

## **Missoula City Council Committee of the Whole Minutes**

**January 11, 2023**

**11:00 AM**

**Council Chambers (in person) or TEAMS (virtually)**

**Attend in person: City Council Chambers, 140 W Pine, Missoula MT**

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

### **1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS**

#### **1.1 Roll Call**

#### **1.2 Approval of the Minutes**

No minutes attached to approve.

### **2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

### **3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

#### **3.1 Joint City-County Advisory Board (JEDI)**

Donna Gaukler presented on behalf of the City's Senior Leadership Team as a representative of the JEDI Strategic Implementation Work Team. Presented on the 2021 JEDI resolution and its goal of creating an advisory board, which is before the council now.

Donna Gaukler spoke to the importance of having diverse representation that reflects the city as a whole on advisory boards and making sure that citizen members feel welcome in what may have been previously unwelcome spaces. The task force will help define the mission of the board, starting the effort to craft a clear mission, responsibilities and authority for the advisory board.

Sandra Vasecka asked about the total amount of funds that have gone into the JEDI initiative. Donna Gaukler stated that the budget for 2023 is \$194,000 from ARPA dollars designated for equity work.

Sandra Vasecka asked about what the on-going staff support will cost. Donna Gaukler stated that the JEDI Specialist position will staff this, which is funded through ARPA dollars. Boards typically require about four hours a month of staff time, expecting more at the beginning as it is getting set up.

Mike Nugent asked how this committee (board) will interact with the staff currently working on these issues. Donna Gaukler responded that the current JEDI workgroup is focusing primarily on internal issues and could imagine having members of the public comment on how welcoming city services feel to the public. The advisory board may also work on existing equity efforts, such as those on-going in the Growth Plan. The advisory

board might also be tasked with community surveys regarding equity, such as equity in quality of public parks.

Mike Nugent asked how much the intent of the advisory board is to advise public officials like city council. Donna Gaukler recommended the council assist in defining the goals of the board, including assisting crafting questions for board members, etc.

Mike Nugent asked about how measures of success will be defined, so that we know we're accomplishing something not just doing something to say we're doing something. Donna Gaukler responded that we're working with community partners to increase external measures such as health outcomes in the community, home ownership rates, etc. Also, the JEDI group is interested in doing some community surveys for comparison to similar communities. Mike Nugent suggested that this group watch and define success as we go along. Dale Bickell (CAO) responded that we need to operationalize the JEDI Lens for assisting in city operations.

Sandra Vasecka asked about how many members the advisory board would have. Donna Gaukler responded that the current task force will be three members and will help define how many members going forward and how they are selected. Donna Gaukler also like the city council and county commissioners to participate in a training regarding the relationship of local government and equity.

Heidi West asked about the status of ARPA funding. Donna Gaukler believes the current funds can be allocated annually and spent through 2026.

Mirtha Beccera thanked former Mayor Engen for getting this started and the staff for taking this up. We would like for our services to be available to all, but we've heard that there are structural barriers, and this is a step in addressing those.

Mike Nugent commented that the individuals named for the task force have a great reputation in the community and looks forward to hearing their recommendations.

Heidi West commented on quotes that were found in the LEARN report, including that "In Missoula, justice looks like a poster in a front window." She commented on how difficult it is to forward the cause of justice when we as a community cannot even agree on what "justice" or "equity" is. She is concerned that the creation of the board, while well-intentioned, is corruptible, and that the day-to-day goals of the city are largely in line with JEDI goals but the board does not necessarily forward these goals. She does not support this resolution.

John Contos commented that he believes that the principles here are common sense.

This item will go on committee reports.

**Moved by:** Mirtha Becerra

Adopt a resolution of the Missoula City Council to establish a Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Joint City-County Advisory Board

AYES: (9): Stacie Anderson, Mirtha Becerra, Daniel Carlino, Sierra Farmer, Gwen Jones, Kristen Jordan, Mike Nugent, Jennifer Savage, and Amber Sherrill

NAYS: (3): John Contos, Sandra Vasecka, and Heidi West

**Vote results: Approved (9 to 3)**

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

Gwen Jones adjourned the meeting at 11:45am.