

Business Improvement District
318 Central Avenue
March 12, 2020

Board Present: Travis Neil, Max Grebe, Shari Dolan, Matthias Schalper, Jason Kunz, Jason Madill
Board Absent: Alison Fried
Staff Present: Joan Redeen
Guests: Christian Leinhauser, Teresa Schreiner, Nathan Reiff, Joseph Cik

- I. **Call to order & Roll Call:** Travis called the meeting to order at 9:00am; roll call of all present, a quorum was established.

- II. **Guests:** Teresa Schreiner, the Investment Director for Great Falls Development Authority (GFDA), brought the board up to date on the Development Authority. It was noted that the BID has been an investor of GFDA in the past. Joan noted that in 2009 the BID was in the middle of a five-year commitment, contributing \$500 per year; that commitment ended in 2012. In 2015, the BID funded \$1,000. Teresa noted that GFDA is requesting a commitment of \$1,150 per year for the next five years, for a total of commitment of \$5,750. Nathan Reiff mentioned GFDA's revolving loan fund for hazardous clean-up; they have \$250K that needs to be deployed by June 30th.

- III. **BID Board: Conflict of Interest:** Jason Madill noted that he might have a conflict of interest, depending on what grants might be discussed.
Max brought up the board resolution that he initiated two years ago. He noted that after attending the most recent board training the City provided, he once again feels that this resolution should be adopted by the Board. He noted this resolution would require that any board member that receives a grant would be ineligible to serve on the BID Board until after the grant has been funded. Discussion followed on time frame after a grant has been funded for an individual to be eligible to serve on the Board. Joseph Cik, Assistant City Attorney, relayed that MCA calls for a one-year time frame. Discussion followed on grandfathering in current board members serving; Joe advised against doing that and noted that if a board member has active grants there is a conflict of interest. Discussion followed on the BID, by nature of its make-up, having a conflict of interest as our board members must be property owners or representatives of property owners, and it is our property owners who are seeking our grant programs. Joan noted that our BID is the only BID in the state that offers grant programs, so we are unique in this state in that regard. She added that she sees tremendous benefit to our grant programs; being able to write a check to a property owner for grants that cover a year or two of their BID assessments is a huge benefit we are able to offer. The Board will consider the resolution at their next board meeting, Max recommended having it go into effect July 1, if passed.
Joan reported that Travis's term on the Board expires June 30th and he has noted that he will not be seeking an additional term; Max's term expires June 30th and he has expressed interest in serving a second term; Jason Madill's term expires June 30th and he has one additional term he is eligible to serve. Jason Madill noted that he will not be seeking an additional term; and added that if it does not negatively affect the board he will resign sooner than June 30th. The City will be advertising for any vacancies the BID Board has, they advertise for a period of three weeks. Joan continues to work on actively soliciting for board members, as well. Any potential new board members will need to be appointed in June, so their term commences on July 1.
Matthias commented that all of the BID's grant programs are currently suspended; there needs to be a plan on what to do with them. He added that it might be best to keep them suspended until July 1. The Board agreed this was a good suggestion.

- IV. **Approval of minutes from 2-13-20 Board meeting:** Matthias motioned to approve the meeting minutes from the 2/13/20 Board meeting, as presented. Max seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

- V. **Financials:**

Monthly Financials: The Board received the February financials via e-mail. There being no further discussion on the financials, Max motioned to approve the 2/29/20 financial statements which include the Balance Sheet, P&L, and the P&L/Budget comparison. Matthias seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

The updated Budget vs. Actual report was provided to the Board.

VI. Grant Programs:

Grant Applications: The grant schedule for FY 2020 was provided to the board; current grants approved remaining to still be paid out total \$391,546.40. So far, this fiscal year, \$106,743.40 in grants have been paid out and grants approved this fiscal year total \$234,736.60.

Grant Applications: Joan reported grants remain suspended however she is accepting applications informing applicants that the criteria may change. She has pending applications from Calvary Chapel (just the cover page application); The Newberry (complete façade & interior applications); and Harlos (complete interior grant application).

Hicks Endeavors: Joan reported that Hicks Endeavors has asked if the Board would consider increasing the approved sidewalk and façade grant payouts. She added that they have already been approved for the maximum façade grant. She noted that, if the Board were to consider an increase in their sidewalk grant, the additional approval would be \$430.50. The Board noted that our grant applications note that grants are approved based on the estimates submitted at time of application and therefore this request for an increase will not be approved.

Grant Criteria: Joan reminded the Board that last month discussion was held on holding a work session to discuss grant criteria; she added that, based on the Doodle poll, there was not a time when four members could meet. Max and Joan met to discuss the grant criteria and are working on some possibilities to propose to the Board. Proposed grant changes will be emailed to the Board when prepared, and as discussed earlier grants will remain suspended for the time being. Joan continues to accept applications. Max noted that any grant changes would go into effect July 1. Travis noted that several of our approved grants are on target to be complete by December 2020.

Joan provided an update on the following grants:

Noischt Properties: Mauri Novak has submitted his final receipts for payout on Phase I of his façade grant, and for his interior grant; a breakdown on labor has been requested from Mauri and upon receipt his grants will be eligible for payout. Mauri provided an update on Phase II for his façade grant with estimated completion by March 2021.

Faster Bassett: They have reported that they hope to open by September 2020; this grant has been adjusted to reflect that date.

Alluvion: Alluvion was awaiting better weather to continue their art project.

Little Bird Therapy: Joan will send them a letter asking for a status update.

Jason Madill noted that when he joined the BID Board there were several, large grants. He inquired if Shari had reviewed the formula at the bottom of the grant schedule yet; she reported that she has reviewed it but not made it work, yet. She believes that things were counted multiple times. Jason Madill noted the grant programs are working, he believes our downtown is doing well, but advises caution that we not think we are there yet, either. Travis noted that is where he feels cautious, that several of the grants approved on the schedule are nearing completion and will be paid out soon. He added that there is a lot more that this board could be doing for the public and improving the Downtown, as a whole. He used the Johnson Hotel building as an example of what he is referring to, with the BID acquisition and redevelopment of that particular project. He challenged the Board to think more globally and larger to think of what the BID can do, the Civic Center, a splash pad, etc. were just a couple of ideas. He believes there is a lot more that could be done besides grants. Max added that he sees the grant programs as critical and does not see them going away. He would like for the Board to look at what would the BID mission be before the next renewal in 2029; what does the BID hope to accomplish; what is the message that the BID will deliver to property owners; in another

10 years will we see the majority of the spaces downtown filled, etc. What is the BID's mission at the end of the 10 year time frame? The grant program is working to the point where we need the assessments to catch up so that we have more income.

Joan informed the Board about the Civic Center façade project; it is estimated to be a \$5.5M project. One of the potential financial tools the City is looking to use to fund the project is the Downtown TIF, with a balance of about \$800K at this time. The Downtown Development Partnership (DDP), as a board, voted against the City accessing TIF funds for the Civic Center project. The City has not submitted an application for TIF funds, yet, but if/when they do the DDP Board will not approve the application. That being said, the City Commission has the final say and may still vote for approval. The Civic Center is not a contributing building to the BID or to the TIF district, as they do not pay property taxes. Some ideas that the DDP has discussed for utilizing TIF funds that are being explored is use of TIF funds for fire suppression and ADA compliance in re-development projects. She added that she, Kellie, Brett Doney and Sherie Aery were all present at the City Commission meeting advising them of the DDP, and our various organizations, stance on this topic. Travis noted that the Civic Center façade has been an issue for years, he was originally involved over 10 years ago when they first started exploring the problems. Joan added that she has her spreadsheet that reflects the taxable valuation of the BID since 2009; this spreadsheet includes some parcels that have been re-developed.

Shari inquired if the BID Board should do a work session to discuss where the BID wants to go. Max noted that some drafts for grant programs are coming along and those drafts could allow for grants, as well as some of the ideas Travis has suggested.

VII. Old Business:

Beautification: ArtsFest MONTANA 2020: Joan will be submitting for an AARP grant that provides for community involvement; she plans to apply for a specific property that will be completed during ArtsFest.

Banners: Joan reported that the current bid for banners is \$4,200 and she is awaiting a second bid. There are three brackets that are missing and need to be replaced, that bid is about \$500. She will solicit for sponsorships so that there hopefully would be no cost to the BID, other than replacing the missing brackets.

Electric City Art Walk – Alley Lights: Nothing new to report on this at this time.

Flowers: Joan informed the Board that self-watering flowerpots are in; the hanging pots will work but the 11 rock planters are too large for the rocks and will not work. EarthPlanter

Downtown Great Falls Association: Joan reported that Cruisin' the Drag is 5/2; April 16th is the Downtown office open house from 4pm to 6pm. DGFA is working on Craft Beer Week.

Downtown Partnership: Joan noted that she updated on the Civic Center; she encouraged board members to attend City Commission meetings and reiterate our desire for them to not utilize TIF funds.

Wayfinding: Joan reported that she is leading the Wayfinding efforts. There will be announcements very soon on the process; she encouraged the Board to attend the public meetings when they are held. She added that the project is still short \$6,050; she noted that she does not want the BID to fund this, she is working on seeking funding elsewhere. The contract with Cushing Terrell is for \$66,500; the BID has committed \$6,500 and there are other funding sources. The contract is with the BID as we are managing the Main Street Grant. Funding sources included: \$25K from the Downtown TIF fund; \$15K from the Montana Main Street Program; \$6,500 from the BID, \$6,500 from Tourism, \$6,500 from the DDP, \$1K from GFDA and a shortage of \$6,050 with sources identified. The contract that Cushing Terrell presented is a standard contract; Max moved to approve Joan signing the contract with Cushing Terrell, pending final review. Matthias seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Downtown Safety Alliance: Joan informed the Board that GFD is actively recruiting for their seasonal volunteer program; she asked board members to take flyers and share. The program is being

modified; they are asking for two hours per week, foot patrol only and no need to go into GFDP as volunteers can clock in via their mobile devices. She added that they would like to get the word to the employees downtown, specifically FCR; Jason Madill will deliver a flyer to FCR.

Joan reported that the next Safety Alliance meets on April 7.

Great Falls Development Authority: Christian reported that he is now adding reaching out to other markets to find out what is going on in other regions and what is working for them and what they are doing that we can implement in Great Falls. He has met with 10 different businesses; five of them are primary sector targets and five were out of market. He met with a restaurateur from Bozeman, they toured Great Falls. He is also working on tracking ongoing projects downtown; he has 20 on his list, so far. GFDA has had great success with their pitch fest's lately so they plan to hold one for Downtown, no date set yet. There are four new SBDC clients; six people talking about expansions; six seeking gap financing; two new start-up's, these are existing businesses downtown that are in the process of changing ownership and they wish to stay downtown; one announcement with the Northern Loft Apartments and another announcement coming very soon. Invest Downtown Great Falls will be held Downtown on May 6th & 7th. Barbara Wold is the keynote; Joan reminded everyone that Barbara's specialty is working with retail & hoteliers, the Board was asked to encourage attendance at Barbara's presentation(s).

Joan reminded the Board that the Professional Services Agreement between the BID and GFDA will expire on 6/30/2020. There will be some minor adjustments made to the agreement, and the budget will be updated. Joan noted that the budget from GFDA includes indirect costs, that line item needs to be reviewed more closely. The goal will be to approve this agreement for one year, July 1 to June 30th with approval at next month's board meeting. She added that the Board's directive was that vacant spaces be filled, and she noted that she feels like Christian is doing a great job.

Parking Commission: Joan noted that she was not able to attend last month's meeting; they are planning to hold a meeting next week. Nothing new to report.

Personnel: Joan reported that the BID has been selected for an on-site audit from Workman's Compensation. Max asked for an update on seasonal staff; Joan noted that we are still a few months out from staffing. Joan noted that she was due to be out of the office this month for a day for Special Olympics, but that event has been cancelled; there will be dates in May that she will be off work for Special Olympics. She added that there may also be a trip to Florida in April with a few days off.

Work Plan - FY 2020: The Work Plan for FY 2020 is being followed. A draft for FY21 will be provided by April, with approval needed by June.

VIII. **New Business:** Business After Hours: The Downtown office is hosting a Business After Hours with the Chamber on April 16th from 4pm to 6pm.

Downtown Directors Meeting: Joan reported that we will be hosting the Downtown Directors from all around the state on Thursday, April 23rd. She added that her goal is to get funds from sponsors to cover four meals for 15-20 people for two days. Attendees would arrive by noon on Thursday, lunch and dinner would be provided; Breakfast and lunch would be provided on Friday and they would be heading for home by Friday lunch time. It was noted that the Montana Downtown Conference will be held in Dillon this fall.

IX. **Public Comment:** No public comment currently.

X. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 11:10am.

Travis Neil, Chair

Joan Redeen, Staff

Date: _____

Date: _____