



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

## WORK SESSION SUMMARY

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS**  
220 N. 27<sup>th</sup> St.

**November 20, 2023**

**5:30 P.M.**

### 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  
Councilmember Tom Rupsis, Ward V  
Mayor William Cole

Absent/  
Excused:

#### Staff

Present: Chris Kukulski, City Administrator  
Kevin Iffland, Assistant City Administrator  
Wyeth Friday, Planning Director  
Andy Zoeller, Finance Director  
Nick Westburg, Fleet Services  
Mike Pigg, Parks and Recreation Director  
Debi Meling, Public Works Director

#### Public Comment:

- **Rep. Mike Yakawich**, thanked Council and staff for their hard work.
- **Catherine Card, 2815 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue S., Billings, Montana**, spoke of unhoused neighbors and a program that provided showers and shelter needs.
- **Dena Bishopp, no permanent address**, requested staff investigate an incident with police officers allegedly kicking a homeless person.

#### 1. **Workforce Needs – Department of Labor and Industry.**

Tammie Hickey, Project Management Specialist, State of Montana, gave an overview of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan, purpose, and requirements. She reviewed the Core Programs and partner programs, the WIOA vision and how it affected the community.

Council discussed how to reach teenage workers, providing support to social workers, housing, education, transportation and childcare concerns. They mentioned retaining the youth workforce in the community, an SD 2 Program that connected students with business trades, and the need for companies to grow their own workforce programs.

**Public Comment:**

- None

**2. Public Safety.**

Rich St. John, Police Chief, gave an update of recent crimes and charges that were pending. He discussed how Council could help the department spread positive messages, possible curfew changes, stolen guns, and steps to deter crime. He discussed a technology that recorded shots fired and could dispatch police to the area.

Council discussed resources, how the community could help, neighborhood programs, and intervention opportunities. They spoke of partnership opportunities and funding options.

Mr. Kukulski spoke of community partnerships and the benefits of volunteering with kids in the community.

**Public Comment:**

- **Catherine Card, 2815 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue S., Billings, Montana,** spoke of gang issues.

There were no further speakers.

Councilmember Owen gave an update on recent meetings with the Jail Study Group, County Commissioners, and options available for a temporary facility. She spoke of a short-term facility for pre-arraignment only, how quickly people were moved through the system, types of beds needed, and arraignment court options.

Council indicated a desire to continue Public Safety discussions during the Work Session on December 4, 2023. They discussed community partners they would like to be included.

Recess at 7:36 pm

Reconvene at 7:42 pm

**3. Equipment Replacement Plan (ERP).**

Nick Westburg, Fleet Services, gave an overview of the ERP Committee members, deferred equipment and replacements numbers, transfers, FY25 replacement summary by department and dollar amounts.

Council discussed vehicle mileage guidelines before replacement, increasing the price limit due to inflation, and if using the current deferral rate decrease was reasonable with the economy.

**Public Comment:**

- None

#### 4. Capital improvement Plan.

Andy Zoeller, Finance Director, spoke of the Parks and Recreation recently failed mill levy and the new staff suggestions to remove the following projects: Castle Rock, Centennial, Cottonwood, Coulson, North Park and Zimmerman Centers and modifying the remaining projects. He reviewed the projects and funding amounts for each project based on departments.

Councilmember Owen reviewed the Budget and Finance Committee's recommendations.

Mike Pigg, Parks and Recreation Director, spoke of plans to move forward with various projects.

Council discussed SBURA funding, bonding options and how the current funding could be used for projects.

Councilmember Joy asked about the South Billings Aquatic Center being developed in place of South Park pool. Mr. Pigg indicated there could be competition for SBURA money between ice, soccer, pools, etc.

Council asked for clarification on the West End Reservoir project. Debi Meling, Public Works Director, indicated rudimentary plans for bathrooms and parking lots were in the works. She spoke of the need for public/private partnerships to help the project proceed.

Wyeth Friday, Planning Director, indicated the \$5.5 million for Stagecoach Trail included a large amount of pre-design, bonding efforts, and the TA Grant application process.

Council asked if the monies allocated from the TA grant could be postponed. Mr. Friday indicated the money would need to be spent the year specified in the grant application.

Councilmember Rupsis reminded staff to not forget about Poly Vista Park parking lots and paths and spoke of the reallocated money from 2 projects (Spring Creek and Evergreen irrigation).

Councilmember Shaw spoke of the Grant Administrator position. Mr. Zoeller indicated the position had been filled.

#### Public Comment:

- **Kristi Drake, Billings TrailNet**, spoke in favor of the Stagecoach Trail and how it would connect the City.

There was no further public comment.

Councilmember Rupsis indicated the highest priorities were: repairing and replacing South Park Pool, North Park and Zimmerman Park centers. He spoke of using the bonding capacity through Park District 1 before the deadline. He indicated he would be proposing dedicating 4 mills to ongoing incremental development in Parks.

Councilmember Gulick spoke of the need for improvements on the South Side and North Park to help those areas feel like an important part of the community.

Councilmember Neese asked for clarification on the move from PD1 money to the General Fund. Mr. Zoeller indicated the FY24 PD1 money had been transferred from the General Fund and indicated it had not increased. He indicated it was set aside for Parks projects.

## 5. Highlight Upcoming Agenda Items of Council Interest.

Chris Kukulski, City Administrator, mentioned the following upcoming items: 2 annexations on Lincoln Lane, and Avenue D, Downtown Urban Renewal YesterYears project, Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority, ERP and TRP items.

Public Comment:

- None

### **COUNCIL DISCUSSION:**

- None

**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:** 9:08 PM