

Missoula City Council Committee of the Whole Minutes - DRAFT

**April 6, 2022
9:45 AM
ZOOM Webinar**

Members present: Stacie Anderson, Mirtha Becerra, Daniel Carlino, John P. Contos, Jordan Hess, Gwen Jones, Kristen Jordan, Jennifer Savage, Amber Sherrill, Sandra Vasecka, Heidi West

Members absent: Mike Nugent

1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

1.2 Approval of the Minutes

1.2.1 Minutes from the March 16, 2022 Meeting

The minutes were approved as submitted.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

3.1 Fiscal Sponsorship with Missoula Community Foundation

Emily Harris-Shears presented on a proposed contract to permit a fiscal sponsorship to allow the Affordable Housing Trust to participate in Missoula Gives.

John Contos asked about the eight-percent administration fee. Emily Harris-Shears stated this is lower than their typical fee of ten to fifteen percent.

Heidi West asked about communication and engagement plan for this fundraiser. Emily Harris-Shears outlined current plans and how they will gather information for future participation.

Amber Sherrill asked about the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and what the possibilities are for donations to an endowment for this.

Stacie Anderson spoke in support of the Missoula Gives event as a way for small donations to add up and have an impact and many Missoulians care about affordable housing. She also spoke to the reasonableness of the fee, that is within the norms of the industry and is backed by the paperwork that goes into processing donations. The majority of funding will still come from opportunities that are generated through grants and municipal sources, but this is great outreach.

Mirtha Becerra spoke to the importance of small donations in terms of raising awareness from both the community and larger donors.

Jennifer Savage also noted that the fee is standard and even on the low side, ranging as high as 45%.

Will be on the consent agenda at the next City Council meeting.

Moved by: Amber Sherrill

Approve and authorize the mayor to sign the Fiscal Sponsorship agreement with Missoula Community Foundation.

AYES: (11): Stacie Anderson, Mirtha Becerra, Daniel Carlino, John Contos, Jordan Hess, Gwen Jones, Kristen Jordan, Jennifer Savage, Amber Sherrill, Sandra Vasecka, and Heidi West

ABSENT: (1): Mike Nugent

Vote results: Approved (11 to 0)

3.2 Operation Shelter Update

This presentation will provide an update on the continuum of services for people who are unhoused and subprojects tied to Operation Shelter.

Emily Armstrong presented on the remaining topics from the March 16 presentation (see video and attached slides). Gwen Jones noted there will be a separate meeting specifically on security issues later in May.

Jill Bonny spoke on the winter shelter efforts from the Poverello perspective. Very few complaints, good engagement with community, never had to turn away someone and no known deaths from the cold. A security group meets weekly to collaborate on security needs for Poverello and the Johnson Street shelter. Noted that they do not have security in the building. Reminded everyone that individuals experiencing houselessness are more likely to be the victims of crimes than to commit them.

Gwen Jones asked her to speak on the deaths due to exposure in the winter. Jill Bonny spoke to the difference between those who pass away for other reasons and the fact that recently there have been no deaths due to not having shelter.

Anna Nilles spoke on the care team that are visiting camp sites and building relationships. The care teams includes RNs and provide wound care. Also assist with getting IDs, support services, etc.

Jim Hicks spoke on the positive outcomes, including moving people out of the houselessness system due to finding housing, going to in patient treatment, back to safe housing with families, etc. Would like to continue to have a safe temporary outdoor space for those are continuing to move through the process of getting support and finding housing.

April Seat added that they've house 39 people since 2020. Have certified peer support specialists that can assist case managers, who are often overwhelmed.

Police Department representative spoke as to overflow issues with people camping in the area or adjacent areas. Trend has been a reduction by about 50 calls per month at each of the sites. Many of the calls are not going through 911, but coming directly to the right person at the PD.

John Petroff from the Fire Department spoke on the increase in communication between these organizations and projects. Highlighted the ability to send the right response rather than sending law enforcement or fire when that is not the appropriate service need.

Gwen Jones asked about the Mobile Support Team, the Community Care Team and the Hot Team. Jill Bonny said that the Hot Team is really about building relationships about why individuals are resistant to coming to shelter.

Jennifer Savage asked about the temporary safe outdoor space is and where it might go, and what the progression of services is. Emily Armstrong stated that the safe outdoor space is by the Buckhouse Bridge heading towards Lolo.

Kristen Jordan mentioned that she is getting calls about encampments near Reserve Street. Concern that with the closing of the winter shelter there will be 85 people looking for a place to stay. How to do we encourage them to move along and provide opportunities without criminal justice involvement or riparian zone damage. Emily Armstrong responded that this is the crux of need and the services that we provide. Recommends the Engage Missoula page as a resource for education.

Heidi West wanted to clarify that 49% of the people who used the service have moved through the services to achieve housing. Jim Hicks and April Seat spoke to the variety of ways that individuals move into housing services.

Daniel Carlino noted the need for safe parking space for people who are living in their cars. Emily Armstrong noted that she's been researching how other programs around the country work. There's been a noted need in our area for safe parking for RVs and trailers, which is different than car-based programs. There's no set plan in place, but conversations are happening.

Daniel Carlino asked if there were plans for electricity and running water. Casey Gannon said there are plans to bring water to the authorized camp site. There is some power at the site used for the security trailer. They are exploring options for providing electricity to residents (was previously provided in an unstructured way).

Amber Sherrill noted that the ability to feel safe and that their belongings are safe is a very important component. Thought that the myth buster posters were very compelling and would like additional access for distribution. What is the plan for more structures? Jim Hicks said that they are on private leased property, so there are not plans for additional or more permanent structures at the current site by Buckhouse Bridge.

Amber Sherrill asked if there were numbers on camping site expansion versus current need. Emily Armstrong responded that they are hesitant to expand the size due to the decrease in safety with larger groups.

Stacie Anderson noted the importance of momentum and roll out of increased support in the city. Would be good to see the budget impact of the various services in the budget season presentations. Asked how the Trinity and Bellagio projects will affect future care services and needs. Those units will have affordable housing for rents and will hopefully online in the fall of 2022 and spring of 2023.

Stacie Anderson asked about plans for safe indoor air during the smoky summers. Conversations are in progress.

Sandra Vasecka asked about who to call about developing encampments. Emily Armstrong stated that it often depends about whose land it is on, in a park is a parks issue, etc.

Jordan Hess spoke on the importance of this work in lifting up and valuing every member of the community, and that we've gotten better at winter shelter every year. What are the most impactful investments we could make to continue this work. Emily Armstrong noted the consultant process to assist with the evaluation with the 10 year plan will help identify gaps and places of need. Jim Hicks commented that there are a lot of costs in standing up these services, want them to be sustainable and well planned.

Heidi West noted that staffing challenges were an issue to running these spaces, would like an update during budget presentations. Also would like some take aways from covid that may be continued post-pandemic.

Mirtha Becerra commented that these groups do amazing work and these groups need to get the message out to the community on successes, should be made clear in the budgeting process about how solutions save money for the community over all.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Gwen Jones adjourned at 11:27.