

City Council Work Session

5:30 PM
Council Chambers
Date: March 2, 2015

ATTENDANCE:

Mayor/Council (please check) Hanel, Cromley, Yakawich, Cimmino, Pitman, McFadden, Bird, Swanson, McCall, Crouch, Brown

Agenda

TOPIC #1: Legislative Update

- Ed Bartlett: legislative report. Transmittal deadline explanation. Over 1000 bills, Governor signed about 80 bills into law. Local option update. House Bill updates. CCTV camera limits failed.
- Hanel: HB 344 clarification? Bartlett: introduced by local legislator, would prohibit use of license plate scanners.
- McCall and Cimmino: LC 1475, Sen Arntzen on TIFs?
- Cimmino: LC 0559, local option tax.
- Ed: simple bill
- **Public Comment:** none

TOPIC #2: RiverStone Health Resolution

- City Administrator Tina Volek introduced John Felton, Riverstone Health CEO.
- Felton: Congress needs to renew grant program or will lose capacity to treat about 9000 patients. Requesting that Council pass a resolution asking Congress to renew funding.
- Yakawich: Riverstone Health survival at stake? No, but it would dramatically change. Satellite facilities could be in jeopardy.
- McFadden: delegation aware of the issue? Yes.
- McCall: support a resolution. Are County commissioners doing the same? Would resolution or letter be better? County Commissioners sent a letter. Format doesn't matter as much as the message being from local officials.
- **Public Comment:** none
- Hanel: likes the idea of a resolution as opposed to a letter. McCall agrees.
- Consensus to return item to 3/9 meeting.

TOPIC #3: Parking Strategic Plan

- Bruce McCandless introduced Dennis Horn. Horn: Overview of presentation. Plan goals. Assessed current parking operation. Stakeholder outreach. Key

themes – opportunities and challenges. Expert panel. Identified 20 Characteristics of effective parking programs. Technology. Organizational structures – hybrid governance, vertical operating dept. 6 key areas. Guiding principles. Recommendations: adopt the plan, update technology, support downtown/economic development, facility rehab & maintenance, branding and marketing, deal with Federal-APD demise, staff training, vertical integration and parking board authority, long term - access management program, courtesy tickets and meter bags, strengthen enforcement system.

- Cromley: how much detail in report? Great deal of detail. Lengthy reports.
- Brown: is the learning curve so expensive that we should consider contracting? No, City has a good base and it will improve over time.
- McCall: excellent plan. Equipment costs? Reenergizing Parking Advisory Board and vertical integration? Don't replace everything at one time and not right away. Programs evolve over time. Be proactive and think strategically.
- Yakawich: one or two focused comments about strengths or weaknesses? Need a single sense of purpose, direction and plan, strong leader, new technology to improve customer service.
- Pitman: aggressive timeline. Does that mean we should implement new technology within 6 months, 1 year, ? Not necessarily, depends on capacity to make all of the changes.
- Brown: is parking generating enough revenue to buy new technology? Will ID steps that make it affordable.
- Yakawich: is technology outdated? Not necessarily, but current technology company is going out of business, so support and maintenance will be an issue.
- Pitman: would like more recommendations, maybe from Tracy after parking conference. Would like to nail down a time frame for reports. McCandless: Parking Advisory Board will try to identify more exact recommendations. Will aim for additional reporting in 45-60 days.
- Cimmino: when will Council receive plan to review? McCandless: tomorrow.
- McCandless: Parking is an enterprise fund, and is intended to be self-sufficient. Keep in mind that improvements/changes could have an impact on parking fees.
- Tracy Scott introduces parking staff present at the work session.
- **Public Comment:**
- Greg Krueger, Development Director for Downtown Alliance: Downtown Alliance supports the plan. Alliance stands behind Tracy Scott and parking staff.

TOPIC #4: Highway 3 Corridor Study

- Lora Mattox, Transportation Planner: 5 mile long study, multi-faceted. Joint effort to examine several elements of transportation corridor.
- Danielle Scharf, Project Manager for study from Sanderson Stewart: project area, planning elements, 4 major recommendation categories: traffic and safety, traffic operations, trails and open space, and review of storm water conditions. Divided corridor into 3 zones: Scenic Zone in the East, Residential Area, and Rural Area. Planning process, stakeholder input. Existing conditions, recommendations. Roundabout and Zimmerman Trail improvements in 2017.

- McFadden: concerned about bike lanes in high traffic area, sacrifice driving lanes in order to get bike lanes. Reasoning? Scharf: two lanes would be adequate for future volumes on Highway 3. Received many requests to add bicycle lanes.
- Cromley: thoughts about limiting access on lower rims? Scharf: maintain and possibly enhance access to lower rims. Leave lower rim trails as they are.
- McCall: bike lanes and trails, parking lots? Bike lanes would be paved. Wide shoulders. Turning lanes in the center median. Parking lots will re-establish vegetation in current gravel areas.
- Swanson:
- Cimmino: timeframe? Tie in with Inner Belt Loop? Zimmerman Trail intersection safety is the only one currently funded. Time frame is dependent upon available funding. Plan will give MDT idea of how City would like to develop this area.
- Pitman: who maintains? Many entities due to multiple ownerships and operations.
- Brown: Does this equate to a Parks Master Plan/long range plan? Yes. Long term goal to work towards when funding becomes available.
- Yakawich: Are priorities in presentation in order? No order/weight assignment to 13 priorities that were presented. Which priority should be first when funding becomes available? Mattox's opinion is to preserve and reclaim rim top and to provide amenity to residents in a safer and more developed way.
- **Public Comment:**
- Al Rapacz, 4840 Pecan Trail, Billings, MT: encourage Council to think about participating in the plan/project, beautiful corridor, specific recommendations.
- Kevin Nelson, 4235 Bruce Avenue, Billings, MT: agree that commuter bike lanes aren't needed. Recreational will use it but not commuters.

Mayor Hanel called for a break at 7:55 pm. The meeting was resumed at 8:13 pm.

TOPIC #5: Transportation Safety Plan Grant

- Lora Mattox, Transportation Planner: working with state for past year on state safety plan. State offers locals use of their consultant. No money, just have to agree to use the consultant, under MDT rules. Data driven process. Reviews local statistics. Letter to MDT is all that's needed.
- Brown: funding would come from the state? State provides consultant to City.
- Cromley: do improvements include pedestrians? Yes
- McCall: statewide number of accidents, alcohol involved, etc.; statewide percentage? Fluctuates, can provide exact figures at another time; do not have these figures right now.
- **Public Comment:** none

TOPIC #6: Council Discussion

- Hanel: City Administrator Volek distributed an invitation to annual police appreciation event on March 5.
- Hanel: Barbara Hinkel letter about ped traffic at YMCA. Compliment the last issue of City Link.

- Cimmino: CIP isn't on the agenda for next Council meeting? Will be on March 23rd agenda.
- Brown: discuss when City can hire additional officers? Tina: 4 officers, met with Chief, approved 3 hires and Animal Control Officer; will have to restart application process. Concern about hiring now and laying off a year from now due to lack of funding. Working with Finance and Police Chief. City Administrator is tasked with hiring, concern about laying off new officers. If we have the money, we'll hire for the September academy class.
- Yakawich: what if we hired 1 person, not 3, but gave employee a 3 year guarantee? Volek: the budget/union system does not work that way.
- McCall: follow-up from Saturday meeting about public relations? Volek: has been working on this.

TOPIC #7: Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda

- Kevin Nelson, 4235 Bruce Avenue, Billings, MT: Gazette article on County levy for jail operations – laid out the expenses and the revenue. Weber's memo said 20 employees cost \$2.2 million. \$110,000 per employee vs \$70k for County employee. City doesn't need to make so many presentations, just succinctly lay out what new taxes will buy. Hwy 3 project cost estimate; \$4.5 million for 3 miles. Council will be asked to pay Cabela's \$5.2 million for ½ mile of street. Volek: money involved in new officer hiring is not just salary; numbers include ongoing operational expenses in addition to salary.

ADJOURN TIME: 8:35