

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION
March 20, 2012

City Commission Work Session

Mayor Winters presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL: City Commissioners present: Michael J. Winters, Bill Bronson, Fred Burow, Mary Jolley, and Robert Jones. Also present were the City Manager; Deputy City Manager; Directors of Fiscal Services, Park and Recreation, Planning and Community Development; Police Captain; City Engineer; and the Administrative Secretary.

1. CDBG FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

Deputy Director of Planning and Community Development Wendy Thomas introduced members of the Community Development Council (CDC): Scott Anderson, First Interstate Bank; Dave Fink, U.S. Bank; Anita Fisher, Easter Seals-Goodwill; Sandie Wright, Children's Museum of Montana; Carrie Kopyy, NeighborWorks Great Falls; and Jolene Bach, Rural Dynamics.

CDC spokesperson Scott Anderson provided a handout of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) 2012/2013 funding priorities and CDC recommendations. Mr. Anderson reported the ten members of the CDC represent different backgrounds – six members represented non-profit organizations; one is a lawyer; and, three are bankers. The different experiences and areas of expertise were helpful in analyzing applicants' operations and finances.

The CDC recommendation process includes scoring applications, judging presentations, and arbitration. Total 2012/2013 CDBG grant money is \$777,959, and application requests are \$1.5 million+ (not including administration costs).

Members of the CDC visited applicants' facilities, and asked extensive questions about proposed requests and the sustainability of the organizations. The information was used to complete a complex scoring matrix, based on City and HUD guidelines, to distribute the grant money to the most deserving applicants.

Mr. Anderson noted the CDC struggled with not funding the Great Falls Development Authority (GFDA) application in the micro-business development category. CDC recommended using the grant money for Pinski Park equipment.

Commissioner Jolley questioned how the arbitration process works. Mr. Anderson responded that though the scoring matrix takes out the human element, projects do not match up dollar for dollar. Commissioner Jolley also asked if applicants were asked the same questions. Mr. Anderson responded he believes the questions were asked to each applicant.

Commissioner Bronson referenced CDC's minutes and questioned the discussion on the creation of a separate committee to address economic development issues. Mr. Anderson responded he believes that, after his presentation, GFDA President Brett Doney expressed an interest in forming a group to consider development in general. Ms. Bach commented that CDC members agreed a greater emphasis should be placed on economic development for Great Falls.

Commissioner Jones commended the CDC on the detailed information provided from the recommendation process. Mr. Anderson noted a lot of thought was behind the difficult decisions.

Commissioner Burow noted concern for not funding economic development, but expressed appreciation to the CDC for their difficult decisions.

Mayor Winters thanked the CDC for their efforts.

Mr. Doyon agreed there must be some certainty for eligibility of economic development dollars.

2. LEGISLATIVE REDISTRICTING PROPOSALS

On behalf of the Great Falls Area Chamber of Commerce (COC), Rhonda Wiggers provided a handout on Legislative Redistricting Basics. Cascade County lost a legislative seat in the 2010 census, and the COC chose to become a participant in the redistricting process of representing neighborhoods for the next ten years. The COC has been working with the Business Advisory Council on proposed maps.

The Redistricting Commission was appointed in 2009 and the COC weighed in by requesting communities be kept intact and districts be made as small as possible. After receiving the census numbers, the COC worked on creating a map. The Redistricting Commission will take local public comment on April 18, 2012.

The Redistricting Commission directed staff to develop four maps. One map moves current legislative districts to achieve the 9,894 people (plus or minus three per cent) needed to be a legislative district. The second map is a deviation map showing as close to exactly the right number of people in a House district (not number of voters). That map doesn't take neighborhoods into consideration. One map was created based on subdivision lines using neighborhood councils. Another map was created to keep city and rural separate.

Ms. Wiggers reported an additional map was created called the Communities Map that is receiving a lot of attention.

The COC map was designed creating communities of interest where a community already exists. The design began with school districts and neighborhood councils, but school districts could not be used since they aren't contiguous.

Ms. Wiggers reviewed the design of the COC map. The proposed districts include: (1) beginning in the center of town, the area east of the Missouri River and north of 10th Avenue South, including Black Eagle; (2) the center of Great Falls; (3) the east end of Great Falls; (4) south of 10th Avenue South; (5) the Riverview area north of the Missouri River; (6) the west side/rural; (7) Fox Farm/rural; (8) and a rural district.

Ms. Wiggers encouraged the Commission to voice their opinion on April 18th in the City Commission Chambers. She also encouraged them to support the COC map to keep communities of interest intact.

Mr. Doyon questioned if MAFB was included in the city limits, would that have a bearing on calibrating the redistricting numbers. Ms. Wiggers responded MAFB was included in the rural district.

Ms. Wiggers also encouraged the Commission to comment on Senate pairings on April 18th. Public hearings will be held across the state. In August, one map will be created. Three additional public hearings will be held, and one of those hearings is on Senate pairings. The legislature will vote on the final map in January, 2013.

Mr. Doyon questioned the gains and/or losses in the process. Ms. Wiggers responded that one House seat will be lost, but no Senate seat will be lost. She commented that although Great Falls grew in population, other communities grew at a faster rate.

Commissioner Bronson asked what other communities are trying to accomplish when preparing their maps. Ms. Wiggers responded Billings is also trying to follow neighborhood councils/neighborhoods. Bozeman submitted four maps so it was difficult to determine what they were doing. Kalispell also requested neighborhood changes.

Commissioner Bronson questioned if the Reapportionment Commission has commented on the maps. Ms. Wiggers responded they have seen the maps. Billings map was submitted early and is already a part of the urban map. Only slight changes were need to the Kalispell map. The Reapportionment Commission was very receptive to the COC map. They were confused about Bozeman's map because there wasn't a consensus in the community.

Commissioner Bronson asked who has seen the COC map. Ms. Wiggers responded the map is currently being presented to the Neighborhood Councils. The County Commissioners will have a presentation on March 21, 2012. She added she has presented the map to one civic club and will present to three additional clubs in the next two weeks. No one has expressed dislike of the COC map.

Commissioner Bronson questioned if the COC map has been presented to the local political parties. Ms. Wiggers responded the map was presented to the Cascade County Republican Central Committee; she has not received a response from the Democrat Central Committee.

Commissioner Burow asked about a recommendation for the Senate seat. Ms. Wiggers responded she believes the COC board will provide direction after they meet regarding the reaction from the Redistricting Commission.

Commissioner Burow questioned the process of bringing the redistricting process out into the community. Ms. Wiggers responded generally the political parties hire someone to create maps. Only one political party chose to do that this time. The Chamber of Commerce in several communities in the state decided their communities should be represented.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Winters adjourned the work session of March 20, 2012, at 6:20 p.m.