

## Billings City Administrator Weekly Report

November 11, 2021

### 1. BUILD Grant Activities – the October update on BUILD grant activities.

The City of Billings was awarded a BUILD grant in September of 2020.

- The Pre-Award Budget Narrative was submitted to FHWA in mid-September. On October 20<sup>th</sup> we were sent a notice for some additional information/clarification on the narrative. We have been informed that this is a normal back and forth with FHWA as all details are nailed down. Planning and Engineering are currently working on this request and will submit back to FHWA as soon as possible.
- The following are engineering updates:
  - The NEPA document (environmental document) was approved by FHWA and FHWA noted that the City may begin right-of-way negotiation.
  - The geotechnical design work is complete relative to the retaining walls on the Skyline Trail. The consultant is designing the last 2 of 4 retaining walls along the trail.
  - The IBL roadway design consultant is continuing to add detail to comply with MS-4 requirements outlined in the environmental document. The city will review the storm water document in the coming 2 weeks.
  - Appraisals are complete, both the base appraisals and third-party review appraisals.
  - Staff is preparing to start right-of-way negotiation in combination with right-of-way that will be needed for meeting the MS-4 requirements (storm detention).
  - Staff met with stakeholders, City Parks, MET staff, City transportation planning staff, the City Active Transportation Coordinator, Billings TrailNet, Western Heritage Center and reviewed route finding and historical/ educational signage. Discussions also included a potential for a pad for a future MET bus stop location and potential restroom facility. Further review is ongoing with a potential restroom and/or bus stop location.
- City staff and staff from FHWA and MDT continue to meet regularly or stay in contact as the grant process moves forward.

Next steps: Complete and submit the Pre-Award Budget Narrative clarifications to FHWA and await further instructions. Staff will continue with regular meetings and correspondence with our FHWA representative. BUILD website will be continually updated with information as it is available.

### 2. Legislative Breakfast – approximately 35 local legislators, city, county, and state officials attended the breakfast including Department of Corrections Director Brian Gootkin and the City's lobbyist Aimee Grmoljez who traveled from Helena. The goal of the meeting was to *increase legislators'*

***knowledge and understanding of how decisions made by the State of Montana are negatively impacting violent crime in Billings.*** Chief St John and County Attorney Twito were the primary speakers. Several follow-up meetings will be held throughout this fall and in 2022 as we draft legislation to present during the 2023 session. (See attached agenda)

3. **Dinner with Governor Gianforte** – November 1<sup>st</sup>, Mayor Cole, Chief St John, and I attended a dinner with the Governor and first lady Susan Gianforte, their key staff, Sheriff Linder, County Attorney Twito and others to show appreciation for the partnership between Billings, Yellowstone County, and the State to invest approximately \$4.3 million to fight violent crime in our community.
4. **2021 Election Results:**
  - a. **Public Safety Mill Levy – For 21,155 (61%)      Against 13,741 (39%)**
  - b. **Billings Dispensary Ordinance – Against Dispensaries 19,196 (55%) For Dispensaries 15,819 (45%)**
5. **Leadership Team Retreat** – November 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> our leadership team (department directors, city clerk, ACA and CA) spent two days in Red Lodge. Our meeting was facilitated by Mark Willmarth from Vision West. Over the two days we focused on building a high-performance organization, improving orientation for the new council members, identifying priorities for the upcoming 90 days and 1-3 years. (See attached agenda)
6. **Thank you** – Three years ago today, I began this latest chapter of my career as your City Administrator. The three years have brought both success and failures. I'm grateful for the leadership opportunity I have been granted and commit to working daily to make Billings a stronger, more vibrant city than when I started November 11, 2018.

**Be sure to thank a Veteran for their service on this Veteran's Day.**

# Billings Area Legislative Breakfast Agenda

Doubletree Hotel – 1<sup>st</sup> floor (room behind/east of City Brew)

November 10, 2021 – 7:00am

- 1) Welcome – City Administrator - Chris Kukulski, Representatives Barry Usher and Emma Kerr-Carpenter

***Our goal is to increase legislators' knowledge and understanding of how decisions made by the State of Montana are negatively impacted violent crime in Billings.***

- 2) Brief Introductions – (10 seconds per) 5 minutes

- 3) State of Crime in Billings – 30 minutes

Chief St John

County Attorney Scott Twito

- 4) Questions & Answers/hot topics – 10 minutes

- Probation & parole discretion lost in 2017
- Consistent definitions and data to understand facts
- Sober living housing crisis
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- 5) Next steps for January 2022

- a. Specific legislative proposals will be developed
- b. Consider establishing committees
- c. Outline schedule for 2022

Adjourn – 8:00am (we have the room until 9:00am if anyone wants to continue the dialogue)

**City of Billings  
Leadership Team Retreat  
November 3/4, 2021  
Red Lodge, Montana**

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**Wednesday, November 3**

9:30     What is the most challenging issue in your department?  
          What is the most exciting thing happening in your department?

10:15    Debrief about the previous night's election.  
          What will be the impact of the newly elected officials?  
          Public Safety levy? How do we move forward?

10:45    BREAK

11:00    Impact of COVID presentation/discussion - Mark  
          Summary of The Advantage – Chris/Mark  
          2021/22 priorities progress report and accomplishments over the  
          past year – Chris  
          5 Strategies to Make Billings a Great City - Chris  
          Hand out Survey

12:30    LUNCH

2:00     What could we do better as an organization?  
          What do we do well as a leadership team? What could we do better  
          as a leadership team?

3:00     BREAK

3:15     Focus on Creating a High Performance Organization  

- What is a High Performance Organization for us?
- What would it look like for us?
- What do we need to do over the next 6 months?

5:30     Adjourn

6:30     Dinner at hotel

## **Thursday, November 4**

8:00      BREAKFAST

8:30      Discussion on how to improve orientation for new city council members. How can we deliberately add a policy discussion on each tour/visit? What does your department need from the council? What would you share with the council?

10:00     BREAK

10:15     What are the top THREE things the City of Billings needs to accomplish within the next 1-3 years?  
What is ONE thing we need to accomplish in the next 3 months to be successful?

11:30     LUNCH

1:00      Determine where we go from here.  
Actions  
Next Session – date and content

3:30      Adjourn