



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

WORK SESSION SUMMARY

COUNCIL CHAMBERS
220 N. 27th St.

MARCH 18, 2024

5:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Cole

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 Bill Kennedy, Ward III
Councilmember Scott Aspenlieder, Ward IV
Councilmember Dan Tidswell, Ward IV
Councilmember Mike Boyett, Ward V
Councilmember Tom Rupsis, Ward V
Mayor Cole

Absent/
Excused:

Staff
Present: Chris Kukulski, City Administrator
Kevin Iffland, Assistant City Administrator
Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner
John Caterino, Facilities Manager

CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION - LITIGATION UPDATE 4:30 PM – 5:30 PM

Mayor Cole, general statement on Andy Beartusk Martinez case. Thoughts with the family. CM Aspenlieder, MSU-B women's basketball update.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ALL ITEMS. This is the time to comment on any matter (Agenda or Non-Agenda) falling within the scope of the Billings City Council. There will also be time in conjunction with each agenda item for public comment relating to that item. You may only speak once for each item during the meeting.

- None

1. Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee (BPAC)

Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner, introduced the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee members and briefly explained their roles. Dave Coppock gave an overview of their focus, and the Billings Bikeway and Trails Master Plan. Kristi Drake reviewed survey findings, and connections often mentioned by the public; Valley to Rims (Stagecoach Trail), and a connection to downtown. She spoke of crash data in the last 14 months, BPAC's recommendation of a Public Service

Announcement and a change in infrastructure. Joan Schey spoke of efforts by the City, County and State within the last year and sidewalk funding in other cities.

General Council questions. Discussion of decrease in numbers, pedestrian deaths, and survey statistics.

Public comment

- None

2. Permanent Supportive Housing

Chris Kukulski, City Administrator, spoke of a recent visit to Boise, Idaho for information on a permanent supportive housing program.

Dean Wells, United Way of Yellowstone County, gave an overview of permanent supportive housing, chart of high utilizers, common characteristics and far-reaching impacts. He explained the impact on communities, partnerships and reviewed sites visited in Boise. He ended with challenges and keys to success.

General Council discussion on potential partners, housing options, costs and number of units needed.

Terry Todd spoke of federal and grant funding for projects like these. She indicated it would require full case management and supportive services.

Public comment

- **Catherine Card, Billings, MT**, reminded Council of need for a low barrier shelter. Encouraged Council to take role and be a leader.
- **Kari Boiter, Continuum of Care (CoC)**, general comments on sheltering and individual needs that exceeded just housing.

No further speakers.

3. Babcock Theater update

Matt Blakeslee, Executive Director of Arthouse, spoke of the Arthouse and Babcock theaters. He discussed the timeline for both theaters, plans for the future and improvement needs. He spoke of over \$100,000 in investments to the Babcock. He spoke of repairs needed to the sidewalk and vault, exterior doors, entry floor and a complete marquee rehabilitation. He indicated \$301,043 would be the Arthouse contribution and over \$100,000 would be needed from the City for repairs.

John Caterino, Facilities Manager, spoke of funding needed.

Council discussed selling the theater versus leasing, reserves, and deferred maintenance funds.

Kevin Iffland, Assistant City Administrator, indicated Arthouse had contributed significantly to the Babcock. He indicated an Ad Hoc Committee from 2017 had formed to discuss the lease, etc.

CM Kennedy asked if the repairs would be eligible for Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Chris Kukulski, City Administrator, indicated it would be eligible.

Council spoke about TIF funding availability. Mayor Cole indicated TIF funding for government projects would take priority of the Rockman Hotel TIF funding.

Chris Kukulski, City Administrator, spoke about trying to find a balance between incentivizing private investment to grow increment for taxing entities.

Council discussed the City's responsibility to ensure the Babcock is a safe building and brought up to a certain standard before considering a sale or transfer. They discussed having an RFP brought back to Council for the cost of repairs.

General Council discussion on options available for the theater.

Iffland: Council appropriated \$500,000 in 2017 another \$500,000 had been intended for appropriation and had never happened.

CM Neese Motion: direct staff to explore process of transferring property to Arthouse and bring information back to Council. Council discussion on allowing other entities to be included in the sale or transfer.

Mr. Blakeslee indicated the Board had entered into an agreement with the City as a partner and any other agreement would require some discussion with board members.

Approved 7-4, Shaw, Gulick, Joy, Rupsis opposed

Public comment

- None

4. Zoom Meeting Participation

Chris Kukulski, City Administrator, indicated staff was looking for Council opinion on public Zoom Meeting participation.

CM Aspenlieder spoke in favor of discontinuing public Zoom participation. CM Neese indicated if Zoom participation was discontinued for the public, it should also be discontinued for all public participants.

Council discussed looking at allowing public comment in a similar way to Legislation. They discussed the registration process.

CM Aspenlieder Motion: eliminate public comment through Zoom, except for applicants or people doing business with the City. Exceptions allowed if unable to attend meeting with prior approval at the City Administrator's discretion.

General Council discussion.

Approved 11-0

Public comment

- None

5. Highlight Upcoming Agenda Items of Council Interest.

Chris Kukulski, City Administrator, following up on Council priorities made during Council and Leadership Retreat and budget meetings coming in May.

Public Comment

- None

COUNCIL DISCUSSION:

CM Kennedy spoke of Code Enforcement ordinance when homeowner is out of compliance, burden on homeowners, and grandfathering issues. Would like to discuss possibility of assisting certain cases.

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: 8:08 P.M.