

BILLINGS PARKING BOARD
Meeting Minutes
December 11, 2024 @ 2:00

Board Member Present in person: Thom Maclean, Pete Sanderson, Todd Morgan, Jim Hauck, Brandon Scala, Larry Mathew, Thom Greenwood

Board Members Absent: Jennifer Webber and Mark Kary

Ad Hoc Board Member Absent: Memet Casey

City Staff Present: Tracy Scott and Brianne Logan

Guest: Robyn Alisat, PayByPhone Representative

Call to Order: Board member Scala called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm

Minutes: Motion to approve minutes was made by Larry Mathew. Pete Sanderson seconded. The board approved the minutes from September and October 2024.

PayByPhone Presentation:

- Robyn Alisat with PayByPhone explained the new coupon feature they were offering. It was still in the BETA phase, and they were looking for municipalities and companies to trial the product for free. Tracy and Brianne had already gone through the demo meeting PayByPhone had offered and were able to supplement information to the Board.

Reports: Tracy delivered the reports.

- **Monthly Reports**
 - Monthly summary – There was a little increase comparing December 2024 with November 2024, with the largest increase at Park 2. There was not a significant change with the lot revenue. Not all revenue was added to the November figures when they were entered into the board report. The total revenue for garage hourly cash sales was \$41,814 instead of the printed amount of \$24,508. Total for all garages was \$192,318. There was a little over \$10k in increased revenue when comparing the past 4 months and the previous year's last quarter. Total for monthly parking for 2024 and 2023 were about same. The total had increased about \$31k. Board member Scala asked to verify if Park 3 had \$15k in revenue per month. Tracy stated Park 3 brings in approximately \$25k per month. Board member Hauck stated the August 2023 rate increase had not been applied until October of that year. The rates were raised in November 2023 and again in July of 2024.

- **Operating Report**

- Operating fund – Tracy stated Parking had received the entire TIF funds of \$139,542. The amount does cover holiday parking of approximately \$39,542 in lost revenue. Board member Scala inquired if we knew the exact cost of the revenue lost during holiday parking. Tracy stated Parking did not know the exact total. Tracy believed it to possibly be off 4 or 5 thousand. She didn't know if the TIF funds would be available in 2026 in total or even for holiday parking. Board member Hauck stated it sounded like it was not going to be available. Tracy stated she was hoping to continue the holiday parking, but the Parking division needed to be compensated for the loss in revenue.
- Operation's year-to-date revenue and expenses looked good compared to 2023. Expenses were down a little as Parking had quite a bit of turnover. One maintenance position was left vacant when the employee changed to enforcement, which resulted in a decrease in wages. Two new maintenance employees were hired to fill the vacancies. Two of the enforcement officers retired. One of the positions was filled by the previous maintenance employee. The other would be open for hiring in the next couple of weeks.
- Tracy stated an agreement had been made to lease Park 3 garage from the Honakers. The lease amount was approximately \$12,200 per month. Board member Scala asked if this would bring in revenue. Tracy stated Parking would take out the expenses to run the garage and subtract it from the revenue brought in; what was left over would go to the Honakers. Board member Hauck stated the result would be about \$12k in the City's favor, but this would increase and decrease depending on the amount of revenue generated per month. Tracy stated the lease was for 1 year and then it could be adjusted. The Legal department was working on the lease agreement. Tracy stated Parking might lease the garage for the next 2 years or possibly longer. Board member Greenwood asked again if Parking would make a profit. Tracy stated Parking would not receive revenue from the lease, just payment for services. Tracy stated that it was complicated as there was no direct revenue or expenses for the administrative positions in Parking. Tracy considered percentages for staffing time, supplies, and liability for running the garage. Board member Greenwood inquired as to who would maintain the garage. Tracy stated Parking would take care of minor maintenance and the Honakers would be responsible for major repairs. She stated Legal would be involved in deciding specifics.
- Board member Scala asked about the garage repairs that had been happening. Tracy stated the total for all Park 1 and Park 2 at that time was about \$53k. This did not include the engineering fees. There would be more repairs completed when the weather was better. Tracy stated the Honakers requested minor repairs be done at Park 3. Park 1 needed the most work.

Downtown Alliance Report

Mehmet reported in email: Attached

Public Comment (3 Minutes) There was no public comment.

Discussion Items

- **PayByPhone presentation discussion:**
 - The board's advice was to hold off on the possibility of using this coupon feature at least until it is out of the BETA phase.

Agenda/Action Items

- **Preference for Minutes**
 - Tracy asked how the board members would like to have the Billings Parking Board minutes preserved for future use. She stated some boards have audio recorded; or would the board prefer to have the meeting summarization written and printed. The board decided to have the minutes written.
- **Alive After 5 – Findings on meter revenue and garage numbers**
 - Tracy stated she did not have good luck finding out hourly garage revenue for specifically the hours of Alive After 5. An event application was submitted for Alive After 5. Meter revenue during the dates of the events on Broadway is high. The average meter revenue amount was \$170 from 1 -5 pm. There was a question whether this impacts hourly revenue for Park 3 as it is hard to access. Tracy stated she would speak to Kevin about damaging downtown.
- **Free Holiday Parking**
 - Tracy stated 2024's free holiday parking seemed to be going fairly well. Enforcement officers had been handing out the Downtown Business tickets of cheer. It seemed people were enjoying it. Parkers were still paying meters. It had been agreed upon that anything above the \$39,542 in TIF funds would go to an account for the downtown art fund. Enforcement was still chalking sections instead of all of downtown.
- **Rental of Parking Property**
 - Tracy did not have time to investigate parking property rentals. Board member Scala asked about renting out the roofs of the garages for private events. Tracy stated it would not be a bad idea, though safety and liability were concerns. It was suggested to continue the discussion at the next board meeting. Board member Greenwood motioned for setting the fee at \$1k. Board member McLean seconded. Board approved.
- **Universal Parking Pass**
 - Tracy stated universal parking passes didn't work well as it was difficult to track parkers and their vehicles if they were in multiple garages. Knowing who and what vehicles were in garages was also important for liability. Tracy stated Park 3

might still have hourly parking under the Honakers as the City's average hourly revenue had been provided to them.

- **Speed Bumps at Exits of Garages**

- Tracy stated speed bumps were not a bad idea to slow people down when exiting the garages. She was concerned about skateboarders as they were already an issue for the garages. Tracy stated she would investigate the City's liability if someone walking was injured by an exiting vehicle. Parking was exchanging the hangtags at the Empire garage for access cards and that would influence the vehicle exiting the garage. Tracy stated the streets changing to 2-way would also change the speed on exit. Parking was working with Streets and Engineering on the street conversion and would be posting new signs in the garages affected by the changes.
- Tracy stated Parking had many meters and the plan was to get them installed. It was possible more 10-hour parking would be added as well. A board member asked about School District 2 and the newly added 10-hour parking. Tracy stated they were paying full price. Board member Hauck stated the Planning Department would be moving into the Stillwater building the end of December 2024.

Meeting Adjourned: Board member Scala motioned and board member Hauck seconded adjournment.

Next meeting March 12, 2025 @ 2:00 pm

email from Mehmet:

Hello, Parking Board -

Happy Friday! I hope this finds you well. I'd like to apologize formally for having been MIA lately from the Parking Board meetings. It's been coincidentally conflicting with conferences, personal time off, DEI training, and Leadership Billings class. I can see now the benefit of meeting monthly but I wouldn't impose that on you selfishly. 😊 I've also tried to delegate with my teammates to have a presence on my behalf but we've had some internal changes in staffing as well that's kept people busy.

I'm providing you with an email update in hopes that it will serve as useful information in my absence as I won't be able to make the December meeting (Leadership Billings is an all day event on the 2nd Wednesday of each month through May).

The Downtown Billings Association (DBA) is under new leadership with Nick Steen as the Chair and has had several new board members join so they've spent some time onboarding and maintaining the status quo. Now, they are discussing the package of benefits for members based on member feedback as well as costs of services these days to see if it means raising rates to have a dedicated membership staff member and/or revisiting the tier system if appropriate.

The Downtown Billings Partnership (DBP) continues to monitor existing TIF projects for tracking and reimbursement purposes. They also continue conversations with investors to maintain the momentum of development as well as retention and recruitment efforts of businesses. Another angle is to pay attention to the State Legislature next year as there are already several bills about TIF that can be viewed online, and TIF itself is limited these days so the DBP continues to explore creative ways to leverage it without having much of it. One of the things that keep coming up at the Board level is the idea of eliminating or withholding the annual transferral of \$100,000 to Parking. Let me know if you'd like to attend and speak at the DBP or write a letter to them. Otherwise, I'll keep you posted on that front. The holiday parking program seems to generate positive energy from users and business owners we encounter. We'd love to hear about how the experience is unfolding for enforcement officers with the new offering of cheer tickets. We also want to gather as much input about this program as possible as we review it for next year and as Council continues to ask for more data on it.

The Business Improvement District (BID) street team took down the flower baskets and put up the holiday decoration. Otherwise, they continue their duties of cleaning, street closures for events, snow plowing when there's snow, graffiti removal when appropriate, cleaning of the public restroom, and fixing light bikes. The event team will wrap up events this Friday with the Holiday Stroll but has already begun working on next year's events. The communications team continues to promote events, happenings, specials, independent and local businesses, and downtown as a destination as well as recruiting sponsors for next year's events. The Downtown Resource Officers continue to do their work and report declining undesired activities. If you happen to see things that need to be reported, please continue to utilize them. Also, those of

you who are property owners within the BID, stay tuned as you'll be receiving (if you haven't already) communications about the renewal process of the BID. As you may know, the BID renews every 10 years and the last time it was renewed was 2015 so we're due in 2025.

Community Innovations (CI) held a public meeting last month that was well attended where attendees expressed interest in continuing these meetings to discuss further solutions and plans on addressing the vulnerable populations. Community Innovations will be recruiting new board members soon and they're investigating the possibility of becoming a foundation. The Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) has experienced a bit of a turnover in their staffing (all good upgrades and promotions for them) but otherwise continues to work out of our office so let us know if you'd like them to visit your establishment and share more about what they do.

If you haven't met her yet, Cherish Linse is our new Executive Assistant | Office Coordinator. Our former Office Manager went back to her previous employer with a promotion. Our Director of Operations, Jenny Milu, is no longer with the organization but if you happen to see her, she's expecting a baby at the end of this month. You may have also noticed that we've dropped the word "Alliance" so feel free not to use it anymore moving forward. We're working with our attorney to finalize paperwork to help us become Downtown Billings Inc. in the future so there is only one DBA and that's the Association. 😊

Happy to answer any questions and hope to see you around. Otherwise, Happy Holidays & Merry Christmas if I don't see you between now and then.

Thank you,

Mehmet Casey, M.S.P.R.
Development Director