

REGULAR MEETING OF THE BILLINGS CITY COUNCIL

January 9, 2017

The Billings City Council met in regular session in the Council Chambers located on the second floor of the Police Facility, 220 North 27th Street, Billings, Montana. Mayor Thomas W. Hanel called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and served as the meeting's presiding officer. Mayor Hanel gave the invocation.

ROLL CALL: Councilmembers present on roll call were: Cromley, Yakawich, Brewster, Cimmino, McFadden, Friedel, Sullivan, Swanson, Clark and Brown.

MINUTES: December 12, 2016 and December 19, 2016 - Councilmember Cimmino moved for approval, seconded by Councilmember Brewster. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

COURTESIES:

- There were no courtesies.

PROCLAMATIONS:

- There were no proclamations.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS - TINA VOLEK

- Ms. Volek stated that there was an error on the agenda. She clarified that Item 1J should have stated \$66 million instead of \$66,000 in pooled Series 2017 sewer revenue bonds. She added that the bonds had recently been rated Aa3 by Moody's.
- Ms. Volek asked David Mumford, Public Works Director, to provide a status report regarding snow removal. Mr. Mumford stated that over \$573,000 had been spent in the month of December for fuel, repairs, equipment and labor. He added that employees had worked 84 hours per week during the month of December. Mr. Mumford stated that he hoped to have crews working on rut removal once the temperatures warmed.

PUBLIC COMMENT on "NON-PUBLIC HEARING" Agenda Items: #1 ONLY.

Speaker sign-in required. (Comments offered here are limited to one (1) minute for one item, or three (3) minutes for multiple items. Please sign in at the cart located at the back of the council chambers or at the podium. Comment on items listed as public hearing items will be heard ONLY during the designated public hearing time for each respective item. For Items not on this agenda, public comment will be taken at the end of the agenda.)

The public comment period was opened.

- **Tom Zurbuchen, 1747 Wicks Lane, Billings, Montana**, in reference to Item 1L, stated that there were not any financial documents provided for the proposed loan. He stated the City needed to be more restrictive with its loan policies. Mr. Zurbuchen, in reference to Item 1D, stated that the Vehicle Location System would not save enough money to justify the initial cost. In reference to Item 1G, Mr. Zurbuchen stated that even with the new officers that had been hired, the City would still be very short staffed. He added that more officers were needed.

There were no further speakers, and the public comment period was closed.

1. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Bid Awards:

1. **2017 Trailer with CCTV Inspection Equipment.** (Opened 12/27/16) Recommend delay of award until January 23, 2017.
2. **2017 56,000 GVW 12-Yard Dump Truck with Snow Plow Assembly and Sander.** (Opened 12/27/16) Recommend I-State Truck Center, \$180,462.
3. **Two 2017 58,000 GVW 12 yard dump trucks with plows and sanders.** (Opened 12/13/16) Recommend I-State Truck Center, \$369,939.
4. **4 Wheel Mechanical Broom High Dump Sweeper.** (Opened 12/13/16) Recommend Titan Machinery, \$202,890.
5. **Rose Park Pool Operations Building Replacement.** (Opened 12/20/16) Recommend Asphalt Plus, Inc., \$51,000.

B. Change Order #8, W.O. 15-10, Water Treatment Plant Chemical Building/Disinfection Improvements, COP Construction, \$60,668.46 and increase signing authority for the City Administrator an additional \$100,000.

C. Agreement with Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc.; \$253,031, Three years.

D. Agreement with MarshallGIS for an Automatic Vehicle Location System; \$34,567 for first year, \$20,992 for next three years.

E. Amendment #1, MET Transit Bus/Bench Advertising Concession Agreement, Blair Unlimited, extending the existing term approximately two months to allow staff to complete the RFP process.

F. Amendment #1, W.O. 16-07, Interstate 90 Water Main Crossing Project, Professional Engineering Services Contract, Sanderson Stewart, \$70,760.

- G. **Confirmation of Probationary Police Officers** - Cache Anderson, Anthony Carney, Lane Diercks, Ryan Donovan, Michael Freemen, Colt Kirkpatrick and Nathan Schara.
- H. **Acceptance of Donation** to the Billings Fire Department from Phillips 66 for a Digital Fire Training System and Rehabilitation Shelter; \$35,000.
- I. **Grant Application Request** to submit application for AmeriCorps VISTA and authorize City staff to negotiate and finalize the project if awarded.
- J. **Resolution** authorizing the issuance and calling for the negotiated sale of up to \$66,000,000 pooled Series 2017 sewer revenue bonds.
- K. **Second/Final Reading Ordinance expanding Ward V (Annexation #16-05)** for an approximate 17 acre parcel of land described as Tract 3 and a portion of Tract 4 and Tract 5, Certificate of Survey 1648, located west of Shiloh Road and between Central Avenue and Bell Avenue, just West of Legends West Subdivision. Janet R. Bergman, owner.
- L. **Revolving Loan Fund** to Last Chance Pub, \$125,000.

M. Bills and Payroll:

- 1. December 12, 2016
- 2. December 19, 2016

Councilmember Clark separated Item 1A2 and 1A3 for discussion.

Councilmember Brewster separated Item 1D for discussion.

Councilmember Brown separated Item 1M1 and 1M2 in order to abstain.

Councilmember Yakawich separated Item 1F for discussion.

Councilmember Sullivan separated Item 1L for discussion.

Mayor Hanel separated Item 1I for discussion.

Councilmember Cimmino separated Item 1A5 for discussion.

Councilmember Cimmino separated Item 1B in order to abstain.

Councilmember Sullivan moved for approval of the Consent Agenda, with the exception of Items 1A2, 1A3, 1A5, 1B, 1D, 1F, 1I, 1L, 1M1 and 1M2, seconded by Councilmember Yakawich. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Councilmember Clark, in reference to Item 1A2 and 1A3, asked when the new trucks would start being used. Mr. Mumford stated that the trucks would not arrive until June or July. He stated that they would be trading in older vehicles to purchase the new vehicles. Councilmember Clark moved for approval of Items 1A2 and 1A3, seconded by Councilmember Sullivan. Councilmember Friedel asked if staff had made inquiries with other areas with similar populations about what equipment was used and how long equipment lasted. Mr. Mumford stated that the trucks being purchased would also be used to dump and haul gravel and asphalt, in addition to snow removal. He stated that they would be used all year and not just during the winter months. He stated there was a program that reviewed the equipment and discussed how many hours the equipment had been used and at what point the equipment required more maintenance than it was worth. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Councilmember Brewster, in reference to Item 1D, stated he had talked to a former employer that had researched Automatic Vehicle Location Systems (AVLS) and had not found it to be cost effective. He asked for clarification on potential cost savings. Mr. Mumford stated that he had talked to Bozeman and they had AVLS. He stated that Bozeman had experienced savings, but that he would not know the exact number until the system was operational. He stated that his department looked forward to knowing where vehicles were located to help with dispatch issues. He stated that knowing which trucks had been in certain locations would be helpful for possible damage concerns or complaints of road maintenance. Councilmember Friedel asked how long Bozeman had been using the system and what kind of savings they had seen. Mr. Mumford stated that Bozeman had been using the system for about four years and found it had saved in dispatch time and equipment location time. He stated that savings would come from knowing where staff was located and having them get to the right place at the right time. Councilmember Brown asked if the system could be used by other departments. Mr. Mumford stated that eventually it could be used by other departments and that Planning would utilize it as well. Councilmember Brewster asked for clarification on the safety aspects of the system. Mr. Mumford stated that it could be used to locate staff if there was a medical issue. He added that if someone reported damage, staff could show that the vehicle had not been in the area of the reported damage. Councilmember Brewster moved for approval of Item 1D, seconded by Councilmember Sullivan. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Councilmember Yakawich, in reference to Item 1F, asked for clarification on the City's reimbursement for the project. Mr. Mumford stated there had been a general contractor and a sub-contractor that had performed boring under I-90 to extend a water main. He stated that there had been a lot of settling and pipe issues. He stated that the general contractor had stood behind the work and that liquidated damages would cover the cost of the engineering. He stated that the City would be responsible for the payment, but would be reimbursed by the general contractor. Councilmember Yakawich moved for approval of Item 1F, seconded by Councilmember Sullivan. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Hanel, in reference to Item 1I, asked for a brief overview of the AmeriCorps VISTA Program. Brenda Beckett, Community Development Manager,

stated that there had been over 177 VISTA members placed in Billings since 2007 and they had raised over \$3.5 million to support social services to impact poverty. She stated that they had various programs that included: community gardens, housing, food security, veterans and active military members. Councilmember Yakawich asked when the current grant request would expire. Ms. Beckett stated that the grant expired every year and staff had to justify their needs every year to qualify for the following year. Ms. Volek asked for clarification on the program's success. Ms. Beckett stated they had received national attention on several fronts and were one of the most successful programs in the nation. Councilmember Yakawich moved for approval of Item 1I, seconded by Councilmember Brewster. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Councilmember Sullivan, in reference to Item 1L, asked what sort of guarantee the City used in its loaning policies. Greg Krueger, Downtown Billings Alliance (DBA) Development Director, stated that the DBA obtained a great deal of financial information from the loan applicants by working directly with First Interstate Bank, Wells Fargo Bank, US Bank, Western Security Bank, Yellowstone Bank, Rocky Mountain Bank and Stockman Bank. He stated that the committee worked with the bank that had the applicants commercial loan in order to receive the financial information and credit reports. He stated that the Revolving Loan Fund committee reviewed all of the financial information of the loan applicants before making a decision. He stated that the information was destroyed afterwards since it was highly confidential and contained personal information. Mr. Krueger stated that the fund had started with \$1.6 million in the 1970's and had \$9 million in revolutions. He stated the fund had not had any of its loans default and all payments were current on outstanding loans. He added that the fund currently had over \$1 million in it. Councilmember Sullivan asked what would happen if an applicant's business went bankrupt. Mr. Krueger stated that the corporations and/or owners provided personal guarantees for the loans. Ms. Volek stated that the applicant owned a similar establishment in Red Lodge and had offered a personal guarantee on the loan. Councilmember McFadden asked if the revolving loan fund money came from the general fund. Mr. Krueger stated that the revolving loan fund money had been set aside from the original tax increment district that had been established in 1976. He stated that legislature had changed the tax increment laws to allow those loan funds to remain in perpetuity for urban renewal. Councilmember Sullivan moved for approval of Item 1L, seconded by Councilmember Brewster. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Councilmember Cimmino, in reference to Item 1A5, asked for clarification on the \$51,000 for the Rose Park Pool Building demolition. Mike Whitaker, Parks Director, stated that the initial asbestos removal had not fully removed the asbestos and the current contract was for the remediation and removal of the remaining asbestos. Councilmember Cimmino asked why the insurance company would not cover the asbestos remediation. Mr. Whitaker stated that the leftover insurance settlement funds were in the Parks account. He stated that the building had been insured, but not from a replacement perspective. He stated that the building would be approximately \$180,000 and the City had a \$100,000 deductible. He stated that the Parks Department had used \$40,000 to operate the park during the summer season, which had included a partial

remediation of asbestos. Councilmember Cimmino asked from where would the \$1 million to build the replacement building come. Mr. Whitaker stated that the money would come from the Park District. Councilmember Cimmino asked if the money would be earmarked for FY18. Mr. Whitaker stated that he had asked to delay FY17 projects so they could move forward with the Rose Park Pool Operations Building project. Councilmember Yakawich asked when the project was scheduled to start. Mr. Whitaker stated that if they received good bids, they would bring the information to Council at the next business meeting. Councilmember Clark asked if the building would be complete by next summer. Mr. Whitaker stated that it was on schedule to be completed by the upcoming swimming season. Councilmember Cimmino moved for approval of Item 1A5, seconded by Councilmember Sullivan. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Councilmember Brewster moved for approval of Item 1B, seconded by Councilmember Yakawich. On a voice vote, the motion was approved 10-0, with Councilmember Cimmino abstaining.

Councilmember Brewster moved for approval of Items 1M1 and 1M2, seconded by Councilmember Sullivan. On a voice vote, the motion was approved 10-0, with Councilmember Brown abstaining.

REGULAR AGENDA:

2. PUBLIC HEARING AND RESOLUTION #17-10597 approving and adopting budget amendments for FY17. Staff recommends approval. (Action: approval or disapproval of staff recommendation.)

Ms. Volek stated that staff did not have a presentation, but was available for questions.

Councilmember Clark asked if the amendments included money to implement Marsy's Law. Ms. Volek stated that it did include funding for Marsy's Law staffing and equipment. Councilmember Cimmino asked for clarification on the staffing amount changing from \$66,000 to \$43,337. Ms. Volek stated that the difference was the balance of the remaining year of staffing instead of the full year. Councilmember Cimmino asked why there was a need to fill the position right away if the law would not go into effect until July 1. Ms. Volek stated that it would take some time to fill the position and the program would take time to set up. She stated there were elements that needed to be handed out and coordinated. Brent Brooks, City Attorney, stated that the City was going to maintain a joint website with the County Attorney's office and staff would need training on how to input data into the joint website. He stated it was critical to fill the position as soon as possible to ensure time for training of staff.

The public hearing was opened.

There were no speakers, and the public hearing was closed.

Councilmember Swanson moved for approval of Item 2, seconded by Councilmember Sullivan. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

3. PUBLIC HEARING AND FIRST READING ORDINANCE FOR ZONE CHANGE #951: a zone change from Residential 7,000 (R-70) to Neighborhood Commercial (NC) on a 14,400 square foot parcel of land described as: East 1/2 of Lot 2 and Lot 3, Block 5 of Amended Block 2, Valley View Acres Subdivision. Steve Kuehn, owner. Zoning Commission recommends approval and adoption of the findings of the 10 criteria. (Action: approval or disapproval of Zoning Commission recommendation.)

Nicole Cromwell, Zoning Coordinator, gave a brief PowerPoint presentation with an overview of the property and stated that the property had split zoning since the 1980's. She stated that a change from the current zoning to Neighborhood Commercial zoning would allow the owners to add a few additional parking spaces.

Councilmember Brown asked if there had been any opposition by the neighbors. Ms. Cromwell stated that no one had attended the public hearing and that there had not been any opposition.

The public hearing was opened.

There were no speakers, and the public hearing was closed.

Councilmember McFadden moved for approval of Item 3, seconded by Councilmember Friedel. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

4. PUBLIC HEARING AND SPECIAL REVIEW #950: a special review to construct a public parking lot in a Residential 9,600 (R-96) zone on a 10,418 square foot parcel of land described as: Lot 11, Block 5 of Central Acres Subdivision, 5th filing. Ed Jorden and Gerald Neumann, owners. Ed Jorden, applicant and agent. Zoning Commission recommends conditional approval and adoption of the findings of the 3 criteria. (Action: approval or disapproval of Zoning Commission recommendation.)

Dave Green, Planner, gave a brief PowerPoint presentation with an overview of the property. He stated that there had been some neighborhood opposition to the proposed parking lot and the opposition letters had been included in the staff reports. Mr. Green stated that the current proposal would be to access the parking lot from the alley, and engineering was determining how the draining would work.

Councilmember Friedel asked if any neighbors had been opposed to the parking lot. Mr. Green stated that the main concern had been the possible increase of traffic in the alley. He stated that there were multi-family dwellings at the end of the street that only had access to their garages from the alley.

Councilmember Sullivan asked for clarification on a previous special review for the property. Mr. Green stated that the property currently had a different owner.

Councilmember Yakawich asked if it was normal to put a parking lot in the middle of a residential area. Mr. Green stated that this was the fourth similar special review in the past six months.

Councilmember Cromley asked what had occurred during the last zone change application for the property and when the last zone change application occurred. Mr. Green stated that it had been about six months ago and the Zoning Commission had recommended denial and Council had denied the change. Councilmember Cimmino stated that she was concerned with the lot not having a fence around it. Mr. Green stated that a fence would be required as a part of the recommendations.

Councilmember Clark asked what would happen if it was not possible to develop a water drainage system. Mr. Green stated that placing the exit on Lynn Avenue would be an alternate option. Mayor Hanel asked at what point improvements would be needed to the alley. Mr. Green stated that alley access to parking lots or businesses would trigger the need for improvements to the alley. He stated that paving would be required if the alley was used to access the parking lot. Councilmember Friedel asked if the applicant had a study prepared to learn if the alley would work as access for the parking lot. Mr. Green stated that the applicant was in attendance and may have an answer to that question.

Councilmember Brown stated that a private, fenced parking lot may attract loitering. Mr. Green stated that a fence would not be allowed at the front of the yard and would, therefore, be open to public view. Councilmember Clark asked what type of landscaping would be allowed. Mr. Green stated that low shrubs would be allowed.

The public hearing was opened.

- **Toni Donahue, 24 31st St. West, Billings, Montana**, stated that she lived in a 4-plex near the retail center. She thanked Council for noting that a parking lot in a residential area was not desirable. Ms. Donahue stated that the property owner, Gerald Neumann, had spoken with her and her neighbors and had made them feel more comfortable. She stated the alley was very narrow and was heavily used by the tenants of the 4-plex. She stated that she would like Lynn Avenue to be used as the access point to the parking lot. Councilmember Yakawich asked if she wanted a parking lot on the property. Ms. Donahue stated that she was unsure if she wanted a parking lot on the property. Mayor Hanel asked if it would be preferable to have the access on Lynn Avenue. Ms. Donahue stated that she would like a house to be built on the lot and did not understand why it had not been developed. She stated that if a parking lot was built on the lot, she would prefer the access point be on Lynn Avenue.
- **Carol Bernhardt, 16 31st St. West, Billings, Montana**, stated that only one of the neighbors, Ms. Donahue, had received a notice and had attended the special review meeting. She stated that Ms. Donahue's opposition had seemed to be ignored. She stated that there were nine families with garages facing the alley and it was a high traffic

area. She stated that having the access on Lynn Avenue made more sense. Mayor Hanel stated that Ms. Donahue's opposition was noted and had been heard during the special review. Councilmember Cimmino asked if Lynn Avenue was a controlled intersection. Ms. Bernhardt stated that it was a controlled intersection. Councilmember Cromley asked if she would be opposed to the parking lot if the access was located in the alley. Ms. Bernhardt stated that she would oppose the parking lot in that case.

- **Ed Jorden, 5233 Blue Heron Drive, Billings, Montana**, part owner of subject property, stated they had purchased the lot with the intention of building a parking lot so that employees of the strip mall would not park in the strip mall lot or on Lynn Avenue. He stated that the residents on Lynn Avenue had been very supportive of the parking lot plan. Mr. Jorden stated that they did not care where the access was located and would put the access wherever the neighbors preferred. He stated that their engineers had worked with the City engineers to develop a plan for water drainage from the alley into a boulder pit on the parking lot. Councilmember Yakawich asked if there had been any opposition from the neighbors. Mr. Jorden stated that one of the property owners on Lynn Avenue had talked to several neighbors and had not heard any opposition. He stated that they had invited people to attend meetings and no one had opposed the parking lot. Councilmember Yakawich stated that staff had received a letter of opposition from a resident at 3116 Lynn Avenue, but could not find a reason to oppose the parking lot if most property owners were not opposed to the parking lot. Ms. Volek added that Ms. Donahue had been the only property owner within the 300-foot notice area, therefore, she had been the only one to receive the special review notice. Mr. Jorden stated they had felt more comfortable purchasing the property when they had seen other parking lots in residential areas approved. Councilmember Cimmino asked if one parking space was required for every 300 square foot of commercial use. Mr. Jorden stated that it varied depending on the type of commercial use. Councilmember Cimmino asked if the strip mall had enough parking spaces for customers and employees. Mr. Jorden stated that they currently had enough spaces, but as businesses expanded there could be a need for more spaces. Councilmember Cromley asked if there had been a parking study completed. Mr. Jorden stated that it had and the study had required 72 parking spots. Councilmember Brown asked when they planned to build the parking lot. Mr. Jorden stated they were not sure when the parking lot would be built. He stated that it depended on when overflow employee parking became necessary. Councilmember Brown stated that support from the neighbors made him feel more comfortable about the parking lot.

- **Gerry Voto, 3128 Lynn Avenue, Billings, Montana**, encouraged Council to approve the parking lot. He stated that all of his neighbors, with the exception of one of the neighbors, were in support of the parking lot and would prefer the access point be on Lynn Avenue. Mr. Voto stated that he wanted the lot developed and did not think a house would be financially feasible. He added that Mr. Jorden and Mr. Neumann had been very good neighbors and had done a good job of talking with the property owners in the area.

There were no further speakers, and the public hearing was closed.

Mr. Brooks reminded Council that a parking lot was an allowed use on the property with the current zoning regulations. He stated that if Council chose to deny the

special review, they would need to make some findings or conditions that were already in place. He stated that additional findings could not mitigate the impacts of the parking lot. He stated that if Council preferred the access/exit to be on Lynn Avenue they would need to add that as one of the conditions. Mayor Hanel asked if there were any conditions that required a certain location of the access/exit. Mr. Green stated that the conditions did not require the access/exit be located off of the alley. He stated that a change from alley access to Lynn Avenue access would actually simplify the drainage conditions. Wyeth Friday, Planning Director, stated that parking lots located in residential areas could be challenging, but the developers had expressed a concern with traffic overflow and were looking at ways to address the issues. He stated the layout, site development, landscaping and conditions presented by staff would help to mitigate any issues. Councilmember Yakawich stated that he was concerned that by allowing parking lots in residential areas it would create a precedence and hoped that the City was not moving in that direction. Mr. Friday stated that, by requiring a special review, it allowed staff to review each case separately to determine if the proposed development was appropriate. Councilmember Clark asked what the rules were for entering a business off of an alley. Mr. Friday stated that the alley must be paved if a business was being accessed through it. He added that only the portion that the business used was the portion that needed to be paved. Mr. Friday stated that the alley was paved near the 4-plexes as well.

Councilmember McFadden moved for approval of Item 4, including the conditions and the findings of the three criteria and adding a Lynn Avenue access provision, seconded by Councilmember Brewster. On a voice vote, the motion was approved 9-2, with Councilmembers Cromley and Sullivan voting in opposition.

5. PUBLIC HEARING AND SPECIAL REVIEW #951: a special review to locate a beer and wine license with gaming in a Community Commercial (CC) zone on a 1.43-acre parcel of land described as: the North 408.375 feet of the South 544.5 feet of Lot 21, less the West 10 feet, Arnold Subdivision, 2nd filing. Plaza 24, LLC, owner. James Heallow, agent. Zoning Commission recommends conditional approval and adoption of the findings of the 3 criteria. (Action: approval or disapproval of Zoning Commission recommendation.)

Dave Green, Planner, gave a brief PowerPoint presentation with an overview of the property. He stated that over 20,000 cars went by the property per day and it was a very busy location. He stated that only the applicant and the agent had attended the public hearing.

Councilmember McFadden asked where the nearest school was located. Mr. Green stated there were no schools, churches or playgrounds within 600 feet of the property.

Councilmember Sullivan asked how far away Softies was located from the property. Mr. Green stated that Softies would be more than 300 feet away.

Councilmember Cimmino stated that she was concerned with the lack of food service in an establishment that allowed gambling and alcohol. Mayor Hanel stated that not everyone that gambled would drink alcohol.

The public hearing was opened.

- **James Healow, 312 Clark Avenue, Billings, Montana, Agent**, stated that the applicant had recently sold the Alpine Casino, but still owned the license. He stated that the proposed location was more modern and had better accessibility than other available options. Mr. Healow stated there had been a protest letter involving complaints about traffic and property values. He stated that the letter had come from a person that lived on Yellowstone Avenue and that street did not have any access from 24th Street. Mr. Healow, in reference to Councilmember Cimmino's concerns about alcohol consumption, stated that more coffee was consumed than alcohol in most casinos.

There were no further speakers, and the public hearing was closed.

Councilmember Clark moved for approval of Item 5, including the conditions and the findings of the three criteria, seconded by Councilmember McFadden. On a voice vote, the motion was approved 10-1, with Councilmember Sullivan voting in opposition.

PUBLIC COMMENT on Non-Agenda Items -- Speaker Sign-in required. (*Restricted to ONLY items not on this printed agenda. Comments here are limited to 3 minutes. Please sign in at the cart located at the back of the council chambers or at the podium.*)

The public comment period was opened.

- **Tom Zurbuchen, 1747 Wicks Lane, Billings, Montana**, stated that Council needed to get a better handle on the budget. He stated that the City was going on four years of failed budgeting. Mr. Zurbuchen added that Council consistently told the people that the City needed a tax increase and they were losing credibility. Mayor Hanel stated that collecting less and saving more was intelligent management of the City and taxpayer money. He added that the City had kept, within its reserves, what was required by law, so that it could be prepared for emergencies. He credited the staff, Ms. Volek and Council for the decisions that had been made. Ms. Volek stated that in 2016, the City had been acknowledged by Wallet Hub, as the 7th best managed City in the United States. Councilmember McFadden stated the City had an excellent bond rating and that rating allowed them to get better rates. He added that having money in reserves allowed the City to address things that arose throughout the year.

There were no further speakers, and the public comment period was closed.

COUNCIL INITIATIVES:

There were no Council Initiatives.

There was no further business, and the meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.

CITY OF BILLINGS



BY: Thomas W. Hanel
Thomas W. Hanel, Mayor

ATTEST:

BY: Denise R. Bohlman
Denise R. Bohlman, City Clerk