

# City Council Work Session

5:30 PM  
Council Chambers  
February 3, 2020

**ATTENDANCE:**

**Mayor/Council** (please check)  Cole,  Shaw,  Yakawich,  Neese,  
 Ewalt,  Joy,  Choriki,  Purinton,  Ronning,  Boyett,  Brown  
**CM excused: ALL PRESENT**

**ADJOURN TIME:** 10:13 pm

## Agenda

<b>TOPIC #1</b>	<b>Wayfinding Signage Plan</b>
<b>PRESENTER</b>	<b>Mack Drzayich, Alta Planning</b>
<b>NOTES/OUTCOME</b>	

- Mack: overview of Wayfinding Signage visions and goals, best practices, visual preference survey summary, brand development, destination identification and prioritization, costs and maintenance.
- Neese: family friendly signage? Mack: not in current plan, City determination. Neese: QR Code for historical information? Mack: space on signage for information, QR codes great idea.
- Mayor Cole: donor information? Mack: area on signage for donors, logos etc.
- Ronning: signs to get people into downtown instead of outlying areas? Mack: downtown has so many signs, so hard to compete. Downtown density will mean less wayfaring signage.
- Yakawich: faded and not well marked existing signage? Lora Mattox: maintenance ongoing.
- Matt Hoppel, Assistant Fire Chief: Wayfinding signage will significantly help with emergency situations. People will be able to give a more precise location.
- **Public Comment:**
- **Kristi Drake, Bicycle Pedestrian Committee and TrailNet:** during recent bike tour became obvious City has no signs. Support plan.
- **Michael Nelson, 1221 Avenue C, Apt. 4, Billings, Montana:** walk and bike 12 months out of the year. Signage would be incredibly helpful.
- **Anna O'Donnel, 131 Avenue B, Billings, Montana:** other cities could look to Billings as a City that branded themselves with a good Wayfinding signage plan.

<b>TOPIC #2</b>	<b>Tax Abatement Annual Report</b>
<b>PRESENTER</b>	<b>Patrick Klugman, Big Sky Economic Development</b>
<b>NOTES/OUTCOME</b>	

- Patrick Klugman: PowerPoint presentation of Tax Abatement program overview, 5 or 10 year option, capital investments, and active tax abatement business' and savings. Highlighted business': Home Science Tools and Billings Flying Service.
- Neese: ask for residents vs non-residents jobs during survey? Patrick: not currently, great idea.
- Ronning: do not see the tax abatement program as very profitable for the City.
- Purinton: how is compliance ensured? Patrick: can recapture taxes if not compliant through statutes.
- Mayor Cole: City's percentage of lost taxes? Patrick: less than 1%.
- **Public Comment:**
- None

Recess at 7:05 pm

Reconvene at 7:15 pm

<b>TOPIC #3</b>	<b>Public Safety Mill Levy</b>
<b>PRESENTER</b>	<b>Chris Kukulski, City Administrator</b>
<b>NOTES/OUTCOME</b>	

- Chris: PowerPoint presentation. Overview of: City's responsibilities, partners, Public Safety (PS) Levy scope, potential revenue sources, services included in the PS levy, and annual costs.
- Law Enforcement crime data, calls numbers and population growth, crime reduction strategy overview.
- Code Enforcement cases and strategies to improve neighborhoods.
- Prosecutor PS challenges, and caseload.
- Fire Department problem statement, call volume, strategies to reduce loss of life and property.
- General Fund/PS Fund structural imbalance.
- Council discussed numbers and proposed taxes for home values. Billings Urban Fire Service Area (BUFSA) discussion.
- Chris: if Council could give direction then staff can focus on Council priority items and not waste time on items of no interest.
- Neese: would like to see PS numbers on different measurement than taxable value. Made motion to direct staff to research BUFSA methodology for different assessment ways, timing, contractual requirements, other stakeholders, seconded by CM Ewalt. Motion was approved 10-1, Joy opposed.
- Shaw: short term solutions such as Municipal fines, mill levy, and long term tax structure changes. Chris: have given ball park amounts to Council. More creative we get, more risk we take with litigation issues. Do not recommend putting City finances in legislative hands. Impact fees, BUFSA, Municipal fines, etc. Kevin Iffland, Assistant City Administrator: need Council direction on equitable options, risk level will increase with creativity, but Council needs to give staff direction.

- Ronning: do not need staff to reiterate things that have already been presented to Council. Municipal fines increase good idea. PS District has been brought to Council multiple times, long term and do not support. County charges State inmate service - Could City could charge State for parolees? Increase success of drug courts.
- Yakawich: final date for ballot? Chris: June 8<sup>th</sup> last day to pass ordinance to put ballot out in November. Yakawich: would like to discuss mills and how much that means to homeowners? \$141 for \$100,000 home. (Incorrect: \$141 on \$211,000 home)
- Choriki: prioritize by short term / big impact. Short term / little impact. Long term / big impact and long term / little impact.
- Boyett: need to focus on amounts.
- Ewalt: 2-year patch in order to come up with alternate financing. Work with legislature to create solutions. Example: Percent tax on casualty insurance.
- Brown: can change assessments at any time.
- Ronning: talking about lives, not just numbers.
- Shaw: Motion to move forward with impact fees and municipal fines, CM Boyett seconded. Chris: consulting firm fee could be added in proposed 2020 budget for impact fees. Could add ordinance amendment to adjust fines/consult with judge. Motion approved unanimously.
- Council discussion on dollar amounts and various options that could be considered. Move City Hall plan out of mill levy.
- Ewalt: motion to move forward with further research regarding a 2 year patch of \$141 per homeowner, seconded by Neese.
- Choriki: PS has been funded by the General Fund for decades. Need amount to be large enough to make a true difference.
- Mayor: PS funds could not be used for anything other than PS.
- Motion to move staff forward on 2 year patch of \$141 FAILED 4-7, Shaw, Joy, Mayor, Choriki, Ronning, Brown and Boyett opposed.
- **Public Comment:**
- Carmelita Dominguez, 4440 Laredo Place, Billings, Montana: timing of a mill levy is important. Keep the people's trust.
- Anna O'Donnell, 131 Avenue B, Billings, Montana: Chief Rash had to cut training due to financial issues, need quality trained PS personnel. Be fully transparent.
- Larry Seekins, Billings, Montana: City could work with County to find answers.
- Yakawich made a motion to direct staff bring back information on a \$250 mill levy per homeowner, Neese seconded.
- Shaw: would rather see a range from \$250 - \$327.
- Ronning: challenge Council to find out what constituents want.
- Shaw: substitute motion to focus on staff bringing back information on a \$296 per homeowner amount, seconded by CM Choriki.
- Ewalt: called the question, Choriki seconded. Approved unanimously.

- Substitute motion approved 6-5, Yakawich, Neese, Ewalt, Purinton, Brown opposed.

<b>TOPIC #4</b>	<b>Council Discussion</b>
<b>PRESENTER</b>	<b>CM Ronning – Trip to DC</b>
<b>NOTES/OUTCOME</b>	

- Ronning: trip to Washington DC for human trafficking summit, local group recognized. Proud of success and hard work.
- Yakawich: Evergreen Street has a spring coming onto road.
- **Public Comment:**
- **Brent Cromley, 235 Parkhill Drive, Billings, Montana:** NDO presentation. Encourage support.

<b>TOPIC #5</b>	<b>Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda</b>
<b>PRESENTER</b>	
<b>NOTES/OUTCOME</b>	