Commissioner McKenney cautioned that approving projects such as this could serve as a "red flag" to the Legislature, especially as there have been recent discussions about restricting TIF authority statewide. He emphasized that, while the proposed funding may be legally permissible, he does not believe it is the right course of action.

He further expressed concern that the City has developed a habit of using Downtown TIF funds—due to ongoing budget constraints—to support government buildings rather than core downtown infrastructure improvements. He recommended that the City identify an alternative funding source for the seat replacement project.

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City Manager Doyon stated that he understands the concerns expressed by the Commission. He noted that previous Commissions have faced similar challenges when determining how to allocate general fund revenues—which are derived from taxpayer dollars—to various city services and amenities.

Manager Doyon noted that, throughout these discussions, there has been a consistent Commission priority to increase resources for public safety, which has further complicated funding decisions. He empathizes with the Commission's concerns about both the Legislature's scrutiny of TIF use and the City's fiscal limitations.

However, he emphasized that the Civic Center serves as an anchor facility in the downtown area, hosting large-scale events that have a positive ripple effect on the local economy. Manager Doyon encouraged the Commission to review and revise, if desired, the Downtown Master Plan or the TIF District Plan to ensure that future project funding aligns with the Commission's vision and avoids potential legislative concerns.

He concluded by reiterating that the Civic Center generates meaningful economic activity and contributes to the vitality of the downtown district due to the nature and size of the facility.

Commissioner Tryon added that he might have shared Commissioner McKenney's concerns regarding the use of TIF funding if not for the Downtown Development Partnership's (DDP) favorable recommendation. He stated that the DDP's support of these projects as a worthy use of TIF funds indicates that the improvements will benefit downtown businesses.

Based on the DDP's endorsement, Commissioner Tryon will support the use of TIF funds for the seating, elevator, and ceiling projects.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Reeves had the City Clerk reiterate the motion on the floor and called for the vote.

Mayor Reeves called for the vote.

Motion carried 3-2 (Commissioners McKenney and Wilson dissenting).

OLD BUSINESS

16. CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT AWARD: WTP HEAD HOUSE AND RAPID MIX VAULT. OF 1332.7

Public Works Director Chris Gaub reported that this item is a request to award a construction contract to repair the Head House of the 100-year-old Water Treatment Plant, which delivers one of the most essential services we have — clean drinking water. The Head House is where the treatment process begins — it's the first place raw water from the Missouri River enters the system.

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During a valve operation in 2023, the floor was damaged due to structural weaknesses. After further inspection, the need for additional structural repairs were uncovered. TD&H Engineering performed an assessment and prepared a plan to restore the Head House safely and effectively. Their structural evaluation identified deficiencies that require repair or replacement within five years.

In June of 2024, the Commission approved a Professional Services Agreement with TD&H for designing the repairs, assembling construction documents, assisting in the bid process, and providing full-time construction inspection.

The requested action tonight is that the Commission approve the contract for Sletten Construction Company to repair the deficiencies outlined in the evaluation. He noted that this work must be done while the plant is online and operating. This will be challenging, but it is possible with careful planning, engineering, and construction coordination. He also noted this project is contingent on SRF loan funding. Staff has been working this loan with DNRC and has very high confidence that DNRC will approve it. Once DNCR approves, a Resolution will come before the Commission for consideration on October 21st with a request for approval to utilize SRF funding.

To summarize, this is a two-step process for the Commission. First, approve the construction contract contingent on SRF loan funding. Second, on October 21, 2025, approve the use of SRF funding when DNRC approves the loan.

Commissioner Tryon moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson, that the City Commission award a construction contract in the amount of \$1,986,375.00 to Sletten Construction Company for the Water Treatment Plant Head House and Rapid Mix Vault project and authorize the City Manager to execute the contract 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 Wilson noted she has been in the head house and is glad to see this project moving forward.

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

Motion carried 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

17. LABOR AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF GREAT FALLS AND THE GREAT FALLS POLICE PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION (GFPPA) FOR THE PERIOD OF JULY 1, 2025 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2027.

Human Resources Director Gaye McInerney reported that the Great Falls Police Protective Association labor agreement is the fifth collective bargaining agreement to be

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completed in the 2025 negotiating season. The City began its collecting bargaining with its 11 unions in April 2025.

The labor agreement between the City of Great Falls and the Great Falls Police Protective Association consists of 84 sworn employees of the Police Department.

Members of the negotiating teams worked to update basic contractual language in order to make the Agreement clearer, more understandable, and consistent. Five key items included:

- The term of the Agreement is two years from July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2027.
- Article 17 – Health Insurance - Annual health insurance premiums will be shared with the City paying 80 (eighty) percent and the employee paying 20 (twenty) percent.
- Article 23 – Wellness Program - The Wellness Program incentive was increased from two days to three days of paid leave for completion of all three sections of the Wellness Program.
- Article 25 – Uniform Pay - A \$300 annual uniform allowance per officer payable in September each fiscal year.
- Article 9 – Compensation - Shift Differentials for the afternoon shift increased to \$0.75 per hour in addition to the regular hourly rate of pay and to \$1.25 per hour in addition to the regular hourly rate of pay when working the late afternoon shift or night shift.

For each year of the two-year contract, the base salary will increase two percent for market adjustment, three percent for COLA, and one percent for health insurance adjustment (80/20 cost sharing).

The fiscal impact of a two percent market adjustment, a three percent COLA and a one percent health insurance adjustment is approximately \$885,000 over the term of the two-year contract.

Commissioner Wolff moved, seconded by Commissioner Tryon, that the City Commission approve the labor agreement between the City of Great Falls and the Great Falls Police Protective Association (GFPPA) for the period of July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2027.

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 page 348 of the agenda packet and inquired if she was reading it correctly that once an officer attains his 17th year anniversary, his longevity pay will be increased for an accumulated total of \$330.00 per year.

Director McInerney clarified the longevity pay is \$16.50 per month for the maximum total of \$330.00 that goes into the officer's base wage.

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Commissioner McKenney referred to page 335 in the agenda packet and inquired the difference between the officer's annual base wage versus the average annual base wage.

Director McInerney responded that confirmed means an annual base wage of an officer that has been with the department one year, and the average is computing all the 84 sworn officers annual base wages together.

Commissioner McKenney referred to the one percent for health insurance adjustment to the 80/20 cost sharing and inquired why the cost sharing didn't just stay at 85/15.

Director McInerney responded that one of the consultant's recommendations was to change the cost sharing to maintain the health of the plan that the City has with its benefits.

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

Motion carried 5-0.

18. CASCADE COUNTY METRO REGION GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE FOR OPIOID ABATEMENT.

- I. Interlocal Agreement Between Cascade County and the City of Great Falls Establishing the Cascade County Metro Region Governance Committee for Opioid Abatement.**
- II. Resolution 10608 Appointing Metro Region Governance Committee Representatives.**

City Attorney David Dennis reported that the City of Great Falls and Cascade County have negotiated an Interlocal Agreement ("Agreement") to formally establish the Cascade County Metro Region Governance Committee for Opioid Abatement ("Committee"). This Committee will serve as the coordinating entity for opioid abatement funds allocated to the Cascade County Metro Region under the Montana Opioid Abatement Trust (MOAT) settlement framework.

Retained attorney Ben Snipes of Kovacich Snipes Johnson, P.C., reported that the City and County have taken proactive steps to address the opioid epidemic that has significantly impacted the community. Rather than remaining passive, the City and County chose to actively pursue benefits from opioid litigation settlements.

Attorney Snipes explained that this approach allows the City and County to retain local control over the settlement funds, providing autonomy to evaluate applications and allocate funding directly, rather than relying on state-level distribution, which often limits local input.

An Interlocal Agreement between the City and County has been established to create a governing body responsible for reviewing funding applications and determining how the

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opioid abatement funds will be utilized. This agreement ensures a collaborative review process between the two entities.

Currently, there are 14 applications under consideration and approximately \$1.2 million available in the Montana Opioid Abatement Trust designated for this community. Of that amount, 53% is allocated to the City and the remainder to the County. For projects not jointly funded, the City maintains autonomy over its share of the funds.

Attorney Snipes noted that City representatives have already been appointed under Resolution 10577 that established the governing body structure for opioid litigation settlement funds. The appointed representatives include Melissa Kinzler, Commissioner Tryon, and Commissioner Wilson. He stated that confirming these appointments will enable the Cascade County Metro Region Governance Committee for Opioid Abatement to begin reviewing and approving applications for funding in the near future.

City Attorney Dennis recommended appointment of the same three individuals to allow coordination across both governance structures and ensure direct accountability to the City Commission.

Commissioner Wilson moved, seconded by Commissioner McKenney, that the City Commission approve the Interlocal Agreement between Cascade County and the City of Great Falls establishing the Cascade County Metro Region Governance Committee for Opioid Abatement and authorize the City Manager to execute the Agreement on behalf of the City.

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

Ben Forsyth, City resident, shared his perspective on the relationship between recreational marijuana and opioid misuse. He noted that counties within Montana that prohibit recreational marijuana have lower per capita opioid misuse rates. He expressed his view that the opioid abatement efforts may not succeed as long as recreational marijuana is harmfully sold.

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

Hearing none, Mayor Reeves called for the vote.

Motion carried 5-0.

Commissioner Wolff moved, seconded by Commissioner Tryon, that the City Commission adopt Resolution 10608 appointing Melissa Kinzler, Rick Tryon and Shannon Wilson to serve as the City's representatives on the Cascade County Metro Region Governance Committee for Opioid Abatement, as established by the Interlocal Agreement between the City of Great Falls and Cascade County.

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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.

ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS

CITY COMMISSION

19. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Commissioner Wilson commended Animal Shelter Operations Manager Laramie Smovir and the shelter team for their participation in the Veterans Standdown event. She noted that they brought dogs, food, and supplies to distribute to veterans and offered free pet adoptions to those veterans.

Commissioner Wilson expressed her appreciation for Manager Smovir's dedication and the important work done by the Animal Shelter staff.

20. COMMISSION INITIATIVES.

Mayor Reeves noted that the City currently takes a reactive approach to code enforcement for various reasons. He asked whether the Commissioners supported directing the City Manager to re-evaluate the City's code enforcement practices and consider adopting a more proactive approach.

Commissioner Wolff reported that during the Downtown Safety Alliance meeting today, it was mentioned that Bozeman recently prohibited individuals from living in recreational vehicles (RVs) on city streets, resulting in some people relocating to Great Falls and parking in neighborhoods with abandoned houses. She noted that Volunteers in Policing (VIPs) collaborate with the Police Department to look for things like this. She expressed support for beginning proactive code enforcement efforts at this time.

Commissioner McKenney cautioned that while he supports staff exploring the topic, an aggressive enforcement approach could negatively impact community relations, as some residents already view police interactions unfavorably. He recommended further study before making any formal decision.

Commissioners Tryon and Wilson expressed no objection to staff exploring the issue further.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, **Commissioner Tryon moved, seconded by Mayor Reeves, to adjourn the regular meeting of October 7, 2025, at 8:41 p.m.**

Motion carried 5-0.

Mayor Cory Reeves

City Clerk Lisa Kunz

Minutes Approved: October 21, 2025