

City Council Work Session

5:30 PM
Virtual Zoom Meeting
July 6, 2020

ATTENDANCE:

Mayor/Council (please check) Cole, Shaw, Yakawich, Neese,
 Ewalt, Joy, Choriki, Purinton, Ronning, Boyett, Brown

ALL PRESENT

CM excused:

ADJOURN TIME: 8:30 pm

Agenda

Dave Mumford, Public Works Director, announced his retirement

TOPIC #1 **COVID-19 Update**

PRESENTER Steve Arveshoug, Big Sky Economic Development (BSEDA) and John Felton, County Health Officer

NOTES/OUTCOME

- John Felton: several cases in assisted living facilities, 149 total active cases in MT, no ventilator cases, encourage masks when social distancing not possible. Most cases related to gatherings, some transportation and some work place transmissions. 4.7% rate of increase for state.
- Ewalt: how to people get off active list? Mr. Felton: 10 days without symptoms
- Shaw: cases in jails? Mr. Felton: No active cases currently.
- Ronning: Alternatives? Mr. Felton: Private entity, cases reported for all residents of Yellowstone County
- Purinton: assisted living facilities screening? Mr. Felton: Screening for symptoms, travel, etc. Most facilities are privately owned and establish their own screening process.
- Choriki: public announcements? Mr. Felton: half of cases are age 20-39. Looking for options to reach younger people. Council can model how to stay safe. Riverstone wears masks.
- Councilmember Brown, BSEDA member: very efficient team doing a great job.
- Steve Arveshoug: economic pulse before Covid – 2.9% October 2019, GDP Growth rate through 2018 was on modest roller coaster, 40% of work force will reach retirement in 10 years. 11,598 unemployment claims end of April. \$94 million in PPE funding granted. Overview of consumer spending. Masks could help keep business’s open. Recovery timeline: Responses and stabilization, Business Recovery, and Building Economy Community Resilience.
- Neese: business’s struggling to find employees due to UI benefits. Mr. Arveshoug: sent ask to Governor to help incentivize employment.

- **Public Comment:**
- **Tom Zurbuchen, 1747 Wicks Lane, Billings, Montana:** stated City is falling into hole, Covid cases increasing. City must act.
- **Lauren Wright, 511 Yellowstone Avenue, Billings, Montana:** works with local group to encourage wearing masks. Mask crusader group to normalize masks.
- Choriki: ask City staff to wear masks in order to good role model. Chris Kukulski, City Administrator: had discussed with Library and Airport due to traffic.
- Purinton: hesitate to require masks, breeding ground for bacteria and touching face.
- Brown: Health officer says don't require masks. MET Transit? Chris: drivers wear masks.
- Neese: businesses can self-regulate.

TOPIC #2	Billings Heights Business Association
PRESENTERS	Ming Cabrera and Jennifer Owens
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Ming Cabrera, Billings Heights Business Association Chair: Founded in 2019. 35,000 residents in heights, 300 business members, Main Street has 63,000 cars daily.
- Jennifer Owens, Billings Heights Business Association Co-Chair: PowerPoint of Main Street vision, help business voices be heard. Long term priorities: development of heights for business growth, Main Street beautification and modernization, evaluation of economic and development tools.
- Purinton: how many members? Mr. Cabrera: about a dozen and working towards more. Covid has slowed down membership drive opportunities.
- Mayor Cole: dues? Mr. Cabrera: \$200 per year voting membership, \$100 non-voting.
- Brown: working with other established organizations? Ms. Owens: Chamber of Commerce, BSEDA, other business entities very supportive.
- **Public Comment:**
- None

Break at 7:24 pm
Reconvene at 7:32 pm

TOPIC #3	Public Safety Mill Levy Discussion
PRESENTERS	Chris Kukulski, City Administrator
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Chris Kukulski: PS levy charter amendment public money/time cannot be spent to advocate for or against running for office or ballots. Are permitted to educate

community on impacts of decisions. Educate not advocate. Advise Council to avoid advocating during official meetings/boards etc. Outside of meetings Council can advocate. Prior to 2016 Office of Political Practices - changed policy of reporting. PowerPoint and presentation prep, copies made, etc. are tracked and reported.

- Brown: task force meetings? Chris: Not formal representative of City during task force meetings.
- Boyett: ad in paper or radio? Chris: that is fine, just can't use City resources in any way.
- Shaw: parks, City property? Brent Brooks, City Attorney: Fine on own time, not using City time. Gina Dahl, Assistant City Attorney: Parks are public spaces, don't use City time or equipment, funds, resources, staff.
- Purinton: asked opinion during meetings? Chris: in order to not be put in position to defend actions, make clean break and do not mix advocacy. Stay with education.
- Brent Brooks: make time separate from meeting.
- Joy: do not use City email to advocate. Use personal emails.
- Ronning: use slides created by City staff? Gina Dahl: fine, been used for public.
- Boyett: get group together to advocate? Mayor Cole: yes, Covid making difficult.
- Ronning: started discussions but due to lack of decisions from Council and time, interest has dissipated.
- Chris: presenting to Parks, Police, editorial groups. Will present to any recommended groups. Will use social media.
- Neese: Public Library. Gina Dahl: that is ok, public space.
- Mayor Cole: staff can advocate during off hours? Chris: yes.
- Ronning: Police and Fire union members can advocate. Chris: yes, cannot use public resources, but union dues/meetings are not public resources.
- Yakawich: meetings for every Ward and in Library as soon as possible.
- **Public Comment:**
- None

TOPIC #4	Council Discussion
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Joy: as policy setting board and local governing body could benefit by working through issues before handing off to staff. Committees are part of legislative process, missing pieces of process when Council does not debate and research policy. Initiative allows one Councilmember to direct staff, committee would be more appropriate.
- Yakawich: Mr. Mumford, legacy of information. Thankful for his time and he will be missed.
- Shaw: national campaigns costs City Public Safety money. Consider asking for deposit. Mayor Cole: outlined policy to split costs. Ask in advance. Honor to host.

Brown: very expensive, obligation? Brent Brooks, City Attorney: will research City's obligation.

- Purinton: Council used to meet to discuss agenda items before Council meeting to set agenda. May make meeting smoother.
- Neese: should not pay for campaigns.
- Ronning: cannot use resources for PS levy but can use City money for national campaigns. Need to change policy.
- **Public Comment:**
- None

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

- None