

# City Council Work Session

5:30 PM  
Council Chambers  
February 4, 2013

## ATTENDANCE:

Mayor/Council (please check)  Hanel,  Ronquillo,  Cromley,  Cimmino,  Pitman,  McFadden,  Bird,  Ulledalen,  McCall,  Astle,  Crouch.

CM Cromley excused.

## ADJOURN TIME: 8:00 P.M.

## Agenda

<b>TOPIC #1</b>	<b>Legislative Report</b>
<b>PRESENTER</b>	Ed Bartlett, Lobbyist
<b>NOTES/OUTCOME</b>	

- Ed Bartlett: Reviewed topics that impact the City. There are 3 bills he is watching and considers extremely important to the City. The pensions subcommittee only considered 3 bills out of many bills to be considered. The bill that received the most attention was introduced by Sen. Lewis on defined contribution for new employees. New employees would not be under defined “benefits” plan, they would be under defined “contributions” plan. The committee hasn’t taken any action on any of the proposals received. Another bill of interest concerns the police and fire compensation and retirement systems. Approximately 20-30 police officers/firemen gave testimony and were in favor of this bill as it would result in additions to their pensions. No action was taken by the committee. It is anticipated it will be March before the committee takes any action. The state bonding (JOBS) bill received a very solid hearing, positive testimony. The only negative testimony came mostly from the golfing community in Missoula, Montana and a couple of others that didn’t like the amount. Overall, very positive responses from unions, university system, the construction industry and chambers of commerce, etc. No action taken by the committee. The third significant bill is one introduced by Sen. Llew Jones. Bill is basically a total revision of K-12 funding. This would be approximately \$110 million of new funding, some of which would come from oil and gas revenues. This would not amount to a new tax, but rather a diversion of taxes. Bonding bill action will be an executive action on Feb 8. The last bill Ed reported on was Rep. Kary’s bill, HB 314, concerning special districts. The City of Billings, City of Missoula, and Alec Hanson of MLCT, gave opposing testimony on Section 10 of the bill that would make it retroactive because it would affect our Park Maintenance District. Rep. Kary agreed to amend to eliminate Sec 10. No action has been taken by the committee.
- McCall: Well done on HB 314.
- Bird: HB 14, bonding bill, thought it was supposed to be an education bonding bill but other projects were added. Why a Butte-Silver Bow criminal justice building for state and local law enforcement?

- Ed: Don't know, but has been working to find out. It may have been added when the bill was broadened. It concerns the 6 largest cities in Montana. Historical Museum in the list, too.
- Public comments:
- Candi Beaudry: Concerned with SB40 and 41 subdivision bills. One of the bills requires conservation easements. This would require local government approval and would no longer be voluntary. SB40 disallows setting application submittal dates. Disadvantageous to subdividers because it removes certainty. We have a very refined process and it begins with a very defined submittal timeline.
- Hanel: Was it controversial issue?
- Candi: It was when the subdivision rules were overhauled. Billings is a model for the state because we have an effective and efficient process.
- Cimmino: What is the rationale for changing it?
- Candi: Don't know. Introduced by Sen. Ed Buttrey of Great Falls. May have been an issue in Missoula requiring a meeting with subdivider prior to submittal. Was some conflict from a land surveyor/subdivider who was very disgruntled with that process.
- Wyeth Friday: The bill proposes to eliminate schedules and that is a concern. Not many communities have schedules. Another part of the bill has language to the subdivision law regarding a second public hearing. New information has been submitted that this body decides is significant enough and the public and others have not had adequate time to comment, can conduct a second public hearing to make certain that information is considered before taking action. Have not been used in the County or City of Billings as of now, but discussed many times at the Planning Board to possibly make that recommendation to the Council. Has not been done, but has come up. There is an amendment to eliminate this section. A concern because of due process and public participation. The proposed amendment takes away the option of a second public hearing. Will continue to communicate with Ed on other items.
- No other comments. Public comment period closed.

<b>TOPIC #2</b>	<b>FY12 Audit Report</b>
<b>PRESENTER</b>	Pat Weber, Finance Director
<b>NOTES/OUTCOME</b>	

- Pat Weber: Introduced Marilee Glover from JCCS.
- Marilee: Presented the audit results for FY 2011-2012. The management letter was issued and there are no findings. The City has received, for the 28<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, a Certificate of Excellence from Government Finance Officers Association. JCCS auditor's opinion is "clean" or an "unqualified" opinion. Basic financial statements, briefly reported on government-wide statements and changes from last year. The total net assets for the City have increased from the year before at approximately \$43 million. GF unrestricted balance is over \$20 million. Internal controls are OK, no findings but one significant deficiency, and it is odd, is that prior period adjustment was needed in the fixed assets in the water fund, staff found it and properly made the adjustment but it has to be reported as a deficiency. A-133 report on federal grants showed compliance, no findings. No finding on the internal controls over the compliance. Past year's finding on I-9 form retention and destruction was misinterpreted, but HR corrected it. The past

year's 5 findings concerning the preparation of the schedule of expenditures of federal awards were all adequately addressed. New financial software saved everyone time – very efficient.

- Tina: Staff thanked the auditing firm. Complimented Pat Weber, the Finance Dept. and all other cooperating departments for their participation in a favorable audit.
- Public comments: None.

<b>TOPIC #3</b>	<b>27<sup>th</sup> Street CDBG Properties Preliminary Review</b>
<b>PRESENTER</b>	Brenda Beckett, Community Development Manager
<b>NOTES/OUTCOME</b>	

- Brenda Beckett: HUD compliance audit finding on maintaining non-CDBG lots and need to sell the ones purchased with CDBG. The City purchased 7 lots using CDBG funds which was part of a large redevelopment project on South 27<sup>th</sup> Street, and some on S. 25<sup>th</sup> and S. 26<sup>th</sup> Streets. The 7 lots are still remaining on the CDBG books and maintenance on those lots has been paid for about 30 years. Community Development's understanding was that the blight designation could be held on those lots until 2013. That is the reason property management continued to be paid. Brenda provided mapping of the subject lots in her presentation. The 7 lots were purchased with CDBG monies in 1980 and 1984 for \$104,000 or \$4/sq. ft. HUD says, lot retention isn't "temporary" and question whether retaining the lots are benefitting low and moderate income residents. HUD wants the City to sell the lots and send HUD the money for the appraised value of the lots, but will allocate the money for future grant funding. The City must cease using CDBG funds for maintenance for those lots and Community Development has until the middle of February to respond to HUD. Brenda proposed using the proceeds from the sale of Block 245 to repay HUD for maintaining the CDBG lots and repay maintenance on non-CDBG lots.
- Mayor: How many other lots are there?
- Brenda: The Galles Building, which is in transition. At one time, there were 70 or 80 lots that were City-owned.
- Tina: If City Council agrees to pay HUD back as proposed, this would free the City from HUD controls?
- Brenda: Yes.
- Public comments: None.

<b>TOPIC #4</b>	<b>Storm Water Bonds</b>
<b>PRESENTER</b>	David Mumford, Public Works Director
<b>NOTES/OUTCOME</b>	

- Dave Mumford: Proposed issuance of bonds for 2 large regional storm water control projects currently in the CIP. FY14 budget will have first of them. East end storm drain estimated at \$11 million. The East end storm drain covers over 5,000 acres. This is the storm drain system that runs down 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, east of downtown and south of there, flowing to the Yegen drain. It floods on a 2-year storm. All storm water goes to 2 choking points and that needs to be fixed. It is such a large project, not certain how to address it. All of it discharges to the river in one spot below the refinery. Want to install

parallel 72" pipe storm sewer in 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. North and will install 5x8 box culverts under the railroad tracks of the Yegen Drain. Project is in design study phase, construct it in 2015.

- Ronquillo: Where would it come under the railroad?
- Dave: Near Pierce Packing. It flows under there now. Is a much smaller pipe. Would replace it with a large 5x8 box culvert to take the storm flows.
- Bird: No one is currently responsible for the Yegen drain? Who owns it?
- Dave: It is like a lot of properties. There is a prescriptive right that the drain will exist across private properties. Trying to work with property owners about how they want to deal with the drain. If we move forward with this, it will become the City's responsibility.
- Bird: Each little section of the drain is the property owners'.
- Dave: On that person's property but they aren't necessarily, by any legal requirement, to take care of it. It is overgrown, people do take care of it strictly on the grounds that if they don't, it will flood. There are some constrictions across it. This has been around for over 100 years.
- Bird: How long is the Yegen drain?
- Dave: Not certain on the portion we are looking to reconstruct.
- Astle: This is an open ditch?
- Ronquillo: When you said it wasn't anyone's responsibility, it is the ditch riders' responsibility. Not the Yegen drain, but the stuff that goes under 27<sup>th</sup> Street and to Washington, all the way down. The ditch riders said it is theirs and we are not to touch that.
- Dave: Correct.
- Ronquillo: If we want a culvert at our cost, we could install that. Have talked with the refineries, they dump into it behind the post office.
- Dave: Correct. Their industrial waste goes out there, too.
- Bird: Is that allowed?
- Dave: It's allowed. They are permitted. It is treated.
- Cimmino: Refineries willing to share in the costs of the wastewater?
- Dave: The City is working with them on pretreatment. They would pay a premium to deliver it to us. We are determining now how much they are going to have to do and will bring the contract before the Council. Looking at a year. If there were significant changes required in our permit because of the refineries, they would have to participate or pay for those changes, if it is strictly because of them.
- Cimmino: Is the EPA involved?
- Dave: Yes, and the MT Dept. of Environmental Quality.
- Astle: Asked questions about the piping and route for clarification.
- Dave: The current 72" pipe doesn't carry water fast enough. It blows the manhole covers off. It all hits at once. Very quick peak when there is significant rains.
- Ronquillo: Would tunnel under the interstate into Coulson Park? Could use some sprinklers in the park, could we use the water for plants?
- Dave: Would have to figure out a way to capture it.

- Ronquillo: Would it have to be treated first?
- Dave: No, need to capture it, so Parks and Rec could use it for sprinkling.
- McFadden: Do it at Par 3 golf course. Have a holding pond there.
- Dave: Could work to have a holding pond or something in the future. Used worst case scenario so over the next two years going forward with bonds. Would rather ask for \$11 million and come in at \$10 million.
- Ulledalen: If need to treat the water, can another feature be built at Coulson Park, like at the Sharptail pond?
- Dave: We could do that. Probably need to look at what can be done on the discharge.
- Ulledalen: That would take an eye sore and turn it into an amenity.
- Bird: Could some trees be planted and have a water feature for a dog park?
- Dave: Dog parks and stormwaste -- we are trying to clean the nitrogen out of it. Second project is the Shiloh conservation area. The Shiloh conservation area design should be done by June. Construction to begin this fall. Over 22,000 acres of drainage area on the West end. It is huge. Majority of it is agricultural coming from outside the City limits. The design will detain the 10-year and 20-year storm events. Reduces nitrogen and phosphorus discharge into the river. The State is considering limiting the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus the City can put into the river. Whatever can be reduced from storm water, will help in how much treatment is done to wastewater. Treat and remove the nitrogen from ag storm water. Several years ago were given the Shiloh drain, so is a City drainage system. Approximately 10 acres will be developed with 2 large lakes and a small fish pond, deep enough for fish to be in year-round. There will be manmade wetlands to clean the storm water by removing nitrogen and phosphorus before it enters the river.
- Cimmino: What are manmade wetlands? A synthetic material?
- Dave: Can use some synthetic materials in it. Manmade is just building wetlands that didn't naturally exist before. Selecting from an RFP a provider to start growing the plant material.
- Bird: Will the design include trees?
- Dave: Yes. Upland, riparian area will have trees and brush all through it. Will be very natural, including irrigation, which will come from the lakes. There will be interpretive signage for educational purposes. Both universities are interested in helping with monitoring and for use as a teaching area.
- Bird: There will be a parking lot, restrooms and a shelter area?
- Dave: No restroom is needed at a wetlands area. There is a parking lot for staging to bring in equipment. This is not a park. It is a public works project. Would not have restrictions on dogs.
- Ulledalen: Dog owners don't understand the leash laws, so have to disallow dogs or patrol for compliance.
- Dave: These two storm drain systems will take the bulk of our storm drain issues and provide a long-term solution. These have been on the books for a number of years, now is the time to proceed. Current bonds will be paid off in FY13. First set of bonds would be for \$4 million in FY14 and would get us through the Shiloh conservation area and finish

the project in FY15. The East end stormwater project would be bonded in FY15. Total would be \$11 million on worst case scenario. Currently have revenues of \$3.6 million in stormwater fees. This does not require a vote of the public, but does require Council support to sell the bonds. Can be done and still provide long-term funding for projects. These 2 projects have been waiting a long time. The West end we will be able to do. The East end has 30-year old documents stating we need to fix this. PW has applied for 5 or 6 years for federal funding to help, but hasn't happened. It is time to ask for Council's permission.

- Hanel: Which project is priority?
- Dave: Passion is the one for the West end. The East end has significant problems today. That one needs to be worked on. Has flooding. The new property owners in the EBURD, have taken a strong stance on trying to do something themselves, they will have troubles if the City doesn't fix the storm drain. Hope the Council will not have to choose between the two projects. The East end is priority. The West end has problems, but is not causing flooding to area businesses.
- Tina: As the West end develops, this project will become more urgent.
- Pitman: We ran out of money on the Hilltop to Aronson project. How much more is needed to complete this project?
- Dave: Needs another million dollars to go to the next phase. Can easily finish that one in the future.
- McCall: Excellent projects. Will do so much for these areas. Complimented staff for their creativity and progressive thinking.
- Ulledalen: By correcting the East end drainage, will encourage more private investment. Do not want to build a new building and then have it flood. Timing is now – extreme low point of low interest rates. More bang for the buck.
- Dave: Agreed. Not completely certain of the East end costs of the project at this time. Also funding these projects from our current funding sources. Bonding costs are expensive. Bond only once, cut the costs way down.
- Ulledalen: Should finance both projects in one big bond. Will be cheaper than selling 2 little ones. These could be creatively structured to get them done.
- Dave: Will work with the finance group.
- Ronquillo: With the new line that was put in at 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, did that solve Northeast area flooding?
- Dave: Did help some. A lot of the flooding in the Northeast area is occurring because the water can't get into the storm drain system fast enough. Won't be remedied until the second pipe is installed. Only so much water can enter into the pipe at a time.
- Ronquillo: Can we get a garbage can at Mystic Park?
- Dave: We'll see what we can do.
- Public comments: None.
- Bird: Give feedback on how well the City is doing with the discontinuation of leaf collection.

- Dave: Each year it is getting better. Citizens are adjusting and it is an old habit that is difficult to break. Continue to sweep the streets. There is enough of a difference now can keep up with things. Is helping to save a lot of manpower.
- Bird: Creates a real challenge in terms of water drainage if people are sweeping their leaves into the streets and gutters.

<b>TOPIC #5</b>	<b>Rose Park Pool Slides</b>
<b>PRESENTER</b>	Mike Whitaker, PRPL Director
<b>NOTES/OUTCOME</b>	

- Mike Whitaker: Reviewed the Rose Park pool slide project and proposal to install a speed slide. Parks' board member, Margy Bonner, worked with the Chamber and Darlene Tussing to raise enough money to pay for a restroom at Swords Park. Received a trails grant for a restroom. This summer Swords Park should have a restroom.
- Hanel: Would like some formal recognition at a future business meeting.
- Mike: Yes. Pools and slides are a major attraction in Billings. Did some research to see how much revenue is generated from the slides. There is a separate fee for the slides. Roughly \$600,000 in revenue since the slides were built. Slides are a major way to provide recreational opportunities and help with a 100% cost recovery at the pool for operating expenses. Part of the City-wide Park Maintenance District included \$300,000 to replace the slides at Rose Park pool. When that estimate was given, thought the existing platform would have to be demolished and replaced. Once an engineer was hired, was determined the structure is sound and the platform will be retained. Decided to come back with a 31' platform, instead of a 21' platform. Perhaps 3 slides could be installed. Did a 10' foot extension on the current platform for a speed slide. Cannot move forward with a speed slide. Would like to have the speed slide and other slides done before the pool season. The speed slide would enhance the revenue of the pool. Increased admissions, expanded market to include more teenagers and adults, and a signature attraction. Pine beetle spraying will not have to be done this year and those monies can be diverted toward completing the speed slide. Would like to receive \$27,000 from the Council Contingency to move forward. Guidance?
- Hanel: Is there room for a speed slide?
- Mike: Yes, don't go into a plunge pool, but a trough. No swimming skills needed to use the speed slide. Can expand the entire footprint to accommodate the slide. Same platform is used, but one side is opened 10'. Strictly for bodies, no floatation devices used.
- Astle: Would the slide pay for the Council contingency investment? Repay contingency from added revenue?
- Mike: Currently, the monies collected from the slide are deposited into the General Fund, so the monies are coming back.
- Astle: The contingency funds would be above and beyond the Park Maintenance District? The project is a grand idea, but funds need to be returned to the contingency fund.
- Tina: Any revenue generated goes into the General Fund. Contingency fund is a side fund that can be replenished at any level the Council chooses.

- Astle: We have already come up with ways to spend the contingency fund.
- Tina: You have some left over. Normally carry a balance of \$60,000-\$65,000. Does the Council wish to raise the contingency fund? Put \$27,000 on top of the \$60,000-\$65,000?
- Astle: Wants it replaced, not raised. Borrowing money from a savings account we have one time. Would like to say this is a great place to give that fund, but want to get it back from their revenues.
- Pitman: Adding a service in the middle of PBB, competing with private businesses, net proceeds after initial investment and operating costs is small, deferred maintenance is supposed to be the Park Maintenance District focus, not installing new features.
- Ulledalen: Taking advantage of an opportunity to save money on the new slide now rather than some years down the road. Makes sense to do it now.
- Cimmino: Did this idea come before or after Interstate Engineering was hired as designer?
- Mike: When we hired Interstate Engineering. They suggested we keep the platform rather than replace it. That was a cost-savings.
- Cimmino: More risk and liability insurance cost with 31' platform vs. 21' platform?
- Brent Brooks: I don't believe so. MMIA is liability carrier for all properties. They do insure pools in large cities. Look at the "as-built" plans and the "management" plan for the slides, look at details, i.e. lifeguards, etc. Once approved, believe liability carrier would be comfortable with it. Increased management risk – if so, how to manage the risk?
- Pitman: Park Maintenance District could save some money by using the same platform. Were told there were 10 years' worth of deferred maintenance issues. Would rather save money, continue with original design. Leave extra money to do other deferred maintenance projects. Struggled with adding this feature. Not just asking to use \$27,000 from Council contingency fund, but also using \$60,000 from Park Maintenance District. Council needs to be consistent.
- Mike: My responsibility is to bring opportunities to Council. Up to the Council on which direction to go.
- Hanel: Need to stick to questions about project, not supporting or objecting to it.
- McFadden: Likes this project. Located in the middle of the West end. A great example of Parks and Rec doing something for the whole neighborhood.
- Bird: New slides require higher admission fees? Consider increasing swimming fees and include slide use within that price?
- Mike: Had conversations about this, public input at the time was that not everyone who attends the pool wants to use the slide. The fairest way was to charge for the use of the slides to those who use it, not to those who do not.
- Ulledalen: Have historically practiced PBB, but have not prioritized maintaining what we have. Look at ways to produce additional revenue. Create reserve for replacement funds for facilities, knowing that projects like this have a finite life. Maintenance needs to be wired into PBB.
- Mike: A lot of discussion at Park Board about maintenance. Prompted by the stadium. A great model. Have \$300,000 in the maintenance fund, Council has directed the revenue

from the facility go into the maintenance fund. A lot of support in developing a maintenance fund for the Parks' facilities.

- Pitman: For PBB, ID what should be reserved for replacement. Need bigger pumps, use more water, use more electricity? What is the bigger picture?
- Mike: Water used in the slide will go back into the plunge pool, which is re-circulated in the pool. No additional water loss other than from splashing. Using same motors, they were oversized. Not having to replace motors, perhaps a slight increase in electricity usage. One attendant can manage the traffic at the top and one lifeguard at the bottom would signal when it is safe for an additional person to use the slide. Should be no increase in staff. Would like to operate for a month and if there is a need would add additional staff.
- Bird: Considered increasing fees if slide is built?
- Mike: Board-level discussions occurred. Understand the Council would prefer small incremental increases over two years to make adjustments.
- Bird: Suggested armbands for unlimited usage of the slides. Competition is good. The 3 water parks are located in completely different areas of town. Market is not saturated.
- Mike: A combination fee for pools and slides?
- Bird: Yes.
- Tina: Council contingency requires a resolution, so that will be forthcoming.
- Public comments: None.

<b>TOPIC #6</b>	<b>Priority Based Budgeting</b>
<b>PRESENTER</b>	Tina Volek, City Administrator
<b>NOTES/OUTCOME</b>	

- Tina Volek: Follow-up from previous meetings about how to break up some larger budgets and seek guidance in breaking down two of the larger numbers in the Public Safety budgets. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) at 55.9 FTEs and Police Patrol Services at \$9.9 million and 108 FTEs. Staff recommendation is to consider the EMS by Fire station and Police Patrol by 9 beats. Alternatively, break down by shift in each case, but may be a much larger number and one the Council may not be comfortable looking at.
- Astle: 93% non-fire calls and of that 93%, 70% is EMS, so where is the difference?
- Tina: Does not have the break down, but will get it and provide later.
- Hanel: Is it the goal by studying these two factors, may be able to realign to save money, to save costs, based on need in specific areas?
- Tina: Particularly in the case of the fire number. That number represents 70% of the calls, it also includes a huge number – includes not actually call time and run time itself, but also includes the time that firefighters are in the station. We want to help differentiate what the costs are – really identify what the cost of a fire call is.
- Ulledalen: When reviewing accounting for departments, there are assumptions. Is the assumption we are making in an effort to balance the budget -- that other depts. will be

cut before public safety? Will we make cuts in other programs and transfer those savings to police and fire?

- Tina: Understand what you are saying, however, the device that Pat has developed, it does provide for some alternatives for reductions in public safety and the General Fund. We can certainly do a mix. Because of the relative benefits, there would be fewer reductions based solely on public safety, but we are cognizant of the fact that is the number 1 priority for the Council. May be looking at a mix, but if we can't, we can't.
- Ulledalen: Our cost problem really is in Police and Fire because of their size.
- Tina: Yes. In the General Fund, they are the largest working body.
- Ulledalen: Our income goes up about 1% annually, our costs go up 5%. We know that either we are going to need more money or we have to cut. With Police and Fire, how will we ever come up with programs to cut? For example, the pools cost about \$220,000 per year, so if cut that, we have a clear picture. Do we need to go any further with this if there were never any cuts in Police and Fire?
- Tina: This is a tough issue to handle. It is being done across the country. Numbers show far fewer reductions if Public Safety reductions are made than General Fund reductions. This is a call for the public and Council. It's a philosophical approach. We can give you the numbers. We are trying to come to numbers that are more meaningful.
- Bird: Where is the Council philosophically? Are we willing to consider cuts to public safety? Are we talking about cutting anything? Should we be holding the line on pay increases and other expenses instead of cutting programs?
- Tina: City Staff has done most of the cutting out over a long period of time. Public Safety Levy has been talked about, but it was agreed that that will not be something to do this year because of the School District's plans. Strongly suggesting a determination about the schedule for levies, i.e., the School District and County Jail. Need to have a realistic discussion on the area's median income and what can be tolerated. All governing bodies in this area need to have a discussion about that before there are significant cuts. We have 2 to 3 years to work with the planning. If you do not give raises, it is likely it will go to arbitration and you will give raises that are not within your control.
- Astle: Staff is assuming that arbitration will occur and union will prevail. Other cities that are cutting police and fire – what services do they drop?
- Tina: It has varied across the country, depending on their need. Some are closing fire stations and laying off police and firefighters. Las Vegas is responding to emergency calls and providing transportation. Still researching this model. Can bring additional models if you wish to see them.
- Astle: Has been reading a plethora of emails from Zurbuchen and Ulledalen. It has brought attention to BUFSA. What percentage of City taxes collected goes to the Fire Department? So say on a \$200,000 house, \$20 or \$25 goes to the Fire Department from the taxes collected. How much BUFSA is being charged on a \$200,000 house located toward Molt? Is the BUFSA response cost proportioned to the distance from the stations?
- Tina: We are working on those numbers now.
- Astle: So we will know what they are paying?

- Tina: We receive payment from the County. We will have to go back to the County to ascertain how they charge in the County itself. We receive a supplemental payment to what we raise through property taxes to operate BUFSA.
- Astle: We don't receive any property taxes for BUFSA from county people do we?
- Tina: We do not.
- Pitman: The more information we can get to help break down PBB numbers is useful. Each Councilmember has different opinions on service cuts. How much input does staff want from Council vs. experts' opinion? Council and staff need to have conversations about programs in order to make budget reductions. Would like to see what other communities are doing when they cut budgets.
- Tina: We can certainly provide you with this information and models for how changes are being made in other communities. Most jurisdictions that are doing this down and taking those steps are doing so because they are financially in such a difficult position they cannot do anything else. We can bring in those models to consider.
- Pitman: By looking at those models, we can hopefully avoid making mistakes that other communities have made prior to us.
- McCall: Thinking about dialogue occurring with community leadership. When could staff have info available to talk with that group? Need united effort.
- Tina: We do not have the kind of analytical staff there may be in other organizations. We have accountants, not budget analysts. We don't have management analysts. This will be done primarily by Department Heads. Hesitant until conversations are had with them to commit to a time.
- McCall: May not need to be done right now, but feel it is important to do with all the stakeholders in this community to have a united front for the future.
- Cimmino: City services that are tax supported are just as important as school facilities, but could city still consider a public safety levy election?
- Tina: Understood from the Council at a previous meeting, that the City would postpone entering the levy arena for the School District to place their levy on the ballot. That was relayed to the School District. To reiterate, Staff recommends that the Police Department budget be broken down by beat and EMS be broken down by station.
- Bird: It is helpful to get information about what other communities are doing with budgets and services. Also helpful to use our own staff to develop proposals for Council to consider. Our chiefs and their critical staff may have some of the answers.
- Ulledalen: The City may have to layoff 60+ employees within 5 years. Especially if raises are given. Want to see a projection over the next 5 years. Want to see amount of reserves that need to be used over that time to balance budgets and cut services/personnel. Give us a dollar amount to work on incrementally. We do not want to wait 2 or 3 years because we will run out of options. It will come down to customer service at that point. People will not be happy eliminating or gutting the Parks Department. It will not solve the cost problems with Police and Fire Departments, will still need to come up with cuts to deal with that. Need to ease into making reductions will show the public we are making an effort to avoid increases in taxes and cuts in services.

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- Tina: Meeting with School District Board needs to be scheduled. Possible meeting dates are March 1<sup>st</sup> (Friday), March 7<sup>th</sup> and March 21<sup>st</sup> at Noon. Will check with the School District about what dates are possible in February. It is the desire of the Council to meet sooner, rather than later, and would like to meet in February if at all possible. Also need to schedule a meeting with county commissioners. Commissioner Reno suggested a joint meeting with the City of Laurel, the Yellowstone County Commissioners, the School District, etc. Would it be possible to combine the meetings?
- Cimmino: Yes, absolutely. The more the merrier.
- Hanel: Need to have a set agenda.
- Bird: Supporting each other's mill levies would be one.
- Tina: We would host the meeting at Back Porch Deli. The meeting room there should have enough room to accommodate everyone. Will report via email what is learned about possible meeting dates.
- Public comment: None.

<b>TOPIC #7</b>	<b>Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda</b>
<b>PRESENTER</b>	
<b>NOTES/OUTCOME</b>	None

Additional Information:
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