



VISION STATEMENT:
"The Magic City: A diverse,
welcoming community
where people prosper and
business succeeds."

WORK SESSION SUMMARY

April 17, 2023

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

5:30 P.M.

220 N. 27th St.

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Cole

Roll Call:

Present: Councilmember Kendra Shaw, Ward I
Councilmember Gulick, Ward I
Councilmember Jennifer Owen, Ward II
Councilmember Neese, Ward II
Councilmember Denise Joy, Ward III
Councilmember Danny Choriki, Ward III
Councilmember Pam Purinton, Ward IV
Councilmember Mike Boyett, Ward V
Councilmember Tom Rupsis, Ward V
Mayor William Cole

Absent/

Excused: Councilmember Daniel Tidswell, Ward IV

Staff

Present: Chris Kukulski, City Administrator
Kevin Iffland, Assistant City Administrator
Gina Dahl, City Attorney
Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner
Brenda Beckett, Community Services Manager
Jennifer Duray, Public Works Deputy Director
Mike Pigg, Parks Superintendent

Public comment:

- **John Beckner, 3302 1st Avenue North**, small business owner, problems in the downtown area, theft, vandalisms, feels there may be retaliation from police.
- **Amber Carter, Parkhill Drive, Billings, Montana**, informed Council of rally on courthouse lawn regarding LGBTQ legislation.
- **Glenn Fournier, Metric Wrench owner**, spoke of crime and theft issues at his small business.
- **Irvin Butler, Wicked Diesel owner**, received code enforcement citation for graffiti on his building that he did not create. Spoke of crime issues.

Mayor's Statement Regarding Settlement of Franchise Fee Lawsuit.

1. Safe Routes to School (SRTS), Phase II.

Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner, introduced Erin Claunch as the presenter.

Erin Claunch, Sanderson Stewart, gave an overview of the history, project work to date, upcoming tasks and project schedules. He reviewed the list of schools involved and maps of the areas. Upcoming tasks included: Compiling data, identifying projects/recommendations, draft/final plan report. He ended with a review of the project timeline.

Council discussed dwelling unit per square footage, Castlerock School walk audit, rural special school districts and plans for various areas.

Councilmember Shaw mentioned the SD2 redistricting process not including SRTS. Mr. Claunch indicated they were meeting with SD2 officials to discuss the process.

Councilmember Owen asked if the bike and trail plan should start including the SRTS. Wyeth Friday, Planning Director, indicated he would investigate it.

Public Comment:

- None

Chris Kukulski, City Administrator, spoke of creating incentives and policies regarding fencing and how it affected SRTS.

2. CDBG and HOME Budget Allocation Action Plan.

Brenda Beckett, Community Services Manager, reviewed the annual action plan deadlines, plan findings, goals and core programs. She spoke of HUD funding sources, CDBG and HOME funding history, affordable housing development recommendations, and City Council support.

Council discussed ways to change the program to better assist more people, charging interest on loans, HUD requirements and goals, and growing the budget to deal with the housing crisis. They spoke of the 10% discrepancy of administration cap between CDBG and HOME programs, ways to use funding, application issues and the foreclosure program.

Wyeth Friday, Planning Director, indicated the administrative costs were a critical part of the part of the program. He indicated if Council wanted a larger affordable housing program it would require a new funding source.

Ms. Beckett addressed the application process, foreclosure program and public services.

Public Comment:

- **Patti Webster, HOMEFRONT**, spoke in support of CDB funding. She indicated the federal money available was not sufficient for the needs of the community. Council spoke with Ms. Webster about ways to increase funding for affordable housing needs.

Councilmember Choriki encouraged Council to set aside money every year for housing needs.

Recess at 7:24 pm. Reconvene at 7:33 pm.

3. Water and Wastewater Rates Study.

Jennifer Duray, Public Works Deputy Director, reviewed the results from the W&WW Rates Study, how it calculated revenue requirements, what drives rate increases, billed wastewater flows, rates and impacts, and wholesale water fees. She gave an overview of private fireline annual charges, residential water bill impacts, and unfunded W&WW extensions. She concluded the presentation with system development fees (SDF) and recommended SDF charges.

Council discussed rate increases, resale water data and possible rate increases. They spoke of creating a system for reimbursement to recoup costs for rural development, raising rates to create a “pot of money” to reimburse future development. They discussed system failures, expansion and SDF’s. Ms. Duray spoke of the need for the City to extend sewer and water lines to undeveloped areas and asking for reimbursement from developers.

Debi Meling, Public Works Director, indicated staff had included possible expansion areas that were close to development.

Ms. Duray spoke of rebate and incentive programs to offset the increases. Chris Kukulski, City Administrator, spoke on an increase in growth rates and the need for an increase of \$2 million for water rates and \$2 million for wastewater rates.

Public Comment:

- **Greg McCall, 6125 Norma Jean, Billings, Montana**, spoke of his involvement in the committee discussing W&WW rates and the need for an extension in services. He discussed SDF’s, how development paid for SDF’s, outdoor water use and lot size.

Council discussed SDF’s being used “to fill in gaps” to help cover future development. They talked about lot size and water rates. Council asked staff to bring back information on creating a reimbursement mechanism and the legal requirements for regulations. They suggested between \$1-2 million and spoke about incentivizing infill.

4. 2023/24 City Council Priorities Discussion.

Chris Kukulski, City Administrator, gave an overview of discussion at the Council/Leadership Retreat, outcomes and asked for Council direction. Council indicated there was a need for further discussion to reduce the number of topics. Council discussed the need for small Council Committees to deal with individual topics, and possibly combining Legislative and Local Affairs Committees.

Councilmember Shaw indicated she would be bringing forward an initiative aimed at reducing the segregation of the Native American community.

Public Comment:

- None

5. Legislative Session updates.

Chris Kukulski, City Administrator, gave an update on: the overall budget bill, regional fire assistance, discussion with various representatives involved, and upcoming TIF bill.

Council discussed SB 523, revise TIF funding; SB 381, one Councilmember per ward failed.

Public Comment:

- None

6. Highlight Upcoming Agenda Items of Council Interest.

Chris Kukulski, City Administrator, spoke of CDBG / HOME Action plan, and KIA tax abatement topics coming to the next Council meeting. Council discussed tax abatement options and State regulations.

Public Comment:

- None

COUNCIL DISCUSSION:

Councilmember Boyett spoke of the homeless congregating on N. 27th Street.

PUBLIC COMMENT on "NON-AGENDA ITEMS". Speaker Sign-in required. *(Restricted to ONLY items not on this printed agenda. Comments are limited to 3 minutes or as set by the Mayor. Please sign the roster at the cart located at the back of the Council chambers or at the podium.)*

- None

ADJOURN: 9:26 P.M.