

BILLINGS CITY COUNCIL

Budget Committee

November 14, 2023

1:00 p.m.

Conference Room, First Floor, City Hall

CM: Mike, Ed, Jennifer

Staff: Andy, Chris, Wyeth, Nicole

1) Call to Order (0:00:00)

CM Purinton is present and will participate in discussion along with Committee members, but not vote.

2) Approval of October Meeting Minutes (0:00:04)

Mike moves to approve the minutes as presented. Ed seconds and the motion passes on a unanimous voice vote (0:00:40)

3) Public Comment (0:00:40)

Kristi Drake: emphasizes Stagecoach Trail importance. TrailNet has given \$800,000 to trails system. \$705,000 city match requirement for federal TIP grant. If not funded, would go back to MDT. Grant is \$4.7M. TrailNet has \$100,000. Grant has been approved from MDT – city will manage and build project. City needs match soon – Wyeth looking at grants.

Brief talk about Skyline Trail. Lot less garbage on the Rims. Discussion about Skyline and Stagecoach Trail connections.

Kristi also mentions a need for a clear signal from Council if TrailNet needs to raise additional dollars.

4) FY25-29 Capital Improvement Plan (0:11:12)

Staff will be making changes to CIP to reflect failure of Parks bond. Staff recommends pulling all bond-funded projects out. Committee members discuss need to keep some projects in and find funding; keep other projects in for planning purposes.

Committee members discuss path forward on South Park Pool; general consensus that this project is a priority. Questions about costs of next steps - engineering fees, design, etc. Parks is doing aquatic facility study. Will get a concept design for Parks from that study. Should be done relatively soon – A&E was winning bidder, will start until January. Discussion about source of funds for South Park. May be difficult to reduce scope of project – was already reduced from \$16M to \$10M for bond package.

West End Water Treatment Plant amenities have no timing or trigger. Part of upcoming staff leadership retreat will be on keeping the main project at or under budget. Committee suggests keeping in for tracking purposes in FY27

Discussion about Poly Vista Park and city commitments to matching their fundraising, \$1M expected. Currently at about \$400,000.

Discussion about keeping projects in the CIP for planning purposes. Council needs to have the broad discussion about where to put funds: tax relief, public safety, parks, debt relief, etc.

Stagecoach needs only local match. Federal grant is done. Likely source of funds is raising mills. Project will start in CY24 (FY25), finish in CY25. Brief discussion about reconsidering an opt-in on utility bills. Committee discusses engineering risks and possibility of cost overages that City would have to fully fund. Chris will work to get additional information.

25th Street Bridge – Wyeth asks to leave in, will know about federal grant in March/April. Connecting Communities (\$5M).

Expo Drive – MDT project is impacting, may add another lane on Expo Drive. Wyeth will provide additional information. There are opportunities to improve Heights/Downtown connectivity separate from Expo Drive bridge.

N. 27th St. Path, Alkali Creek Trail Connection, Coulson Park Trail, and Hwy 3 Underpass will be kept in for timelines, but nothing in FY25. Some may fall to outlying years (beyond 5-year CIP period).

Discussion about Council presentation, staff needed, order of discussion. City Administrator generally agrees with Committee discussion and will modify CIP accordingly; no Committee votes needed.

5) Reserve and Investment Policy (1:12:22)

Table for January; December is too busy for Administration.

6) FY24 Second Quarter Report (1:13:55)

Should be 1Q – 2Q ends in Nov. Error in the agenda.

Andy reviews 1Q report. Revenues coming in normally. Expenses relatively normal as well.

Police spending was on track. Not being limited on overtime. Discussion about reducing overtime and then hiring more permanent staff. Andy is reviewing vacancy savings. Unclear what police needs are at this time. Can we surge in legal as well? Can we free up some space at YCDF by working on misdemeanor cases? Chris will investigate.

7) Committee Discussion (1:30:05)

Discussion about Alternatives funding request. Some indication that Alternatives has a grant for GPS monitoring. Discussion about funding courts for GPS monitoring vs. funding a specific provider (there are three others in addition to Alternatives).

Low-Barrier Shelter – some concern about winter shelter. Off the Streets asked for permission to do a tent facility at former Big 5; city declined to provide administrative relief. Have not heard back from OTS. Lots of communication about a tent approach being undesirable. No funding requests have been submitted yet.

CRU dollars may be freed up for FY25, but not likely to be available for redirect this year. Committee members agree that no change from previous recommendation is warranted.

8) Discussion of Future Agenda Items & Meeting Schedule (1:44:00)

Cost of services update. Police/PS update. Reflection of value of committee – what's worked, what hasn't. City Hall financing update.

Adjourned: 1:46:31.

Next meeting: December 13, 2023 @ 9 a.m.