



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

WORK SESSION SUMMARY

Council Chambers
220 N. 27th St.

September 3, 2024

5:30 P.M

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Cole

Closed Executive Session 4:00 P.M. - 5:30 P.M.

Present: Councilmember Kendra Shaw, Ward I
Councilmember Neese, Ward II
Councilmember Jennifer Owen, Ward II
Councilmember Denise Joy, Ward III
Councilmember Scott Aspenlieder, Ward IV
Councilmember Daniel Tidswell, Ward IV
Councilmember Mike Boyett, Ward V
Councilmember Tom Rupsis, Ward V (Via Zoom)
Mayor William Cole

Absent/
Excused: Councilmember Gulick, Ward I
Councilmember Bill Kennedy, Ward III

Staff
Present: Chris Kukulski, City Administrator
Kevin Iffland, Assistant City Administrator
Gina Dahl, City Attorney
Jennifer Duray, Public Works Deputy Director
Mike Pigg, Parks and Recreation Director
Kory Thomson, Parks and Recreation Superintendent
Andy Zoeller, Finance Director
Wyeth Friday, Planning Director
Gavin Woltjer, Library Director
Ben Halvorson, Domestic Violence Prosecutor
Katie Nash, Domestic Violence Officer

Mayor Cole congratulated Mike and Diane Boyett for their 2024 Adult Resource Alliance Volunteer Advocate Award.

Jennifer Duray, Public Works Deputy Director – Utility Billing status updates, examples of mostly inaccurate errors being reported, and ways the department was updating the public.

General questions from City Council.

-Public Comment:

- Kevin Nelson, 4235 Bruce Avenue, Billings, MT – spoke about the new Sports Plex. comments.

1. Updating Resolution Setting Tax Abatement Policies.

Dianne Lehm, Big Sky Economic Development Director, gave an overview of the proposed changes for tax abatement, job retention numbers and payroll reporting. She indicated the City was working closely with the County. She explained the threshold for investments, who was involved with the recommended updates,

General questions and comments from City Council: threshold, City's ability to veer away from State statutes, job opportunities, notarization/sworn statement.

Gina Dahl, City Attorney, indicated she would look at existing statutes to advise more thoroughly.

-Public Comment

None

ACTION:

CM Neese - direct staff to speak with County about changes regarding private dollars, future penalty if they do not meet job creation numbers, clearer on some definitions, potential lower thresholds for certain projects.

CM Shaw - comfortable talking to County but fine with current resolution.

CM Joy - not in favor of lowering thresholds.

Motion: move item to future consent agenda as is and speak with County. Default to stay the same unless County wants to change.

Moved by Mayor Cole
Seconded by CM Boyett
APPROVED 9-0

2. South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District Expansion.

Dick Zier, SBURA consultant, gave an overview of completed plans in the South Billings Urban Renewal area, and future opportunities. He reviewed the request to Council for an RFP to select design team for Amend Recreation Campus (ARC), community benefits, potential economic impacts, and potential public private partnerships. Signal Peak's involvement for developing ice.

Kory Thomson, Parks and Recreation Superintendent, gave an overview of Amend Park Sport Court Facility, programs offered by Parks and Recreation, Rec2U Programs, Youth and Adult Sports, Summer Camps, and projected operations. Evan Decker, Visit Billings, spoke of community focus and needs.

General questions and comments from City Council: site development plan to include ice rinks, lease for pad site dedicated to ice facility, financial needs, and owner/operator partnerships.

Andrew Houlihan, Collaborative Design Architects, spoke of efficiencies that came with combining site developments for .

Andy Zoeller, Finance Director, spoke of bond limits and revenue needs.

Mike Pigg, Parks and Recreation Director, indicated they were looking for direction from Council for 2 RFP's.

Chris Kukulski, City Administrator, spoke of the commitment by the Tourism Improvement District (TBID) to offset potential operational losses.

-Public Comment

The following people spoke in support of the project:

- George Maragos, Chairman of TBID.
- Scott Hanser, SBBURA Board.
- Debbie Potter, Billings Chamber of Commerce.
- Carolyn Rukstad, SBBURA Board.

ACTION:

Motion: move to issue 2 RFP's for pad site lease and full ARC development site to include the entire facility (including courts).

Moved by CM Aspenlieder
Seconded by CM Rupsis
APPROVED 9-0

Recess at 7:35 P.M. Reconvene at 7:45 P.M.

Wyeth Friday, Planning Director, spoke of his extended medical absence. Council welcomed him back.

3. Draft Strategic Plan.

Mayor Cole spoke of a recent email from Yellowstone Valley Citizen's Council outlining items to add to the Strategic Plan.

Chris Kukulski, City Administrator, gave an overview of goals for the evening, 2022 adopted strategies and priorities, and potential adoption of goals and changes to strategic goals. He reviewed the 5 Strategic Goals, objectives for each goal, and implementation options.

General questions and comments from City Council: improve safety (move health to objective and do not combine with safety), further discussion on how to include public health in strategic goals.

Gavin Woltjer, Library Director, asked for clarification.

CM Owen suggested - improve the safety of Billings for all citizens including advancing public health strategies that addresses root causes of crime.

-Public Comment

- Steve Connell, no address given – suggested including urban forestry into all strategic goals.
- Ben Halverson, City Domestic Violence Prosecutor – regarding objectives 1 and 2 for Strategic Goal #1, cautionary on the statistics number. Better goal is targeting child witnesses.

Council discussed reasonable goals and metrics for domestic violence. Council asked Mr. Halvorson and the Legal Department for their input in the upcoming work on the goals.

Council continued discussion: statistical numbers, gang membership and matrix numbers used to measure improvements.

Kevin Iffland, Assistant City Administrator, explained how gang membership statistics were tracked.

ACTION:

Council to have some interaction on the strategic plan and then have another work session. CM Neese - assistance from experts to plug in achievable numbers. CM Owen - adding time limits for order of operations. CM Aspenlieder - 11 objectives too large, need to focus on types of crimes. CM Rupsis – get back to crime numbers from 10 years ago.

HIGHLIGHT UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS OF COUNCIL INTEREST:

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

None

ADJOURN: 8:59 P.M.