

Neighborhood Council 4 Minutes
Heritage Baptist Church – 900 52nd Street North
March 22, 2018

Council members in attendance: Sandra Guynn, Rudolf Tankink, Judy Tankink, Trey Torres and Gregg Matson

Others in attendance: See attached

Chair Sandra Guinn opened the meeting at 6:30 PM

Steve Herrig, Park and Recreation Director gave a brief overview and provided statistics of the City's Park District. The Park District Levy will be on the ballot May 8th. If approved the levy will be used to pay for increased parks forestry and trails, equipment, maintenance and improvements of recreation and aquatics programs. He also discussed consequences if the voters do not pass the levy. He answered questions and listened to suggestions from those in attendance. He wasn't familiar with how the City gauges park usage but would look into it.

Tammy Lacey, GFPS Superintendent gave a brief overview of the GFPS budget, levy details, and general information. She answered questions and provided student and staffing data. (See attached handout.)

Petitions and communications: None

Other Business: None

Committee Reports: Tray provided information from the Police Advisory Board meeting which was held earlier this month. He talked about the Police Department's year-end report and revealed statistical data on arrests, crime, etc. He talked about getting community input regarding school protection and security. The police department would also like to start a voluntary program which would include homeowners who have security cameras. The Police Department have a database of and contact the homeowner if a crime was committed in the neighborhood.

Old Business: Sandra made motion to accept February minutes as amended. Seconded. MSC

Sandra made a motion that we approve the bylaws as presented. Seconded. MSC

Steven Galloway, Republican candidate for SD12 introduced himself and talked about why he wants to run for office. Mike McNamara is running as a candidate in Republican HD24. He also talked about his experience, background and reason why he wants to serve in that capacity.

Next meeting March 22nd.

Meeting adjourned at 8:38.

Respectfully submitted

INFORMATION AT-A-GLANCE

- The Operational Levy is for \$1,349,048.
- As the investment is spread across all property in our community, it will cost less than \$20 per year or \$1.66 per month for the average homeowner.
- The passage of the levy will prevent additional deep reductions to teaching staff and educational programs.
- The proceeds from the Facility Bond passed in 2016 cannot be used to pay for teaching staff and educational programs.
- With a successful Operational Levy, GFPS will be limited in the amount of any future levy requests. The current funding formula will allow only minor adjustments in local funding based on student enrollment.
- GFPS has only passed an operational levy twice in the last ten years. Additional spending has not even equaled inflation.
- The passage of this levy will keep programs in place so students can have the same opportunities as the GFPS students who have come before them, and also maintain their competitiveness with the other AA Montana districts.

COMMUNITY

Strong and comprehensive public schools are the backbone of a strong and vibrant community.

UNITY

By coming together as a community we can keep the GREAT in Great Falls.

OPPORTUNITY

“Education is not a problem. Education is an opportunity.” Lyndon Johnson

THIS INVESTMENT IN OUR SCHOOLS WILL COST UNDER \$20 PER YEAR FOR THE AVERAGE HOME OWNER:

| Taxable Valued Home | \$100K | \$150K | \$200K |
|---------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Per Year | \$13.28 | \$19.92 | \$26.56 |
| Per Month | \$1.11 | \$1.66 | \$2.22 |

To calculate the estimated cost for your property, go here:
<https://gfps.k12.mt.us/school-elections-2018/>



YOUR VOTE COUNTS!

Ballots mailed to registered voters:

April 23, 2018

Ballots due by Election Day:

May 8, 2018

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

<https://gfps.k12.mt.us/school-elections-2018/>

GREAT FALLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS



COMMUNITY



UNITY



OPPORTUNITY

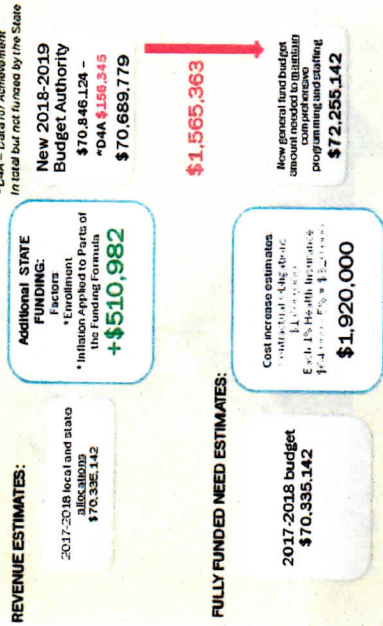
**ELECTION:
MAY 8, 2018**

Find more information at:
www.gfps.k12.mt.us/levy

GREAT FALLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
 Superintendent Tammy Lacey
 tammy_lacey@gfps.k12.mt.us
 P.O. Box 2429
 Great Falls, MT 59403
www.gfps.k12.mt.us
 406-268-6001

REVENUE SHORTFALL INFO

2018-2019 Budget Projections:



The difference between the revenue from the State and the increased general fund expenses is **\$1,565,363**

Increased expense estimates include:

- Employee contractual increases
 - 1500 people
 - 3rd largest employer in Great Falls
- A health insurance premium increase

LEVY AND REDUCTIONS

Montana school funding laws determine the budget authority for each district. GFPS has been operating below its budget authority for many years. As per Montana law, GFPS is asking for voters to authorize the maximum amount of additional budget authority allowed:

\$1,349,048

In order to balance the budget, there must also be reductions of:

\$216,315

If the levy passes and the maximum budget has been authorized, GFPS cannot run another levy unless enrollments significantly increase or school funding laws change.

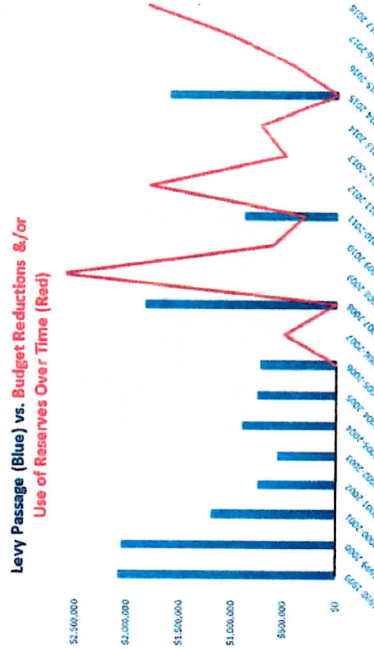
WHAT'S WITH THE BOND \$\$\$?

Our community supported the investment of \$98.8 million to construct, renovate and modernize our public schools in October, 2016. The proceeds from the Facility Bond can only be used for the specific items outlined on that ballot.

To see those items, check out the ballot here: <http://bit.ly/2FHzAq4>. These proceeds cannot be used for district operations to include all of the educational activities that are happening inside our buildings. That's why the Operational Levy is needed.

OUR LEVY HISTORY

The last time GFPS asked for support in the form of an Operational Levy was in 2014. Only two Operational Levies have passed in the last 10 years. Prior to 2007, our community invested in our schools by passing a levy nearly every year. Since 2007, GFPS has made **\$8.89 million** in spending reductions.



REDUCTION REVIEW

- \$8.89 million** in spending reductions:
- Nearly 80 teaching positions: elementary, science, math, industrial technology, English, music, art, medical prep, world languages, health/physical education, library, and family consumer science
 - 2 Cabinet-level administrators & other support staff
 - High school guidance counselors
 - Custodians
 - Summer school and after school tutoring programs
 - Professional development
 - Educational supplies
 - Textbooks
 - Technology purchases

TO MAINTAIN

The \$1,349,048 would be used to maintain current programs and activities. Without this investment, serious reductions will be required. Some possible reductions might be:

- Reducing the number of high school teachers
- Reducing the number of elementary teachers
- Reducing support staff
- Eliminating programs
- And others to be determined.

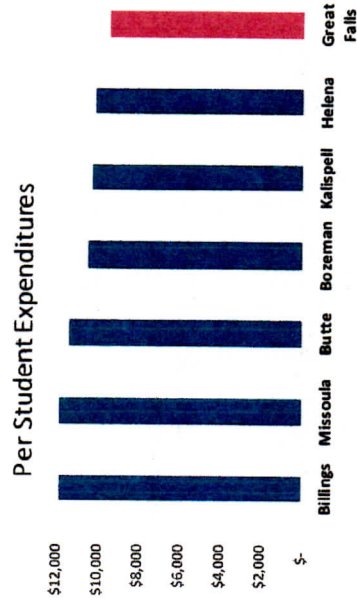
OUR BUDGET HISTORY

GFPS has been a stable and well-managed institution since 1888 as indicated by clean audits and the meeting of State accreditation standards.

Since 2000, the General Fund budget has increased by 28.2% or 1.57% per year. Inflation during that same timeframe increased by 41.66% or 2.31% per year. Even though costs increased more than budget authority, most programs have been maintained. Without this levy, that will change.

AA DISTRICT COMPARISON

GFPS graduates compete for jobs, college entrance and scholarships with graduates from the other large school districts. These communities tax and spend more per pupil than Great Falls. As a result, they have maintained and enhanced programming to ensure their students are college and career ready. Without the levy, we will reduce opportunities for our students.



K-8 & High School Average of All Budgeted Funds



On May 8, voters will be asked to consider creating a Park District to address \$12.6 million in deferred maintenance identified in the Park and Recreation Master Plan: <https://greatfallsmt.net/recreation>. If the creation of the Park District is approved by the voters, the proposed assessment amount for the District would be \$1.5 million annually for the first three years. The assessment method would be based on taxable property value. The estimated 2018 assessment for a property with a 2017 market value of \$100,000 would be \$1.91 per month.

Maintenance Problems and Consequences

- \$12.6 million in critical projects should be addressed in the next five years. Delaying maintenance increases costs of repairs and the critical projects list will continue to grow.
- Park trails, sports courts and other park facilities that deteriorate and become unsafe may be closed.
- Trees that aren't maintained create safety hazards, damage property, will become unhealthy and over time will die. Trees should be trimmed every 4-7 years and are currently being trimmed on a 30-35 year schedule.
- City parks are watered by aging and inefficient irrigation systems including manual systems that require significant staff hours and higher water usage.

Accessibility and Safety Issues

- 7 of 8 park bathrooms have ADA accessibility issues and need repairs and maintenance.
- Only 3 of 30 parks with play structures have ADA accessible sidewalks.
- 7 of 18 parks with walking trails have paths that are in poor condition including Gibson Park and Elks Riverside trails.
- 15 of 17 sports courts need repairs.
- The bath house at the Electric City Water Park needs major repairs and ADA accessibility improvements.

What is a Park District?

A Park District is a special purpose district which would allow the City to assess funds to be used for parks, forestry and trails for capital improvements, staff and operations. Funds may also be used for maintenance and improvements to recreation and aquatics facilities; but may not be used for programming.

What will the money be spent on?

Projects planned for the first three years include, but are not limited to:

- ADA restroom improvements for various parks
- ADA sidewalks to play structures
- Electric City Water Park bath house improvements
- Replacement of Elk's Riverside Park Trail
- Overlay of Gibson Park Trail
- Resurface sports courts (basketball, tennis/pickleball)
- Multi Sports dugouts/backstops
- Picnic pavilion
- Trail improvements
- Irrigation upgrades
- Tree trimming and replacement

What happens if the Park District doesn't pass?

The Park and Recreation Master Plan identified \$12.6 million in deferred or critical maintenance projects to be completed within the next five years. Deferred maintenance will continue with eventual closures of facilities and play equipment that are deemed unsafe. There will be a significant reduction of services including mowing, watering and tree maintenance with the community parks receiving more services than neighborhood parks.

Why doesn't the City sell park land?

The one time funds from the sale of park land would do little to help offset the \$12.6 million in deferred maintenance. In addition, most of the land is not conducive for any purpose other than open space which would make it difficult to sell. Some pieces are dedicated as park land and cannot be sold. Sale of park land requires a 4/5 vote of the City Commission.

For up to date information on the Park District call 771-1265,
Monday – Friday, 8am – 5pm
or visit <https://greatfallsmt.net>

VOTE MAY 8, 2018

PARK FACTS

82%
of people use
GF parks

57
city parks

69%
of people used
GF trails last year

53
miles of
River's Edge Trail

79%
of people oppose
selling park land

36,000
trees in
boulevards and
parks