

# City Council Work Session

December 6, 2010

5:30 PM

Council Chambers

## ATTENDANCE:

**Mayor/Council** (please check)  Hanel,  Ronquillo,  Gaghen,  Cimmino,  Pitman,  McFadden,  Ruegamer,  Ulledalen,  McCall,  Astle,  Clark.

## ADJOURN TIME:

## Agenda

<b>TOPIC #1</b>	<b><i>Par 3 Budget</i></b>
<b>PRESENTER</b>	
<b>NOTES/OUTCOME</b>	

Mike Whitaker, Director of Parks, Recreation and Public Lands, explained that the agreement with Par 3 Golf Course required an annual budget presentation. He introduced Gregg Wilson, President of Exchange City Golf Corporation. Mr. Wilson reviewed projects/accomplishments of 2010 that included a sprinkler control system update, clubhouse renovations, equipment maintenance and replacement, and the Healing Field event held at the golf course. He commended head greens keeper, Chas Walker, and Golf Pro Mark Hahn for the excellent job they did. Councilmember Ruegamer told Mr. Wilson they had done a good job and privatizing the golf course had worked out. Mr. Wilson said it was fortunate that the improvements they had done were first class and the product provided to the community was very good. Mayor Hanel commended Mr. Wilson for his leadership and said he received numerous compliments about the operation.

Mr. Wilson reviewed the budget document and spoke about future challenges and projects. Councilmember McCall asked Mr. Wilson to speak about memberships. Mr. Wilson advised that memberships had stayed somewhat steady.

Mr. Wilson advised that his service as president of the Exchange City Golf Corporation was nearly complete and Jeff Rice was the incoming President. Mr. Whitaker added that there was a good working relationship between the City and the non-profit organization.

The public comment period for that item was opened. There were no speakers, and the public comment period was closed.

<b>TOPIC #2</b>	<b><i>Inner Belt Loop</i></b>
<b>PRESENTER</b>	
<b>NOTES/OUTCOME</b>	

Public Works Director Dave Mumford advised that the projector was not working, so he would not be able to provide his PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Mumford advised that in

October, the Public Works Department came before the Council to discuss strategies for the Capital Improvement Plan. He said FY2012 would be the year the City would completely update the Capital Improvement Plan, something that occurred every five years. He stated that when he was before the Council in October, he talked about changes in the community, such as priorities, needs, and funding; and he wanted to find out the strategies the Council had. He noted that the discussion about changes did not mean that projects like the Inner Belt Loop were no longer important.

Mr. Mumford reviewed the Inner Belt Loop timeline from March 2006 when a planning study of possible alignments was completed and the project was estimated to cost \$14.1-\$16.4 million. He explained that when the Council added the project to its Community Investment Plan, the Planning Department expressed concern with construction of the road prior to completion of land use planning and zoning. He noted that it was all land outside the area of annexation, so it was County land. He advised that a Council Initiative was approved in February, 2007, directing the Public Works Department to begin right-of-way acquisition and have it completed in five years from the start of the next budget cycle, which was July, 2007. Mayor Hanel asked if any engineering or decision had been made on the pathway of the project at that time. Mr. Mumford said that at that time, they had no idea where the road would go. Mr. Mumford went on to explain that the project was placed in the FY2009 CIP and Sanderson Stewart Engineering was awarded the design contract for \$700,000. He advised that since that time, right-of-way appraisals had been completed, right-of-way negotiations had begun, a final traffic report was completed, and the final design was 95% completed. Mr. Mumford explained the road design and said right-of-way was acquired that would allow the road to be widened in the future.

Mr. Mumford advised that in the past, projects had started and staff had not fully explained the impacts to the Council. He used the examples of Briarwood, Yellowstone Country Club, and Ironwood annexations where the ideas and costs came forward, and then problems arose as the project progressed. He said staff wanted to make sure that there would not be any surprises with the Inner Belt Loop project.

Mr. Mumford stated that the reduced growth rate of the community and increased construction costs were a couple of reasons that resulted in reevaluating the timeline of the project. He said the biggest reason for taking the project back before the Council was the traffic modeling. He explained that if opened in 2012, the Inner Belt Loop would not carry a high volume of traffic because there would be no development along the road, but it would increase the traffic on Zimmerman Trail. He said the real concerns were the traffic projections for the year 2032, which were provided by Sanderson Stewart Engineering and Montana Department of Transportation. He said traffic estimates for that road would be equivalent to the volume on King Avenue West and similar streets, and illustrated the need to upgrade Zimmerman Trail with the Inner Belt Loop. He advised that a federal appropriation was awarded several years ago that would require a match of about \$2 million to upgrade Zimmerman Trail. He said a consultant would have options for Zimmerman Trail after the first of the year.

Mr. Mumford explained that the state and federal process to upgrade Zimmerman Trail would take about two years, so staff did not feel it made sense to build the Inner Belt Loop, then have to shut it down when the work started on Zimmerman Trail. He said they felt doing those projects concurrently was the best option. Councilmember Clark asked if the state and federal government would be involved in both the Inner Belt Loop and Zimmerman Trail. Mr. Mumford said that staff did not anticipate using any state or federal dollars for the Inner Belt

Loop, but would use the federal appropriation for Zimmerman Trail. Councilmember Astle asked what the current thought process was for the improvement of Zimmerman Trail. Mr. Mumford explained that the grade could not be changed due to historical restrictions, but a passing lane could be added part-way up from the bottom, widening the shoulder and trying to put some sort of pedestrian facility on the road. He explained the process that would be used to accomplish that and noted it was probably close to a \$10 million project.

Councilmember Ronquillo asked if there were houses along Zimmerman that would have to be purchased. Mr. Mumford said that with the current design, they would not need any properties, but there may be concerns with damage to the existing homes if blasting occurred. He noted that a specialized consultant was working with the design.

Mr. Mumford advised that Main Street traffic had come up since he addressed the issue in October. He said that traffic problem had been addressed during the past few years with the Aronson construction and the proposed Bench Boulevard connection. He said the state had estimated that the two projects would reduce Main Street traffic by 41%, once the Bench Connection was completed.

Mr. Mumford advised there were funding concerns due to changes in the economy and bond market. He reviewed the funding options and explained the costs and annual payments if the project was bonded, and provided information about available arterial fees. Councilmember Ulledalen asked if it was correct that bond payments would require at least half of the arterial fees for the next 20 years. Mr. Mumford said that was correct.

Councilmember Ruegamer said it did not seem to make sense to do the Inner Belt Loop before Zimmerman Trail was done. Mr. Mumford said it made sense to do them simultaneously, and if one was to be done before the other, Zimmerman Trail should be done first. Mr. Mumford said that was not a reflection on the need or validity of the road, but a question of the logistics.

Mayor Hanel asked about the status of work on the tunnel. Mr. Mumford explained they were still working on the 20% design, which should be done in the next few months.

Councilmember Pitman asked about anticipated growth of the arterial fee since Mr. Mumford kept talking about the 20 year growth plan. Mr. Mumford advised that until new growth in new lots occurred, there would not be much growth, so he could not project beyond the next few years.

Councilmember Ulledalen asked about annual maintenance costs for that additional six miles of road and whether street maintenance fees would have to be upgraded to take care of that road, along with Shiloh too. Mr. Mumford explained that it would have an effect on other services as well, such as police and fire. He said he was not sure about maintenance costs, but knew that street maintenance was already stretched thin and had three fewer employees than five years ago. He said he would not say it could not be done, but there could be delays in response times. Councilmember Ulledalen said he felt they needed to take a look at the fact that the City was not doing a good enough job taking care of the roads now and may need to consider increasing fees. Ms. Volek commented that when the City built a road, service needs were brought in. She said she regretted that she did not make more of a presentation to the Council regarding the need for a cost/benefit analysis. She referred to other projects that could have benefitted from such an analysis. She said she would strongly encourage a cost/benefit analysis for future projects.

Councilmember Pitman referred to comments about dumping traffic onto the west end as an exit from the Heights. He said the road would bring growth to the Heights and would unite and move traffic in the community. He asked about the reasonable capacity of Zimmerman

Trail. Mr. Mumford explained that they were having a difficult time determining that because capacity manuals were not designed for a 14% grade on that type of road. He noted that Zimmerman Trail could handle 10-12,000 trips per day, but if it reached the numbers predicted in 20 years, that was way beyond the capacity of a two-lane road. He said it did not have to be upgraded prior to the Inner Belt Loop, but a plan had to be in place for a long term solution. Councilmember Pitman said that was what he wanted to hear. He asked when right-of-way purchases could begin. Mr. Mumford advised that negotiations with property owners had begun.

Mayor Hanel stated that he did not think there was any question whether the Inner Belt Loop was necessary or needed. He advised that he had serious concerns about the pace of the project. He said he felt it would be a mistake to proceed with the Inner Belt Loop before a final decision was made about Zimmerman Trail, and he was also concerned with future funding on behalf of governmental appropriations, and overspending arterial funds. He said the fact that the project may not get done as soon as hoped was unfortunate, but he appreciated staff's foresight in pointing out issues that could cause serious financial concern. He stated he wanted to see it done, and knew it would be done, but possibly not in the timeframe hoped for.

Councilmember McCall advised that based on the discussion, there was some consensus that a plan for Zimmerman was needed before the Inner Belt Loop was done. She asked if, by default, they needed to explore expansion of Zimmerman to a three-lane road because the tunnel concept was too expensive. Mr. Mumford said he saw it as a project that would carry the City through, and then have to think hard about how to get a long-term plan done. Councilmember Ulledalen commented that it seemed the most comfortable thing funding wise would be to pass a general obligation bond through an election. Mr. Mumford agreed and said numerous other projects would be slowed if the arterial fees were used.

Councilmember Cimmino referred to Mayor Hanel's concerns about the pace of the project. She said she felt it was moving at a slow pace in light of the fact that the Initiative was passed in 2007 and property owners had only been met with once. She asked if Resolution #09-18867 regarding funding of the Inner Belt Loop with arterial fees would be rescinded. Mr. Mumford responded that the costs listed in the resolution were estimates at that time so it might have to be rescinded. He said that despite the fact that the road had to be designed and they were in negotiations, he felt that a lot had been done in three years. Councilmember Cimmino said that was why she believed they should endorse the momentum and keep going.

Councilmember Pitman stated that what he wanted to see the purchase of the right-of-way now, as stated in former Councilmember Brewster's initiative. Mr. Mumford explained that funding was in the Capital Improvement Plan to purchase the land and staff was in the process of buying it. He said they had met with the property owners and all were willing sellers.

Councilmember Astle said he understood some landowners wanted zone changes in addition to money. Mr. Mumford advised that people were told that zone changes could not be guaranteed, but some amenities could be done. Ms. Volek stated that Ms. Beaudry had pointed out that any zoning requests would require action by the County since the land was in the County, not the City. She added that the acquisition of land for projects on Lake Elmo, Grand Avenue and King Avenue East was not yet complete, which proved it was a lengthy process. Councilmember Astle commented that if the project would benefit the whole City, it should be funded with General Obligation Bonds. Ms. Volek advised that there was a precedent for General Obligation Bonds if that was the way the Council wanted to go. She emphasized that staff was very clear on the direction of the Council that an Inner Belt Loop would be constructed

and staff was not recommending it not be built, but to follow the original plan to acquire the land in a five-year period.

Mayor Hanel asked about safety concerns regarding the proposed tunnel and widening of Zimmerman Trail. Mr. Mumford advised that a tunnel would be safer because the grade would be less without sharp curves, and would allow easier winter maintenance. He said long-term, the tunnel would be better. Councilmember McCall asked what percentage of right-of-way had to be secured before construction could begin. Mr. Mumford said they would need 100% of it.

Councilmember Ulledalen advised that part of the sensitivity to Mr. Brewster's motion also had to do with the fact that they did not have all the right-of-way completely secured on Zimmerman, and it kind of came up that the final piece was more costly than expected so they were trying to avoid the same thing on the Inner Belt Loop.

Councilmember Cimmino asked for a hypothetical traffic volume that would warrant the tunnel in 20 years. Mr. Mumford explained there was no volume requirement. Councilmember Cimmino asked if they were looking at options with the 20% study or another design study from another entity. Mr. Mumford said with the 20%, they were looking at presenting options with costs and recommendations to the Council, and would proceed with a design phase. He pointed out that the federal appropriation for Zimmerman Trail had to be spent in the next five years so it would not be lost.

Councilmember Ulledalen clarified that it would come down to costs regarding the tunnel or upgrading Zimmerman Trail. He said the tunnel would be the best solution in the long run, but it would be an issue of economics.

The public comment period for that item was opened.

- **Roy Neese, 2323 Constellation Trail**, said he was the new chairperson of the Heights Community Development Task Force and was present on behalf of the Task Force Members. He stated that State Senator Kim Gillan, State Representative Dennis Himmelberger, and newly elected Representatives James Knox and Doug Cary all supported the project. He said the right-of-way had not been purchased and staff did not have the project in place to be completed by 2011. He asked the Council to review the project again, and provide clear direction to staff that it was a vital project to the City and should receive the highest priority to make up for the lost time.
- **Larry Brewster, 1216 Babcock**, said he knew that Dave Mumford was and always had been committed to that project. He advised that if a General Obligation Bond was used, the improvement match for Zimmerman Trail should be used. He added that if the whole \$7 million appropriation was used to engineer a tunnel, the City might not ever get the money to build the tunnel, so the City was better served to improve Zimmerman however possible. He said that when the pool was considered, 6,000 cars on Aronson was not considered to be a problem, so 4,000 on Zimmerman should not be either. He noted that arterial fees could be used to help offset the cost of the project, along with General Obligation Bonds.
- **Dennis Ulvestad, 3040 Central Avenue**, read a letter from Representative Ken Peterson that said it was vital to have additional access to and from the Heights and the Inner Belt Loop needed to be a priority. The letter spoke about the limited access from the Heights after the June tornado, and referred to recent legislation that made it easier for a city to use other revenue sources for construction of a project like that. Mr. Ulvestad stated that

he supported Representative Peterson and suggested the Council and City administration consider the road a top priority.

Councilmember Ulledalen asked Mr. Ulvestad if he had suggestions to fund the road. Mr. Ulvestad advised that he would use the bonds. Councilmember Ulledalen asked if he would support committing arterial funds for several years, which would put all other major projects on hold. Mr. Ulvestad said the Council should consider all options. He noted that other areas seemed to be fine, but the traffic bottleneck was on the Heights. Mr. Ulvestad commented that a tunnel through Zimmerman Trail would be very expensive and he did not agree with that concept. He said he felt Mr. Mumford was right on track with the flow of traffic currently on Zimmerman.

- **Tom Zurbuchen, 1747 Wicks Lane**, stated that Councilmember Astle thought the Heights traffic would be dumped on the west end, but the Heights traffic was already going to be there. He said the Council worked at break-neck speed with County Commissioners and everyone else to do Shiloh Road on a fast track because there was a \$700 million economic bonanza waiting to happen, yet over half of Shiloh had nothing on either side and it was out in the middle of nowhere. He said a route was needed to that economic bonanza and one-third of the city's population lived in the Heights and would be using the streets to get there. He said the Inner Belt Loop should be a priority because of that. He stated that Shiloh was put on a fast-track because the City was looking for the added tax base. He said the Inner Belt Loop would not be used daily as a means in and out of the Heights, but would be an alternate way out of the Heights if needed. He said it would have to be delayed because the right-of-way had not been purchased. He said there was no question it would be delayed, but he asked if it would be fast-tracked.
- **Pete Hansen, 1435 Wicks Lane**, said he was enthusiastic about the idea of an Inner Belt Loop done by the City without the involvement of the Federal Government. He said the Main Street problems existed as far back as 1973. He stated that Mr. Mumford's information that the completion of Aronson and the Bench Boulevard Connection would result in a 41% reduction in traffic on Main Street was wildly optimistic because it seemed that a lot of that hung on the possibility of Zimmerman Trail improvements, yet he did not remember that much discussion about increased traffic on Zimmerman Trail or Rimrock Road when Shiloh was fast-tracked. He said he did not think Zimmerman Trail should be used as an excuse to slow down the Inner Belt Loop project. He said he would like to see something in the Heights qualify for a fast track. He said he had referred to the Heights as a red-headed stepchild of Billings.

Councilmember Astle asked if the population figure referred to by Mr. Zurbuchen and Mr. Hansen was correct. Mr. Hansen said it was his understanding that there were 46,000 people in the Heights. He said he did not feel the General Obligation Bonds would pass if everyone in the City voted on them. Councilmember Astle asked Ms. Volek to provide population figures for the Heights. Ms. Volek mentioned that more than one project could be included in a General Obligation Bond, which had been done in the past. Councilmember Cimmino requested the census data used for the growth policy and noted that those statistics were used by the Elections Office. She said Ward II was the largest ward in the City.

- **Jim Berg, 233 Wicks Lane**, said most of the conversation about the Inner Belt Loop seemed to be about traffic impacts on Zimmerman Trail. He said it would not be a massive flow of people out of the Heights that would not return. He said he was

concerned with unintended consequences and wondered if traffic impacts had been studied from Skyview High School to Main Street. He said Wicks Lane was already plenty busy so he wondered what impacts that road could have on Wicks Lane.

Councilmember Ulledalen explained that whatever was decided about Zimmerman Trail would determine the alignment of it with the Inner Belt Loop. He said it would not be good to complete the Inner Belt Loop, and then have to shut Zimmerman Trail down for upgrade. He said he felt the discussion was getting a little blurred. Mr. Berg said his concern was the traffic going past his front door and if Wicks was designed for that traffic. Mayor Hanel advised that Mr. Mumford could provide traffic information to Mr. Berg.

Councilmember McFadden asked if anyone had considered neighborhoods that could be built along the Inner Belt Loop that would go back toward Main Street. Mr. Berg said he had not thought of that.

- **Stephen Sylvester, 961 Senora Avenue**, advised that he had lived in the Heights for five years and was told that there would be a connection to the west end, which was important to him. He expressed concerns with access for emergency services with the current roads. He said he was happy that the Council was forward thinking to plan and support the Inner Belt Loop. He said the costs would never be cheaper, but now would be the time to do it because property values were probably down. He encouraged the Council to not delay the project. He mentioned his concern with the planning process. He said it seemed a little obstructionist that it had taken as long as it had to get to that point. He said if it was all about Zimmerman Trail, that was the wrong approach.
- **Stan Newton, 835 Agate**, said to fast-forward when the City's population was 200,000, and there would be multiple roads in 40 years. He said the Inner Belt Loop was just one beginning and even though there would be occasional problems, the City would be connected and businesses would benefit by being able to draw customers and employees from all over the City. He called it a win-win situation. He said the emergency response equipment would be able to get an area that was currently difficult to access. He encouraged the Council to not delay the Inner Belt Loop.
- **Jim Brown, 2043 Constellation Trail**, said he had been told that a Mayor from the 1960's suggested the Inner Belt Loop and people thought he was crazy. He said the fact had been established that Main Street was the busiest street in the state. He said several Councilmembers brought up whether other projects should be delayed on Central, Broadwater or Grand to do the Inner Belt Loop, and although he could not answer that question, he wanted to know if anyone could provide the traffic data for those streets as it compared with traffic on Main Street. He said he had heard about safety issues and one he was concerned about was that the local ambulance service kept a unit parked in the Heights for about 2-1/2 hours each day because they knew if a call came in, the response would be difficult with the traffic issues. He said Councilmember Pitman mentioned earlier that the Bench Connector would be built, and then Bench Boulevard would be expanded to accommodate the traffic, and he wondered if it would be a similar situation if the Inner Belt Loop was built and then Zimmerman Trail was upgraded to handle the increased traffic.

Councilmember Clark asked if Bench Boulevard to Hilltop would be expanded in conjunction with the Bench Connection. Mr. Mumford advised that the state planned to do it on the heels of the connection.

- **Brenda Boyd, 1925 Lake Elmo**, said she considered the Inner Belt Loop as a short-term solution to the egress to and from the Heights. She said she supported proceeding with the Inner Belt Loop project.
- **Mark Boyd, 1925 Lake Elmo**, said he felt the Inner Belt Loop project would be another step to make Billings a more user-friendly city. He said doing it now would save money in the long run and should not wait for another project that had only 20% of the planning set. He said it would not cure all the problems, but addressed some of the problems with Main Street. He said he felt that was an appropriate use for arterial fees because it would alleviate traffic on Main Street. He said he agreed with most of what had been said that evening by the other speakers.
- **Tom Binon, 127 Antelope Trail**, advised that he had been collecting signatures of people in support of keeping the Inner Belt Loop project on schedule. He reported that about 60% of the people that signed his petition came from the 59105 zip code, and the rest came from 59101 and 59102, along with a few from residents outside Billings. He referred to Mr. Mumford's comments about the number of people that would be using the Inner Belt Loop and Zimmerman Trail, and said he suspected that the proposed traffic on Zimmerman was probably already there, only that the people were using Highway 3 to get there and would use the Inner Belt Loop when it was built. He said he did not think the Inner Belt Loop would add significant traffic to Zimmerman Trail.

Mayor Hanel asked if Mr. Binon would be willing to participate with a bond effort when it got to that point. Mr. Binon said he would.

Councilmember Cimmino asked Mr. Binon to state for the record how many signatures he collected. Mr. Binon stated that he had tallied 942 signatures, but was handed 20 more that evening, which brought that total to 962, and there was also an on-line signature gathering effort, but he did not have that data with him. Councilmember Cimmino said that someone from the Heights informed her there were about 3,000 signatures on the on-line site.

- **John Burkhart, 1909 Lake Elmo Drive**, stated that he was proud of the job the Council had done for the City. He commented that he marveled at how the City had improved over the years. He said he looked forward to hearing progress reports on the purchase of right-of-way so the project could move forward without delay.
- **Kevin Nelson 4235 Bruce Avenue**, said he would like the Council to look forward just one time. He suggested shutting down the idea of the tunnel because everyone knew that would never happen. He said the solution was to continue the road through the coulee and connect to Highway 3, and then continue to Molt Road to connect to Rimrock. He said the money that would be spent to engineer the tunnel could be spent more wisely on something else.

Mayor Hanel stated that Mr. Nelson was not the first person that had suggested the road come out near the Molt Road. Mr. Nelson said he understood there would be the “not in my backyard” mentality, but he wanted the Council to look forward and to encourage and accommodate the future growth.

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

*A 10-minute recess was taken.*

<b>TOPIC #3</b>	<b><i>Business Consortium Project</i></b>
<b>PRESENTER</b>	
<b>NOTES/OUTCOME</b>	

Ms. Volek advised that since the projector was not working, staff could not present a PowerPoint presentation. Community Development Manager Brenda Beckett provided a brief explanation of the Business Consortium Project, the \$300,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to create a business consortium to improve housing and job opportunities for the homeless in Billings. She advised that a proposal for \$100,000 was received from The Salvation Army for equipment purchases for a composting processing operation, and one from Rimrock Foundation for \$200,000 for housing employees of that composting operation.

Ms. Beckett reviewed data regarding homelessness in Billings and the cost associated with it. She said that based on their data, chronically homeless individuals cost about \$31 million per year. Councilmember Clark asked if most of that cost was related to medical expenses that would still be there regardless. Ms. Beckett explained that some of the cost would still be there, but the concept was that people would be placed in a monitored situation which could decrease some of those costs.

Ms. Beckett provided a brief review of the proposals from The Salvation Army and Rimrock Foundation, and the evaluation process. She advised that the agreements would be before the Council at the December 13 regular meeting.

Mayor Hanel asked the Vista Volunteers in the audience to introduce themselves and identify the project they were involved with.

The public comment period for that item was opened.

- **Kevin Jackson, Executive Director of The Salvation Army**, reported that he had been called to Denver, Los Angeles and Washington DC to provide additional information on the Social Enterprise Business. He said Billings was being looked at as a national model. He advised that funding was in place to sustain the program for five years, and that it would be sustainable in five years. He commended Ms. Beckett for her work, and added that Rimrock Foundation had excellent facilities and programs.

Councilmember Gaghen asked Major Jackson if his assignment in Billings was a set term. Major Jackson explained that the project was only approved with a minimal 10-year commitment of him and his wife staying in the community. He said the program would not be established by The Salvation Army if there was not a commitment.

Councilmember Ronquillo asked Major Jackson to speak about the partnership with the Boys and Girls Ranch. Major Jackson explained the plant project with the Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch. He spoke about other programs within The Salvation Army operations.

Councilmember McFadden asked Major Jackson for a brief description of the composting operation. Major Jackson provided an overview of the composting method and the expectations of the employees of the operation. He said it was a cutting edge program and he was optimistic about its success because it was a niche in the market that was not really being filled, especially on an international basis.

Councilmember McCall shared that she had a conflict of interest because she served on The Salvation Army Advisory Board. She acknowledged the positive changes that had occurred since Major Jackson arrived.

Councilmember Clark asked how many individuals the business could support. Major Jackson explained that in terms of the vocational side, he could envision 20-25 individuals being cycled through the system.

Councilmember Ulledalen asked Major Jackson to describe a Bokashi Kit. Major Jackson provided an explanation of the kit that could be used to add to compost piles to aid with the breakdown to soil. He reviewed plans to partner with the school district to utilize acreage near the Career Center for an agricultural program. He also spoke about other programs for children.

- **Mona Sumner, 1231 N. 29<sup>th</sup>**, stated she was the Chief Operations Officer at Rimrock Foundation and Chair of the Mayor's Committee on Homelessness. She explained that the committee had spent the past three years studying homelessness. She stated that Rimrock Foundation was excited about the project that was an opportunity for the individuals in their sober housing program. She provided a brief review of the evaluation analysis that included healthcare costs for the individuals served by their programs. She noted that the Rimrock Foundation management came with entrepreneurial backgrounds and were all about getting people productive.

Ms. Beckett advised that she would be gone for training when the item was before the Council at its December 13 meeting, but Ms. Beaudry would present it in her place.

- **David Cunningham, CEO Rimrock Foundation**, spoke about a personal experience with The Salvation Army and urged support of the opportunity to work together.
- **Jason Rodriguez**, introduced himself as The Salvation Army Business Administrator. Councilmember Gaghen announced that he had presented the business plan for the project.

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

<b>TOPIC #4</b>	<b><i>Federal Legislative Program</i></b>
<b>PRESENTER</b>	
<b>NOTES/OUTCOME</b>	

Ms. Volek reviewed a list of seven items that would be submitted for consideration of federal appropriations. She noted that six of those items had been on the priority list in prior years, and the new request was the 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue North/Bench Boulevard Collector for \$25 million. She explained that the list needed to be prioritized and if additional items were requested, those should be provided to her that week so the list could be finalized.

Councilmember Ulledalen asked about a match for the 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue North/Bench project. Ms. Volek said the typical match was 20%, but the Department of Transportation had indicated a willingness to provide that match.

Mayor Hanel reported that Senators had requested a teleconference presentation to the Legislative Delegation rather than a trip to Washington DC. Ms. Volek advised that it had been suggested, but knew that Senator Baucus had limited availability due to his committee work.

She mentioned that she and her husband had planned a trip to the Alexandria area in the spring to visit family and could set aside a day to visit with Legislative staff at that time.

Councilmember Ulledalen asked if there was a sense about operating costs of the fire training facility. Ms. Volek explained that there was not an exact budget, but it was anticipated that fees would be collected from other agencies that utilized the facility.

Councilmember Ulledalen commented that he felt the most critical need was the radio system due to the timeline involved.

Councilmember Pitman asked if FEMA had been approached for earmarks as suggested by the Delegation. Ms. Volek reviewed how other agencies were involved in funding requests.

Councilmember Ulledalen expressed his concern if other cities sent a group of representatives to present priorities to the Legislative Delegation in Washington DC and Billings did not. Mayor Hanel said it was suggested to him personally by the Senators because they did not feel it was a wise use of money to travel when it could be communicated with a video conference. Councilmember Cimmino stated she respected the comments of Councilmember Ulledalen and Mayor Hanel and noted that it was a very competitive process. She said she thought the presence and socialization factor was important, but understood the budget issues.

Councilmember Ruegamer said he was disappointed that the Legislative Delegation said not to go there. He said he was certain the other large cities would be there.

Councilmember Ulledalen pointed out that the Legislators were periodically in town raising money and the Council should make itself more available when they were here.

The public comment period for that item was opened. There were no speakers, and the public comment period was closed.

<b>TOPIC #5</b>	<b>2011 MLCT Conference</b>
<b>PRESENTER</b>	
<b>NOTES/OUTCOME</b>	

Ms. Volek reviewed the host checklist for the annual conference that would be held in Billings in October. She noted that Councilmember Ruegamer would be the Chair of MLCT next year. She suggested formation of special committees to work on the various components of the conference. She said she would develop a list of the committees and circulate a sign-up sheet among the Council. Councilmember Ulledalen suggested adequate marketing of the conference and enlisting assistance from entities such as the Chamber and Visitor Center. Councilmember Pitman suggested more, but shorter, presentations. Councilmembers made suggestions for spouse entertainment, local interests that could be visited, entertainment, and venues for receptions. Councilmember McCall suggested formation of a steering committee that sub-committees would work with.

The public comment period for that item was opened. There were no speakers, and the public comment period was closed.

<b>TOPIC #6</b>	<b>Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items</b>
<b>PRESENTER</b>	
<b>NOTES/OUTCOME</b>	

The public comment period was opened.

- **Kevin Nelson, 4235 Bruce Avenue**, said he got 22,000 hits on Google when he searched for how to conduct a legally defensible interview. He mentioned that when one member of the sub-committee that would interview candidates for the Municipal Court Judge stated the criteria he would use, people were disenfranchised. He said people should keep their mouth shut about preferences until all the applicants were in front of them. He said with quick addition, the City spent \$4,298,000 on professional services last year and he wondered if there was a more efficient way for that. He said he wondered if some of those things could be done in-house or an RFP could be put out for one firm to do them the whole year. He referenced the southwest corridor TIF and said the Hanser group suggested optional dues, but he felt that people should not have to pay dues to determine how their tax dollars were spent. He said he did not think it was fair for the people. He said the ink was not even dry on the East End TIF District Master Plan, and form-based codes were being discussed. He said that should have been part of the master plan. He noted that many people were probably not even aware of that.

Councilmember Ruegamer asked Mr. Nelson if he thought it was wrong to give out the parameters of the job in advance or if the Judge applicants had to figure it out on their own. Mr. Nelson said typically during a job interview, one person asked the questions and the same questions were asked of each applicant. He said Councilmember Ruegamer had already stated a public position on the criteria. Councilmember Ruegamer said they would be asking questions the way Mr. Nelson referred to. He explained that any attorney in Billings knew the law part of the judge position, but he did not think anyone knew that the judge had to manage 29 people and he felt the applicants would want to know that in advance. Mr. Nelson said he thought staff did a good job of putting a committee together. He stated he felt managing people was not a primary criteria of the position.

Ms. Volek referred to the recent Southwest Corridor Task Force's consideration of a master plan for the TIF District in that area, and noted that it was Mr. Nelson that made the motion to support the master plan. She said that was also adopted by the Southwest Urban Renewal District and it was moving forward.

Councilmember Ronquillo reported on a meeting with the Hanser group and said it was agreed that people did not have to pay, it was optional, and the people could still have the same involvement. He said that would be presented at the December 20 meeting. He noted that Ms. Beaudry would work with that organization. Ms. Volek noted that Councilmember Ronquillo helped facilitate that project.

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

Additional Information:
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