

DRAFT - Missoula City Council Budget Committee of the Whole Minutes

**August 4, 2021
9:00 AM
ZOOM Webinar**

Members present: Stacie Anderson, Mirtha Becerra, Heather Harp, Jordan Hess, Gwen Jones, Julie Merritt, Jesse Ramos, Amber Sherrill, Sandra Vasecka, Bryan von Lossberg, Heidi West

Members absent: John P. Contos

1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

1.1 Roll Call

1.2 Approval of the Minutes

1.2.1 Minutes from the 7/28/2021 Meeting

Could not see attached minutes. Will approve next week.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Public comment called for and there was none.

3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

FY 2022 Preliminary Budget Webpage (documents are updated at least 30-minutes prior to the meeting):

<http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/2790/FY2022-Preliminary-Budget>

3.1 Referral – Fiscal Year 2022 Executive Budget

Various City departments will discuss budget items including Community Planning, Development and Innovation (CPDI), Housing and Community Development (HCD).

Eran Pehan, Montana James and Kirsten Hands with Community Planning, Development and Innovation (CPDI) presented, along with having other staff members available for questions and answers. Please refer to presentation available on the City of Missoula Website for specific details.

Julie Merritt - Could the short-term rental be paid through ARPA funds? I do feel this is really important. Having this information is important.

Eran Pehan - One firm we talked with said cities are using ARPA funds for that. This indicates there is some eligibility for this. I don't know the extent. We know how important data is for us to make good decisions. There may be a number of ways to do this. This request is based upon the modeling from other communities.

Julie Merritt - What was presented does not match exactly the new request and tax scenarios spreadsheet. Will that be updated?

Leigh Griffing - Yes. We are in the process of doing that now.

Heather Harp - Will the code reform be general fund dollars and any ideas on the return on investment?

Eran Pehan - Yes. We cannot achieve the goals we have set without this code reform. We will do more research on specific returns.

Heather Harp - This cost is only what about two median-cost homes are in our area and we could work at fixing the problem for this cost.

Public Comment from Kenzie - Discussed short-term vacation rentals and how research into this industry could provide much needed information.

Stacie Anderson - Asked question regarding how the numbers displayed on the presentation will fall over the course of the years.

Eran Pehan - They should say "Total Year One Cost" and half of that is coming to Council. Some of these expenses, we do not know exactly how much they will cost based upon the success of the programs.

Stacie Anderson - I am mindful of the finite amount ARPA money and the future effect on the general budget.

Jordan Hess - Do we also need to consider summertime shelters due to the heat?

Eran Pehan - I think the heat and wildfire smoke are an issue, but would need to speak with our provider community on their thoughts for specific details. We worked with providers to determine what they felt are interim needs while we are increasing the housing available. The mobile care team will help with this and this model is what was recommended by our providers.

Julie Merritt - The landlord liaison position, since the City has no control over landlords, sounds like a good opportunity to have people partner with us on a voluntary basis. Do you feel this position would be maintained?

Eran Pehan - It may or may not continue with the mobile care team. We are relying on our providers to determine specific needs.

Public Comment from Tom Benson - I am with Arts Missoula we have a contract with the City to help with numerous programs in the area. We work on economic development for the arts. We would like to have a public art director who can do fundraising, coordination, etc. The master plan stresses the importance of public art in our community. For 30 years, the Public Art Committee has been made up of volunteers. For a better public art leading, we need a director. National studies highlight Missoula for its rich and cultural arts landscape. We want to keep our artists in Missoula. We need a stronger public art program here and a director would be a good start. We would like a City position as a director.

Bryan von Lossberg - Thank you, Tom.

Eran Pehan - I have just a few more slides to share.

Bryan von Lossberg - Eran, the format you presented was very helpful.

Amber Sherrill - The presentation was very easy to follow. Looking at the summary, I want to highlight the reliance on the general fund. That is an amazingly small number. I do understand the concern of how to do these other items long term. We have an opportunity to make a difference now and I don't think we should pass it up.

Public Comment from Kathi Olson - I am currently the chair of the committee. The Public Art Committee has been the leader in public art in the community and was established by ordinance in 1985 and reaffirmed twice. This has been essentially voluntarily staffed, dedicating thousands of hours to the success of this program. Public art is becoming more and more desired and more needed and included in the master plans that Council has supported. We really need consistent and dedicated leadership. It will help us with consistent growth. It will allow for increased collaboration with organizations and businesses. It will strengthen public art opportunities for artists in the Missoula community. This position truly will benefit the city and its residents.

Bryan von Lossberg - We do not have time in this format for questions. The investments in this presentation are very important. I remain unconvinced that the investments match the breadth and scope and ambition of policy expressed by the council over the years. This is my soapbox, and I am curious about the limitations of ARPA funding around our sustainability work.

Dale Bickell - There are ways that we could some sustainability issues into ARPA, but not directly, but the ability is there. While you may have not seen big asks in the new requests, there is sustainability built into what we are already doing. We are making many upgrades with Public Works in existing pumps, solar options, etc., and are working to reduce our carbon footprint. Also the McKinstry investment grade audit is in process. While you didn't see that highlighted in this, we are working diligently on that right now.

Dale Bickell - Presentation on Equity Goals. Please see uploaded presentation for specific details.

Bryan von Lossberg - Thank you. The transportation sector is a great example. Any additional public comment other than those already taken?

Heather Harp - How should we respond to those who oppose the JEDI?

Dale Bickell - Growing up as a Pacific Islander in Montana, I have an interesting lens on this. This is to direct how we set our goals and make our decisions. Who are the winners, who are the losers? Who is at the table and who isn't? This is not about providing something specific, it is about providing equitable access for all.

Bryan von Lossberg - Please raise your hand, Jane, if you wanted to provide public comment. No takers? Last chance....

Thanks to all for the work that went into this.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 10:57 a.m.