

City Council Work Session

May 23, 2006
6:00 PM
3rd Floor Library

ATTENDANCE:

Mayor/Council (please check) Tussing, Ronquillo, Gaghen, Stevens, Brewster, Veis, Ruegamer, Boyer, Ulledalen, Jones, Clark.

CONVENE TIME: 6:05 P.M.

ADJOURN TIME: 8:50 P.M.

Agenda

TOPIC #1	PUBLIC COMMENT
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Councilmember Veis said he and Mayor Tussing attended the Governor's Summit on Emergency Preparedness on May 23rd. He handed out two information pamphlets from the conference - "Pandemic Influenza Planning" and "State and Local Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist."• Interim City Administrator Volek spoke on a "Welcome to Billings" sign that the "Celebrate Billings" committee would like to install on Rimrock Rd. and N. 27th Street. MSU-Billings will maintain the sign.• Ms. Volek also stated that next Tuesday, May 30th at 5:30 will be an agenda review meeting at the Library followed by the Airport/Transit budget presentations.	
TOPIC #2	Board & Commission Reports – TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	
TOPIC #3	Budget Review - Library
PRESENTER	Bill Cochran, Library Director
NOTES/OUTCOME	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bill Cochran, Library Director said that revenue resources come mostly from City and County property taxes but the Library also receives \$50,000 through fines and forfeitures. The FY06 expenditures and designated reserves were affected by a fire code compliance project which is	

now completed. The Library has 29 total full-time employees which is a reduction of 25% from 30 years ago even though the work has tripled.

- FY07 revenue is \$2,647,753; expenditures are \$2,752,747; designated reserves are \$909,241 and cash reserves are \$1,508,798. Councilmember Ruegamer asked if designated reserves are a part of cash reserves. Mr. Cochran said designated reserves are a part of cash reserves.
- Councilmember Boyer asked if the increase in expenses between 2005 and 2006 was caused by energy expenses. Mr. Cochran answered that the increase was due to the fire code project. The library has energy efficient heating and lighting so has not seen a huge increase due to energy costs.
- The Library offers Adult, Children, Teen, Senior/Homebound and Infomobile Services to the citizens of Billings. Councilmember Ronquillo asked about services available at the South Park Senior Center. Mr. Cochran said that services there have been cancelled due to lack of interest. However, if there is renewed interest, the Library could add that stop back into its route. The Infomobile is the only purely County service cost. Annual circulation of library materials is almost at 1,000,000 items. There is a lot of interest in the website and databases with 40 workstations available to the public.
- Councilmember Veis asked when he'd be able to check out DVDs without going through the circulation desk. Mr. Cochran responded that all other items have been switched from a barcode to a radio chip which allows for self-checkout but the DVDs have not been switched. This will depend on the rate of frequency working on the DVDs.
- Councilmember Boyer commented that this is one of the busiest libraries she's ever seen, adding that the staff is doing a great job in bad conditions. Mr. Cochran commented on the diverse population that the library serves.
- Councilmember Stevens asked about the relationship between the Friends of the Library and the Library Foundation. Mr. Cochran answered that the original funds donated by the Billings family were sitting in a trust fund. That trust fund was transferred to the Foundation with the consent of the Board. Eight to ten years ago, the bylaws were revised and currently one of the Foundation members sits on the Library Board and reports back to the other twelve Foundation members. The Foundation Board has a CPA, an attorney, a banker, etc. The difference between the Foundation and Friends of the Library is the long-term planning that the Foundation engages in with a budget of \$10,000 to \$15,000. The Friends of the Library raises funds mostly from book sales and currently has about \$93,000 which is unusually large. They are waiting to spend those funds on a worthwhile project.

TOPIC #4	Budget Review – Parks, Recreation & Public Lands (PRPL)
PRESENTER	Gene Blackwell, Interim Parks Director

NOTES/OUTCOME

- Mr. Blackwell said that the PRPL supervises 120 sites around the City.
- There are four divisions within the Department:
 - Administration – (included in Parks Division budget)
 - Parks Division - \$2,962,074 in expenditures; \$1,605,214 in revenues
 - Forestry – O & M is \$260,669
 - Recreation - \$923,106 in expenditures; \$407,600 in revenues
- Ms. Volek stated that PRPL has the funds for an additional 1.5 FTE positions in the Park and

Maintenance division. This issue will be added to the list for Council review on June 5th.

- Councilmember Boyer asked who is responsible for the Amend Trust. Mr. Blackwell said the Amend Trust is \$198,000 and the \$5,913 interest goes into the Parks & Maintenance budget.
- The Forestry dept. has been moved to the Public Works dept. for better control of right-of-way tree management.
- Mr. Blackwell said that there are 285 seasonal positions in the Recreation Division. They supply personnel for all City aquatic and recreation programs for all ages. Councilmember Ruegamer asked for the revenue breakdown from each pool. The revenues from the pools according to Joe Fedin, Recreation Superintendent, are: South Pool - \$4,000, Athletic Pool - \$16,000 and Rose Park Pool - \$134,000, for a total of \$154,000. The pools are subsidized by the General Fund. Councilmember Ronquillo noted that the South Pool only brings in a small amount of revenue and suggested eliminating the pool fee, which would eliminate the ticket-taker and manager positions and might bring more kids to the pool. Lifeguards and supervisors would still be needed however. Councilmember Veis requested the cost and revenue analysis to make South Pool a free pool. Mr. Fedin will get those numbers for the Council. Any adjustment would have to be made for next year because passes have already been sold and fee schedules distributed. Mr. Ronquillo asked about the condition of the South Pool. Mr. Fedin stated that the South Pool was refinished in 1993 and is in good condition. The bath house needs to be remodeled however.
- Councilmember Ronquillo asked if the City is experiencing vandalism in the cemetery. Mr. Blackwell answered that the vandalism has decreased but the cemetery still experiences periodic vandalism. The fence has helped to correct this problem. Mayor Tussing asked how many graves are in Mountview Cemetery. Lee Stadtmiller, Cemetery Superintendent, said that there are 8,000 remaining graves and 200 niches still available for sale. Councilmember Ronquillo asked if the City markets the graves. Ms. Volek responded that the City does not market them and would likely receive a negative response from the private sector if the City tried to market its graves.
- Mr. Blackwell stated the proposed FY07 Capital Projects plan consist of improvements to the Skate Park, Central Park playground, and master plans for both Riverfront Park and Briarwood Park. Councilmember Stevens asked if it would be more cost effective to bring the master planning in-house instead of using consultants. Mr. Blackwell responded that it's very time-intensive and requires additional work for PRPL personnel to undertake.
- Councilmember Brewster asked if there is still money available for Castlerock Park benches. Mr. Blackwell said that it appears there is money available and staff wants to make sure that there's enough money in this year's budget in order to complete the project.
- Budget totals for the dept. were presented by Mr. Blackwell. There has been a drop in both the expenditures and the revenues this year.
- Councilmember Gaghen asked if the cemetery staff ever considered grave blankets, flowers, etc. for sale to the public for holidays. Mr. Stadtmiller answered they have never been proposed in the budget because of private sector competition. He also said they have flower containers available for sale but sell them at cost because of an existing ordinance.
- Councilmember Veis asked Mr. Blackwell about planning for Cottonwood Park. Mr. Blackwell said that the planning will follow the school construction as the needed funding is tied to the proceeds from the school area.
- Councilmember Ruegamer asked for the average cost of a grave site and how the cost is distributed. Mr. Stadtmiller said that a grave costs \$625; \$425 goes to the General Fund or expansion fund, \$180 for the perpetual care fund and \$20 for the flower pot fund. Mr. Ruegamer asked how much money is in the perpetual care fund. Mr. Stadtmiller replied approximately

- \$600,000, which is designated to purchase more land when the cemetery is full.
- Councilmember Brewster asked if the City would ever look at a city-wide park maintenance district. Councilmember Veis added that Bozeman is trying that plan and suggested the City should perhaps see how it works out for Bozeman. Interim City Administrator Tina Volek asked that the Council go for a local option tax next year, but if that fails, to look at a City-wide park maintenance district for the following year.
- Mayor Tussing said that a work session is necessary for strategic planning to talk about how the City should fund City services long-term. Councilmember Veis said the Cobb Field Committee recommended that the Mustangs maintain the field and asked if that was a good idea. Mr. Blackwell said it could work as long as the long-term capital repair and maintenance is considered. Councilmember Veis asked if the Mustangs have the capability and capacity to maintain the field. Mr. Blackwell said he would need to study their structure, but it could probably be done. Councilmember Veis asked if the City should consider that if the bond issue fails. Mr. Blackwell said that Cobb Field won't last that long. Councilmember Boyer asked if Cobb Field will be on the June 12 meeting agenda. Councilmember Ruegamer said he is going to look at the Casper and Ogden fields. He has already seen the Missoula field and said they didn't get what they paid for.
- Councilmember Stevens asked how the Amend Park Development Council came about. Mr. Blackwell said it started with large donations, about \$1.3 million. The City has also spent about \$1 million over the years, beginning with the land acquisition. Mr. Fedin said that PRPL is trying to re-energize the Amend Park Development Council to deal with operation and maintenance costs. There are four soccer associations that need to coordinate their use, operation, maintenance etc. They've been working on the relationship since last year and it seems to be improving. The Park is still in need of donations for capital improvements.
- Mayor Tussing said he was called by Nancy Dimich, the Amend Park concession stand manager. She gives 10% of the profit to the Amend Park Development Council and keeps 90% for herself. She has had some problems with the stand being broken into and has called asking the City to make the repairs even though the City receives no funds from the profits. General consensus was that the City needs to receive funds from concessions sold at City parks.
- Councilmember Boyer asked for the Strategic Planning Committee list of objectives, the name of the chair and meeting dates from each group.

Additional Information:

- Mayor Tussing said he may be absent from the May 30th meetings.

Respectfully submitted
Tami Greeley, Deputy City Clerk