

Missoula City Council Committee of the Whole Minutes - DRAFT

**June 16, 2021
9:00 AM
ZOOM Webinar**

Members present: Bryan von Lossberg, Mirtha Becerra, John P. Contos, Heather Harp, Gwen Jones, Julie Merritt, Amber Sherrill, Sandra Vasecka, Heidi West

Members absent: Stacie Anderson, Jordan Hess, Jesse Ramos, Bryan von Lossberg

Others present: Mayor John Engen
Dale Bickell - CAO
Jim Nugent - City Attorney
Zeke Campfield - Housing Advocate Network Missoula Interfaith Collaborative
Alex Ramsing - Landlord Liaison Homeword, Inc.

1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

1.2 Approval of the Minutes

1.2.1 Minutes from the April 28th, 2021 meeting

Gwen Jones requested a correction on page four: it should read that Will Seburn has been part of city government not student government.

No other issues.

1.2.2 Minutes from the May 12, 2021 meeting

Approved as submitted.

1.2.3 Minutes from the May 26, 2021 meeting

Approved as submitted.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Seeing none.

3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

3.1 Community Survey Results

Discussion item only

Mayor Engen discussed the resident survey and how the results inform the City in the strategic planning process. He turned the presentation over to Dale Bickell and Jessica Miller to share survey details

Dale Bickell provided an overview of the survey and it's methodology. He reviewed the results of the survey questions:

- the most pressing problems facing people in the city
- rate your quality of life
- satisfaction with city services

Heather Harp asked what "other" means regarding housing.

Dale Bickell clarified that it references transitional housing, people who stay with friends and family.

Amber Sherill asked how many respondents in 2018 versus 2021 and asked for specific information about housing questions.

Dale Bickell mentioned that is a phone survey, so there are limitations on how specific the questions can get, but there are opportunities to follow up with citizens for specific information.

Mirtha Becerra asked how many people per ward answered the question about quality of life.

Jessica Miller stated that there was a pretty similar response rate per ward.

Dale Bickell continued reviewing survey results;

- details of how satisfied people are with various city services: parks, fire and police services, municipal court services, access to information and engagement with City government, access to mental health services, street maintenance, permits and licensing, childcare, traffic management, planning and growth, housing affordability. These were presented in order of levels of satisfaction, people are most satisfied with parks and least with housing affordability.

Heidi West asked if the question were answered based on direct participation or if people answered based on perception of services.

Dale Bickell stated he suspects it's both.

Jessica Miller added that it's difficult to draw conclusions about why people chose to answer the way they did.

Amber Sherrill asked if these results are compared to a State or National survey.

Dale Bickell said the 2018 survey involved comparisons with the state's Big Sky poll.

Jessica Miller provided more information about the Big Sky poll and it's results.

Dale Bickell discussed which services the community wants increased support. He shared the demographics of the survey.

Heather Harp asked if the support for permitting is regarding business permits and if it is related to housing affordability.

Dale Bickell discussed the connection.

Heather Harp mentioned that some citizens might not understand the connection between permitting and housing affordability, which could help explain the difference in increasing support.

Gwen Jones discussed the variety of factors that contribute to this survey. She asked when the calls were placed for the survey.

Jessica Miller said it last two week from late April to early May.

Julie Merritt asked about the low quality of life response for ward six, asked Dale if he has more information.

Dale Bickell said he doesn't have detailed information about why people in ward six reported a lower quality of life than the other five wards, this could be an area for follow up with the community.

Heidi West asked about if there is a dollar amount for childcare from local funds, for instance tax increases.

Dale Bickell stated Parks and Rec will continue with their robust summer camp programming that helps with childcare issues.

Mirtha Becerra asked if there is more information by ward regarding homelessness and traffic services.

Dale Bickell said they can reformat these results by ward.

Gwen Jones asked if these results will be posted publicly somewhere for citizens to review.

Jessica Miller said it should be attached to today's agenda and they can also post it other places.

Gwen Jones asked if the phone calls were cell or landlines.

Jessica Miller provided how many were cell versus landlines.

Mirtha Becerra thanked Dale and Jessica for their presentation.

Gwen Jones gave thanks as well and that this is the first year she is starting to see patterns with this survey.

3.2 Landlord Liaison Housing Advocate Network

Informational only - no action needed

Julie Merritt introduced and provided background information regarding the presentation.

Alex Ramsing discussed the collaboration between Homeword and Missoula Interfaith Collaborative. He discussed the housing challenges over the last year. He describe the landlord liaison and property partners program.

Heather Harp asked about how long the risk mitigation fund has been around.

Alex Ramsing said it's been around since November of 2020.

Zeke Campfield provided details of the Housing Advocate Network and the services they provide. He discussed what resources and systems are currently in place in Missoula, and what isn't working. He provided council members ideas on how they can help.

Gwen Jones mentioned participating in this committee is great exposure too. She is noticing the increased attention and focus on the housing issues in Missoula and appreciates the work they are doing.

Julie Merritt thanked Alex and Zeke for their participation today and work. She discussed how complicated the process of obtaining housing and that not everyone has access to help. She asked for numbers of property partners that they already have and what they are doing to increase those numbers.

Alex Ramsing said they currently have 13 partners/landlords.

Julie Merritt asked if they could provide details about their partner at the food bank.

Alex Ramsing said he doesn't have a lot of information yet because it is a new position over there.

Mirtha Becerra spoke to the urgency of the housing situation and that is why the work they do is so important. She asked what it means for property owners to be a partner.

Alex Ramsing said they provide a checklist of ideas that landlords can implement when renting their property.

Mirtha Becerra asked if they provide risk mitigation so they are more likely to sign on as partners.

Alex Ramsing said the options they provide are based on best practices from around the country and his role is to support them in whatever way they need.

Amber Sherrill thanked them for their important work. She asked Zeke about the increase in number of calls he has received from people who are going to be losing their housing, and if those are the majority of calls he has received in the last few months.

Zeke Campfield said they are still receiving calls from people who have been experiencing homelessness, but there is an increase of people who are new and currently housed, but might be losing their housing soon. He said this is the first time in two years that he has a waitlist to connect with people who need their services and has been trying to come up with solutions, for instance creating groups instead of exclusively one on one meetings.

Heather Harp discussed the survey results presented earlier regarding housing and homelessness and why the work Alex and Zeke is critical. Since politics is a barrier they have, what can Council do.

Zeke Campfield thinks there needs to be an attitude shift about housing/homelessness from an individual problem, to a community wide effort because it is an indicator of health outcomes of the community. He understands there are problems with the state legislature and is uncertain how that can be addressed.

Gwen Jones agrees that this is a cultural issue.

Julie Merritt explained why she wanted to bring this presentation to Council.