

Missoula City Council Committee of the Whole Minutes - DRAFT

**July 27, 2022
11:00 AM
ZOOM Webinar**

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

Members absent: Jennifer Savage

1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

1.2 Approval of the Minutes

The minutes were approved as submitted.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

3.1 Resolution Requesting Missoula County refer a Crisis Services Levy to Missoula County Voters

Presentation

Mike Nugent introduced the resolution request, explaining that many recent community services related to houselessness and people in crisis were funded by federal pandemic-related grants, and now the local governments need to decide if they will continue to be prioritized.

Dale Bickell spoke to the community coalition that came together to recommend this ballot issue.

Shannon Flanagan spoke to the successes, such as the Mobile Support Team, and other programs, and to his group's support of continuing these efforts.

Susan Hay Patrick of United Way spoke to the successes like the temporarily outdoor space and the community care team that were stood up during the COVID pandemic, in addition to addiction services and criminal justice programs. These are community collaborations and Susan stated that the community is doing its part but cannot support these without local government support. She also mentioned that there are few options for raising money open to local governments and stated she believes this is the best option for raising needed funds.

Joyce Dombrowski from St. Patrick's Hospital said she is deeply grateful for the city and county's approach over the past few years and that going backwards doesn't seem acceptable.

Council Questions

Kristen Jordan asked to see a breakdown about what services and positions will be funded in the levy. She also commented that the Mobile Response Team has proven to be an effective use of resources supported by recorded metrics, and she wished that they were able to support more programs this way.

Dale Bickell responded that the funding wouldn't be available until the next funding year (FY24) and allocation would occur as part of that budget process through in the county.

Daniel Carlino commented that when they are funding schools and these programs they seem to be limited to levy funding but the Police Department budget comes "from nowhere." Is this levy going to fund Rogers International security and could alternatives be considered?

Dale Bickell responded that looking into alternatives would be possible.

Amber Sherrill asked about what data there is to support these programs across similar urban populations.

Sandra Vasecka asked if the levy is not funded what happens to the programs, how much is the levy, and can the county continue on this effort without the city's support.

Dale Bickell stated that the city is continuing to fund these programs through FY23. If the levy doesn't pass, the city is embarking an update to its strategic plan and these priorities will be considered, however there are not other funds available in the general fund. The county proposed 20 mils which is roughly \$5.5 million or about \$27 per \$100,000 assessed value.

Heidi West commented that this is not how schools are funded, asked when the final ballot wording will be ready, and asked for clarification that no specific contractors would be named. Dale Bickell confirmed that services would be listed, not specific providers.

Kristen Jordan asked if the council is being asked to support something that doesn't have final numbers or wording?

Dale Bickell referred back to the information that the County Commissioners provided. The first effort is whether to support the county's efforts to get these on the ballot, then if it passes, the city and county will develop an interlocal agreement as to how the funds would be allocated.

Daniel Carlino asked about the current Mobile Support Team budget cuts of about \$300,000 dollars and asked if they'd be able to provide services with these cuts.

Brad Davis spoke to the number that was a misquote as to his goals for the MST, and they are currently able to provide the current level of service.

Amber Sherrill spoke to how interlocal agreement works and that bond counsel would likely not allow specific contractors to be named, as bonds are based on permissible services, not contracts with individual service providers.

Gwen Jones stated the core issue presented is whether we will have funding or not for these new and innovative programs, such as the temporary safe outdoor shelter.

Daniel Carlino asked if the levy would support a 24/7 Mobile Support Team and what is missing from the MST budget for next year.

John Petroff said that the current plan is to run 15 hours a day. Looking at possible Medicaid funding to possibly go to a 24 hour service. Currently using Fire and Police data to build data resources. The Outreach Specialist would provide continuing care assistance after calls.

Brad Davis said they are planning to continue current level of service, as there were no budget cuts.

Sandra Vasecka asked if this is a permanent increase and why isn't the city holding public hearing

Dale Bickell said the county intends this to be permanent. The county is holding the public hearings on this.

Mike Nugent said that this is an opportunity for the city to show support for its priorities. He stated that it's important for constituents to understand that the MST does not just address houseless individuals, but other individuals in crisis too.

Sandra Vasecka said that although this is a priority, priorities typically mean that budgets are shifted around rather than asking for more money.

Heidi West said that she is in support as this is an opportunity to put something before the voters and places the decision in the hands of the voters.

Daniel Carlino said that supports this effort but wishes that there were more specifics in how the funding would be spent. He also stated that he wished that this would be come from the Police and Sheriff's budgets.

Stacie Anderson stated that the many of these local solutions have come as a result of continuing cuts at the state level. And that each \$100,000 cut to the Police Department is essentially a cut to an FTE.

Susan Hay Patrick commented that hopefully the talking points will be clarified and also reminded that this levy is applied to assessed home value, not what Zillow says your home is worth.

Amber Sherrill reminded that these programs will not continue if unfunded and said that she's in support of putting the issue before the voters.

Sandra Vasecka mentioned that issues should be brought before the voters as a last resort.

Kristen Jordan said that she will be supporting this, however it is a false choice that this has to go to a levy to get funded when it has proved to be an efficient program and could be funded in other ways.

Jordan Hess said he has been moved by the success of these programs. He said he's been involved in other bond measure and levies and it is fairly common for the official language to come together later in the process. There is a great relationship with the county and the interlocal agreement will come together to prioritize the funds if they become available.

Moved by: Mike Nugent

Adopt a resolution requesting the Missoula County Commission adopt a resolution and referral to the people of Missoula County for authorization of a crisis services levy to pay costs of services to support people experiencing mental health, addiction, or housing crisis, and to facilitate criminal justice reforms.

AYES: (9): Stacie Anderson, Mirtha Becerra, Daniel Carlino, John Contos, Jordan Hess, Kristen Jordan, Mike Nugent, Amber Sherrill, and Heidi West

NAYS: (1): Sandra Vasecka

ABSENT: (2): Gwen Jones, and Jennifer Savage

Vote results: Approved (9 to 1)

4. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 11:56am.