

## Billings City Administration Weekly Report

March 22, 2019

- 1) **SB 340 - 406 Impact District legislation** – Mayor Cole, Councilman Clark, Councilwomen Ronning and Assistant CA Iffland (along with more than a dozen community members) did an excellent job testifying yesterday on behalf of Billings in support of SB 340. The hearing ran the full 3 hours from 9:00 – Noon. As with most hearings, you leave the room not knowing the probability of the bill's passage. Executive action on the bill is expected next week. Prior to Thursday's hearing - Wednesday evening the Strategy Partners hosted a dinner with nearly two dozen Senator's to present SB 340 and answer their questions. Your assistance in contacting members of the Senate Taxation Committee is appreciated. In particular - Senator's Barrett 396-3256 from Missoula; Phillips 599-5857 & Pomnichowski 587-7846 from Bozeman would round out support from both sides of the isle.
- 2) **SB 315 Office of Public Defender legislation (OPD)** – Mayor Cole testified Thursday afternoon opposing SB 315 and setting the record straight that Billings has not amended or created ordinances since 2017 to reverse actions taken by the 2017 legislature. Throughout the debate regarding OPD's budget problems this session, (see attached letter from MACo) false statements were made claiming that Billings amended its open container regulations to add jail sentencing. The bill shifts costs from the State to local governments when public defenders defend clients against only local ordinance violations (if State code violations are coupled with local ordinances than the State will continue to cover the cost). We will remain heavily engaged in this debate in hopes to kill the bill and possibly create an interim study group, with local government representation, to understand how we can improve the criminal justice system.
- 3) **Zoo Montana Tour** – Monday I had the opportunity to meet Jeff Ewalt and tour our awesome zoo. We will be looking for opportunities to collaborate with the zoo as we continue to improve the quality of life for our citizens. I appreciate the opportunity to show off Billings why their visitors are in town. The zoo will also be featured when hosting the MLCT annual conference this fall.
- 4) **Budget Presentations** – This week budget presentations started with Andy, Kevin and I. We reviewed the library and planning budgets. Each department presenting their proposed budgets will dominate our calendars over the next several weeks.
- 5) **Task Forces** - The West End task force primarily focused their attention on the monthly PD report, Planning's description and Q&A on our annexation process and an adjacent developer's interest in locating a restaurant with a beer and wine license near Faith Evangelical Church. Hopefully, I will make it to next week's Heights Task Force meeting Tuesday night and the Southwest Corridor Task Force on Thursday.

- 6) **Channel 7** - My introductory program with Channel 7 will air sometime in April. We recorded the episode on Tuesday afternoon. Chanel 7 is a great asset to our community and they have also been engaged in helping us negotiate our franchise agreement with Charter Communication.

Have a great weekend – Spring appears to have sprung.