



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

WORK SESSION SUMMARY

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

May 1, 2023

5:30 P.M.

220 N. 27th St.

CALL TO ORDER

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 Daniel Tidswell, Ward IV
Councilmember Pam Purinton, Ward IV
Councilmember Mike Boyett, Ward V (left meeting at approximately 7:00 P.M.)
Councilmember Tom Rupsis, Ward V
Mayor William Cole

Absent/
Excused:

Staff

Present: Chris Kukulski, City Administrator
Kevin Iffland, Assistant City Administrator
Debi Meling, Public Works Director
Andy Zoeller, Finance Director

Mayor's Statement Regarding Settlement of Franchise Fee Lawsuit.

Public Comment:

- **Wesley Dunn, 832 Dorothy Lane, Billings, Montana**, gave Council a handout and spoke of Council member duties.

1. Billings Bench Water Association Agreement.

Debi Meling, Public Works Director, conveyance options for West End Reservoirs, project components, basis of agreement, capital improvements and photos of the headgates and locations. She reviewed pros and cons, Council actions and the agreement with BBWA.

Council discussed how winter affected use, the City obtaining right of way, liability concerns, bankruptcy, and concerns with the agreement.

Ms. Meling addressed concerns and the vulnerabilities in the system.

Public Comment:

- None

Council discussed how the \$35 million in improvements would affect water rates. Ms. Meling indicated every \$1 million per year equaled \$3 per month per user.

2. FY2024 Budget Overview.

Councilmember Owen reviewed the role of the Council Budget and Finance Committee.

Chris Kukulski, City Administrator, and Andy Zoeller, Finance Director, gave an overview of the FY23 accomplishments, pie charts of budgeted revenue and expenditures by class, capital projects, operation and maintenance expenses, inflation impacts, personal services, and new employee requests. He reviewed FY24 budgeted revenues, charges for services, tax revenue, intergovernmental increase in entitlement share, and revenue. He showed FY24 General and Public Safety funds, expenses, typical residential costs, investment in Council Priorities and decisions needed by Council.

Public Comment:

- None

Councilmember Joy asked for clarification on special assessments. Mr. Zoeller indicated they were assessed through property taxes and explained how the fees were assessed.

Council discussed funding for the Crisis Mobile Unit (CRU). Mr. Zoeller indicated the budget anticipated paying for CRU with combined money from the opioid settlement, marijuana money and 2 mills.

Chris Kukulski, City Administrator, spoke of keeping the 2 mills for upstream prevention, local option marijuana tax to be mainly used for prevention. He indicated the opioid dollars had limitations in how they could be spent.

Councilmember Neese spoke about seeing increases in percentage terms and working on creating a plan regarding how to use mills.

Recess at 7:22 pm. Reconvene at 7:31 pm.

3. FY2024 Departmental Budget Presentations.

Andy Zoeller, Finance Director, gave an overview of the downtown revolving loan, Downtown Tax Increment N. 27th St. Billings fund, capital funding, estimated total revenue for FY24, graph of the life of the downtown tax increment from 2006. He reviewed the South Tax Increment fund, cost allocations, and a graph showing growth since 2008. He reviewed the East Tax Increment fund, cost allocations and a graph showing growth since 2007.

Council discussed SBURRA Recreation Center money of \$6.5 million and how it would affect the budget. Mr. Zoeller indicated it could be left in the budget, bonding would not happen unless the public approved it. He added a budget amendment could be brought to Council if needed.

Council asked for clarification for downtown 2-way conversion funds. Mehmet Casey, DBP Director, indicated it was early in the planning process and would have updates available.

Council discussed TIF District funding and how the districts were helping the City's tax base. Council asked for clarification on how the TIF Districts were handling public safety concerns. Jim Tevlin, SBURA, spoke of the infrastructure changes, CPTED and vandalism mitigation possibilities. He indicated their capital improvements plan addressed some of the concerns. Michelle Harkins, EBURD, spoke of park activation to improve lighting, community participation and CPTED options.

They discussed State Legislation and how changes could affect TIF Districts for the City.

Public Comment:

- **Jim Tevlin, SBURA**, spoke of getting a list from the Department of Revenue showing taxable values and how the South Billings Urban Renewal District used the information for projects.
- **Michelle Harkins, EBURD**, gave an overview of upcoming projects.

Council discussed a vagrant property ordinance to help mitigate blight.

Katy Easton, Downtown Billings Alliance CEO, gave an overview of the Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) strategic priorities and reviewed the clean program, public safety, community engagement/events and public art program. She indicated crime calls downtown had decreased.

Council discussed the public restroom facility for downtown called the “Portland Loo”. Ms. Easton indicated it should be completed soon.

Mayor Cole spoke of sidewalk sweepers and asked if they make be an option in the BID. Ms. Easton spoke of a sidewalk sweeper currently in use downtown and some issues with sidewalk crumbling in some areas.

Council discussed graffiti issues. Ms. Easton addressed concerns and reviewed the process to mitigate issues.

Council discussed creating a policy to create a clean graffiti free downtown in the entire area and not just the designated “clean area”.

4. Legislative Session Updates.

Chris Kukulski, City Administrator, gave an update on: HB 5, regional conservation investments.

Councilmember Neese gave an update from the Montana League of Cities and Towns regarding HB 262, Licensing.

Public Comment:

- None

5. Highlight Upcoming Agenda Items of Council Interest.

Chris Kukulski, City Administrator, indicated the following items were coming up: BBWA agreement, tax increment financing grant for Griffin Development, second reading prohibition of firearms, Council strategies and goals.

Public Comment:

- None

COUNCIL DISCUSSION:

Councilmember Choriki bringing forward initiative regarding donation to Billings Area Family Violence Task Force (BAFVTF) for resource guide and conference.

Councilmember Gulick - presentation on how to become higher performance community.

Councilmember Rupsis – follow up on Montana Rescue Mission (MRM) contract talks, MRM not interested.

Mayor Cole – Partners for Parks had a fundraiser. Faith E Church planting trees in Centennial Park.

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 theroster at the cart located at the back of the Council chambers or at the podium.)*

None

ADJOURN: 8:57 PM