

City Council Work Session

5:30 PM
Virtually Held Via Zoom
March 15, 2021

ATTENDANCE:

Mayor/Council (please check) ✓ Cole, ✓ Shaw, ✓ Yakawich, ✓ Neese,
✓ Ewalt, ✓ Joy, ✓ Choriki, ✓ Purinton, ✓ Ronning, ✓ Boyett, ✓ Brown
CM excused: None

ADJOURN TIME: 10:19 PM

Agenda

TOPIC #1	COVID-19 Update
PRESENTER	John Felton, Yellowstone County Health Officer
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- John: National Guard has been very helpful helping at vaccination area. 300 doses available. Overview of current statistics.
- Joy: do people that have had COVID need vaccinated? Felton: yes.
- **Public Comment:**
- None

TOPIC #2	Legislative Updates
PRESENTER	Greg Dorrington and Aimee Grmoljez, City Lobbyist Chris Kukulski, City Administrator
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Aimee: Legislative update, in person and Zoom available, update on current legislation.
- Greg: Midsession report, high number of targeted land use bills. Litigation pending re: marijuana bill money distribution.
- General Council questions and discussion.
- **Public Comment:**
- None

TOPIC #3	Trust For Public Lands - Conservation Finance Feasibility Study
PRESENTER	Michael Whitaker, Parks, Recreation and Public Lands Director and David Weinstein, Western Conservation Finance Director
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- David Weinstein: PowerPoint giving an overview of key ingredients for conservation funding and next steps.
- Wendy Muzzy, Lead researcher for Conservation team: Based in Seattle. Billings revenue options, Park District bond financing costs.
- General Council discussion on bonds, ballots and conservation options.
- **Public Comment:**
- None

TOPIC #4	Park Funding
PRESENTER	Michael Whitaker, Parks, Recreation and Public Lands Director and Tom Rupsis, Parks Board Chair
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Kukulski: Park Improvement Program part of Council priorities and CM Choriki's initiative.
- Mike Whitaker: PowerPoint overview of proposed funding, funding options, maintenance, park development and recommendations.
- General Council questions and discussion regarding: operations costs, bonding options, how the City compared to the National averages, HOA concerns with public utilization, and matching grant programs.

Recess at 7:43 PM

Reconvene at 7:51 PM

- Tom Rupsis: gave an overview of ongoing issues with park and trail funding to recommend a long-term solution that addressed O&M shortages, new park and trail development and future maintenance requirements. He reviewed funding operations, priority projects, and funding future maintenance costs. He showed 2 options: Option 1: mill levy and bond with 2 ballot questions and Option 2: mill levy only with 1 ballot question.
- Council continued with questions and discussion.

- **Public Comment:**
- Steve Arveschoug, 1081 Strawberry Avenue, Billings, Montana: communities investing in themselves, parks and trails development push economic recovery. Health and wellness in community.
- Kristi Drake, 2950 Waldon Place, Billings, Montana: trail use had doubled, must build infrastructure for trails, timing is ideal.
- Dan Brooks, Chamber of Commerce: park development important, safety important.
- Scott Brown, 4650 Kestrel Road, Billings, Montana: supports parks.
- Pat Davies, 4158 Audobon Way, Billings, Montana: encourage parks development. Take survey to public to see level of support. Offer \$2,000 to support survey for matching grant.
- Tim Warburton, 3444 Lucky Penny Lane, Billings, Montana: move up timeline. Matching grant is great idea.
- Council discussed ballot timing, how to balance funding for Parks without affecting Public Safety and how a community survey could help.

TOPIC #5	Council Priorities
PRESENTER	Chris Kukulski, City Administrator
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Mayor Cole spoke of several suggested wording revisions. Wording changes all approved.
- **Public Comment:**
- None

TOPIC #5	Council Discussion
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Ronning: Brent Brooks, former City Attorney has become a CASA advocate. CM Shaw recently lost her grandfather to COVID.
- **Public Comment:**
- None

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

- **Public Comment:**
- None