

GREAT FALLS CITIZENS COUNCIL
Council of Councils Meeting
MINUTES
Tuesday, May 23, 2023
Gibson Room – Civic Center – 7:00 p.m.

Chair Sandra Guynn opened the meeting at 7:01 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

- Neighborhood Council representatives in attendance: NC3 Garri Mauch, NC4 Sandra Guynn, NC5 Eric Ray, NC6 Carl Donovan, NC7 Lisa Meyers, NC8 Karen Grove
- City Commissioner in attendance: Joe McKenney

Old Business

- January 24, 2023, minutes: Carl Donovan made the motion to accept the minutes as written. Eric Ray seconded the motion. The motion to accept the minutes passed unanimously.

New Business

- Sandra Guynn thanked Great Falls Police Department Chief Jeff Newton for inviting members of the neighborhood councils to the GFPD Awards Luncheon.
- **Great Falls Police Department Update:** Capt. Doug Otto provided the GFPD update to the councils. He said the department is currently short three officers. There have been 29 applicants but expects from that group to get to two or three individuals who may be hired. He said there are also six openings in the dispatch center. The GFPD is working on capital improvement projects, installing new carpeting in the building and continuing to move forward on the evidence building expansion. He said there has been personnel movement between jobs in the Support Services Bureau and a change with the bailiff position. For animal control, he said enforcement has become the norm. He said there were 209 violations during the past year, and to date there have been 132 citations written. He said an animal control officer is presently doing light duty as the officer had been bitten by a dog. The officer is now working on administrative work. Karen Grove asked about what the department can do with feral cats. Capt. Otto said their three ACOs are extremely busy and they do not have resources to handle this at the time. Carl Donovan said the Cascade County Humane Society has live traps available to handle feral cats.
- **Public Safety Levy:** Great Falls Fire Rescue Chief Jeremy Jones said the Wendt Agency was hired by the city to help educate voters on the public safety needs of the community. He said after the Crime Task Force met the chiefs produced options that would address the safety needs. He said everything they do is related to their response time. If the levy passes, they would like to add one new station, and place additional equipment and staff at the main station. He said the new station would be constructed in the CGF-MSU area if the levy were to pass. GFPD Chief Jeff Newton said everything added to the police department has a direct impact to the prosecutor's office and judges. He said if the levy passes, they are planning to add two additional school resource officers to the four that are currently working. He said there will be a town hall

meeting at 6 p.m. on June 14 in the Mansfield Center to answer questions from city residents. Garri Mauch said she was disappointed that the district of NC3 would not receive a new fire station. Chief Jones said the single-family residences located in north Great Falls did not trump the mixed use located in the southern part of the city. He said due to the population density and the higher call volume the new station would be needed in the south portion of the city. Commissioner Joe McKenney said the crime task force found a need to increase public safety. He said it would be too big of an ask to go for two additional fire stations, but they are moving in the right direction.

- **Long Range Transportation Study:** Consultant Project Manager Scott Randall discussed the Long Range Transportation Study. He said there was a minor update completed in 2018, but the last major update was completed in 2014. He said there is a federal requirement that the study must be done every five years for the city to receive federal funding. The study looks at the areas of the city expected to grow over the next 20 years. There were no changes in the boundaries from the 2018 LRTS. They are now at the front end of the study, inventorying the existing transportation system and forecasting the future population growth and traffic conditions. The next step will be to analyze the data, recommend solutions, and comply with fiscal constraints. He said as far as the transit system goes, they will not be looking at routing busses, but looking at potential bus stop locations. He said approximately 85 percent of Cascade County residents live in the Great Falls area, and 72 percent live within the city limits. He said the aging population and the younger generation may need alternatives to driving, and economic growth will place demands on the traffic. He said the online survey is now closed. There were 575 responses to the survey. He said he expected to LRTS to finish up in the fall, completing work in a six to nine month time period. Karen Grove asked what some of the larger city projects were. Andrew Finch said the city is working with the state on transportation projects. The Fox Farm Road project, paving Stuckey Road, the River's Edge Trail work alongside the river, reconstructing 9th Street N.W. from Central Avenue West to the Northwest Bypass, and the planning for a roundabout to be build at Watson Coulee Road and Vaughn Road were discussed. Andrew Finch suggested that council members send transportation issues to either him or City of Great Falls Communications Specialist Lanni Klasner to forward to the appropriate offices.
- **EPA Lead and Copper Rule Revision:** Mark Juris of the Great Falls Public Works Department provided the update on the project. The department is conducting a lead service line inventory, and are working a tap sampling plan and a lead service line replacement plan. He said this may require a homeowner to replace their lead service lines. He said there were 10,000 letters sent out to homeowners in July 2022 and there were 3,000 individual responses. A city website is available to view the plan and maps: greatfallsmt.net/publicworks/water-service-line-inventory. For the tap sampling plan, there will be 60 participants, and all schools and child care locations will be sampled. In their pilot project, 20 lead service lines will be replaced. A limited amount of federal funds are available to assist, but homeowners cannot dip into the funds. He said the city will distribute the funds where they are needed. Slides on this program used during a city commission meeting are available on the city website. He said the federal government has established toxicity levels and interested individuals can google the EPA website for additional information.
- **Good Neighbor Day Proclamation:** Sandra Guynn discussed the Good Neighbor Day Proclamation proposed for Sept. 28, 2023. City Commissioner Joe McKenney said commissioners ask members of the audience to join them at the podium during the presentation. Sandra Guynn

made a motion to recognize Good Neighbor Day with a proclamation during a Great Falls City Commission meeting. Garri Mauch seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Sharing

- **NC3** – Garri Mauch said NC3 continues to broadcast their regular meetings on Facebook Live. She said residents are still complaining about noise and smell coming from the Calumet Refinery. NC3 activities included participating in NeighborWorks Great Falls CommUNITY Cleanup with council members cleaning Skyline-Optimist Park and Valley View Park. She said NC3 will be holding its 2nd annual Summer Celebration on August 19, 2023.
- **NC4** – Sandra Gynn said her council members cleaned Pinski Park for NeighborWorks Great Falls CommUNITY Cleanup. She discussed the ongoing 36th Street traffic study. She said an animal control officer will be attending their upcoming meeting.
- **NC5** – Eric Ray said his council participated in the cleanup activities. He said the intersection of 11th Avenue and 32nd Street South had a four-way stop that was converted to a two-way stop. There is additional traffic now and he would like to have a stop light placed at that intersection. He said the city is conducting a traffic study and data will be available in September. He said NC5 will be meeting during the summer months and will be holding a candidate forum for mayor and city commissioner candidates.
- **NC6** – Carl Donovan said there are only four members of the council and they haven't been able to have a quorum to hold meetings recently. He said the council is concerned about speeding on 13th Avenue South as animals are being killed and the police department would be contacted.
- **NC7** – Lisa Meyers said her council voted to support the Great Falls Public Library mill levy. They also supported a conditional use permit for a rental property that would house traveling nurses. She said NC7 will be holding their ice cream social on August 20, 2023, and are looking for a better turnout. She said a new Little Free Library was stolen from a park. NC7 will be meeting throughout the summer months.
- **NC8** – Karen Grove said her council is short one member. She said an animal control officer attended their recent meeting and they discussed the feral cat issue. She said this is not a safe situation and she is hoping for a solution. Carl Donovan said there is a group of volunteers that will help with the feral cat problem. Karen Grove said NC8 will be holding an ice cream social in July or August.

Petitions & Communications:

- Josh Butterfly said he is concerned that a local business is selling out-of-date food. City of Great Falls Communications Specialist Lanni Klasner suggested that he contact the City-County Health Department or the Cascade County Commission, as they would have jurisdiction.
- Barb Waldon said a jet engine noise from the Calumet Refinery continued for 21 days. She asked if there had been a permit issued to the refinery and wanted to know if this would happen again. City Commissioner Joe McKenney said he would make some calls about this issue.

Garri Mauch made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Lisa Meyers seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Eric Peterson
NC3 Secretary