

City Council Work Session

5:30 PM
Council Chambers
May 18, 2015

ATTENDANCE:

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

Tina: announces Billie Guenther's hiring and first day on the job

ADJOURN TIME: 9:05

Agenda

TOPIC #1	Downtown Business Improvement District
PRESENTER	Lisa Harmon, CEO
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Lisa Harmon: Recognizes the BID/DBP staff. Presentation -
- Pitman: local artists used for signal box wraps? Harmon: Yes, Billings or nearby. Juried selection.
- Yakawich: explain personal services and O&M expense increases. Harmon: inflation and added FTE.
- Crouch: numbers of transients moving to treatment? Harmon: success but some are struggling. SB 360 public intoxication didn't pass and it's a challenge. Need carrot and stick. Amazing reduction in PD calls for service recently.
- Hanel: thanks for hard work.
- **Public comments:**
- Tom Zebruchen, 1747 Wicks Lane, Billings, MT: confused by report showing 75% increase in downtown property values. So, why a decline in overall tax collections?

TOPIC #2	Aviation and Transit
PRESENTER	Tom Binford, Aviation and Transit Director
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Binford: accomplishments last year and upcoming. Introduces staff. Reviews airport operations changes 2014 vs 2013. Terminal expansion may be on the horizon; 5 years. Expanding parking lot.
- Hanel: questions about less flights at the airport/growth? Binford can present additional information. Other airports may see more growth thanks to tourism and marketing tourism. Billings is more of a business market.
- Cimmino and Cromley: wi-fi costs at Billings airport and none at others. Why? Don't like it. Binford explains enterprise fund operations; someone has to pay for the wifi.

- Cromley: Billings is the only airport that charges for wifi in the state. Why? If wifi was free for airport visitors, airport tenant rates would need to increase.
 - Hanel: Billings airport is an enterprise fund, so it sustains itself. Most other airports operate a little differently
- McFadden: who ships and receives air freight? Binford: Fed Ex and UPS are main freight carriers and numbers continue to grow.
- Crouch: what does airport use the excess revenue for? Binford: airline residual contracts.
- Kevin Ploehn, Assistant Director of Aviation: can answer a lot of Council's questions about airport finances. Start presentation with MET Transit. Overhead slide not correct but there's a handout. Feds/State not handing out money in FY 15, so will be \$518k more expense than revenues. Explains that PFC and CFC generate more money than needed for projects, so generating excess right now, but will be spent on capital in future years. Discusses Airport numbers.
- Pitman: breakdown of "Other" since it's over \$1 million. Ploehn: yes. Continues.
- McCall: what are federal funded projects this year? Ploehn: Concourse B holding rooms, safety area land purchase, extend runway 10R.
- Pitman: concourse exit improvements? Ploehn: customer requests for better appearance for the exit. Make exit area more appealing for visitors.
- Cromley: update the wolf story at airport baggage area, mentioning that they were reintroduced to the area. Ploehn: will look into this.
- Yakawich: like the amounts raised by MET advertising. Writing on the wall is for state and federal funding reductions. What do we do about it? Ploehn: will be discussed at July 6 work session. Volek: problems with federal funding.
- Cimmino: how many people in terminal per year? Carpet requires care. Ploehn: 1 million per year, carpet is preferred.
- McCall: MET services are good quality and critical for elderly, students, etc. look forward to work session. Good topic for this year's community conversation.
- Crouch: new route to VA center working well? Ploehn: fairly successful, especially for people working in that area.
- Hanel: bunkers still in use? State pass through funds – Admin fee? Ploehn: still use bunkers for storage; good for cold storage. Ron Wenger: MET Transit Manager: Admin fee for MET varies from grant to grant. Could provide additional information.
- Bird: age limit for unaccompanied minors? Wenger: no, but MET drivers are great with helping students.
- Bird: strongly encourage others to consider student passes for MET transportation. Very happy with services.
- Pitman: Legislature deregulated some of taxis, etc. Privatization in the future? Buffalo artwork sales? Wenger: probably get more \$ in FY 17. Vouchers haven't worked well here but still used in some large cities. Almost no transit system makes money, so probably won't see much privatization. Ploehn: About 6 buffalo statues left. Details some "other" revenue sources, biggest one is fuel handling fee. Make about \$.05/gal on fuel sales.

- Crouch: breakdown state and federal funding receipts? Ploehn: most is federal but can send more details.
- **Public comments:** none

Mayor calls for a brief break at 7:20. Reconvenes at 7:37.

TOPIC #3	Police
PRESENTER	Rich St. John, Chief

- City Administrator Volek: Pat Weber, Finance Director, projects that GF reserves will fund Public Safety through FY 18, so have authorized Chief to hire for the 4 vacant positions.
- St. John: begins presentation. FY16 shows \$46,000 decrease in budget request. Extremely busy. Decrease is from savings in oil prices, utilities. O&M decrease. Thankful for equipment, and it is well maintained.
- Bird: comp time payout in contract? St. John: yes, it was added into the last contract after negotiations.
- Cimmino: OT pay is X1.5? St. John: yes.
- Yakawich: thanks for O&M info. Liability insurance and IT charges for services? St. John: computers, cell phones, etc.
- Hanel: vacancies and future ones? St. John: know about 3 in the year and the 4 that are currently vacant.
- Pitman: 11 interviewees, how many can be hired? St. John: planned to hire 1, took care of vacancies other than 4 vacant positions, so could fill 5 positions.
- Crouch: false alarms high? St. John: consistent numbers. Alarm companies are working hard to reduce them.
- Hanel: opinions about and costs of body cameras? St. John: not opposed to body cameras, not all that expensive to get started (\$60 – 70k). Cost issue is storage of the video data. Policies are unknown and important. Have model policies ready to go.
- **Public comments:** none.

TOPIC #4	Fire
PRESENTER	Paul Dextrus, Chief; Bill Rash, Assistant Chief
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Dextrus: Discusses revenue. Fire doesn't generate much revenue, but does generate very important revenue that provides services and pays for 10 firefighters. Discusses expenditures. Very minimal budget increase from last year. Addresses key issues for Fire: 911 center relocation, increased staffing, planning for future growth, budget limitations, deferred maintenance on fire facilities and support buildings. Discusses radio system.
- McCall: 911 center funding set-aside – when did this start? 7-8 years ago.
- Cimmino: \$3m funds that are set aside, interest-bearing? What is the money for? Architecture, property purchase, construction, etc. Yes it is interest-bearing.

- Yakawich: does ambulance company reimburse city for materials usage. Usually exchanged on scene. “Bandage for a bandage” type of relationship. Generally buy the same materials as AMR.
- **Public comments:** none

TOPIC #5	Council Discussion
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Yakawich: what procedure to use to increase or decrease proposed budget? Weber: recommend that it be discussed next week, come back to Council on June 1 with costs or impacts. Make a motion on June 8 to increase or decrease budget.
- Hanel: encourage anyone to send requests to City Administrator anytime.
- Crouch: where did additional GF money come from? Weber: several sources including more revenue and less expense than budgeted.
- Cimmino: Muni court discussion – want to see the architect’s presentation. Seems like a lot of money and don’t like the number of reduced occupant load.
- McCall: completed initiatives list. Starts in 2002, would like to share with others. Website under City Council.
- Yakawich: volunteer appreciation celebration. Est food cost of \$900, maybe at the airport and 1 ½ hours max.
- Volek: reminder that Monday is Memorial Day. Regular meeting is on the 26th, budget work session on the 27th. 26th agenda does not include the LDS meeting house special review.

TOPIC #6	Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Dennis Ulvestad: concerned citizen, bring up message I wrote to Council last week. Wanted to know about whether courtroom is dark. Judge wanted to talk with me about being a witness for a DUI trial. \$30 fine for overtime parking. Re-reads an email that he sent earlier. Kolar has a lot of respect for the judge pro-tems. Support the Judge in how to use personnel – PT judge won’t work. Remodel of Council Chambers/Courtroom is not right at this time. Budget is complex.
- Cimmino: RFP vs SBR.
- Jeff Essmann, Resident of the City of Billings: 8 years ago built a water dispenser on Blue Creek Road. 2” meter and dispenser. Water for 300 families+-. They haul the water. Increasing complaints about rate of delivery through machinery. Meter is the restriction. 110 gal per minute vs 40 gal per minute. Service center response at 2:48 Friday was no meter available, no supervisor available, use a licensed contractor and call back on Monday. Contractor called 3 times today. Service center employee will meet at

7:30 tomorrow. Water rate increase of 16% for his business. Affects 300 families. Would like for Council to direct City Administrator and Dept. Head to make city employees available during the work week.

- Bird: how long did customers deal with low flow?
- Essmann: building for some time. Increasing rate of complaints.
- Cimmino: problem solved tomorrow?
- Essmann: hope so and will invest more if needed to solve problem.
- Bird: has this been an issue before?
- Essmann: this is an eight year old meter, so it has been building up over time.