

**Missoula City Council Public Works Committee Minutes**

**January 25, 2023, 2:15 pm**

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

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

**Members present:** Stacie Anderson, Mirtha Becerra (chair), Daniel Carlino, Sierra Farmer, Gwen Jones, Kristen Jordan, Mike Nugent, Jennifer Savage, Amber Sherrill, Sandra Vasecka, Heidi West

**Members absent:** John P. Contos

**1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS**

**1.1 Roll Call**

**1.2 Approval of the Minutes**

**1.2.1 PWM Committee Minutes from January 11, 2023**

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

**3.1 Appointment to the Missoula Urban Transportation District Board**

Ms. Becerra confirmed the Mayor's appointment for Jason Wiener to the Missoula Urban Transportation District Board.

**Moved by:** Gwen Jones

Confirm the Mayor's appointment of Jason Wiener to the Missoula Urban Transportation District Board or a term beginning immediately and expiring on December 31, 2026.

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

ABSENT: (3): John Contos, Kristen Jordan, and Heidi West

**Vote results: Approved (9 to 0)**

**3.2 Appointment to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board**

Ms. Becerra confirmed the Mayor's appointment of Matthew Gehr to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board.

**Moved by:** Stacie Anderson

Confirm the Mayor's appointment of Matthew Gehr to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board for a term beginning immediately and expiring on September 30, 2025.

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

ABSENT: (3): John Contos, Kristen Jordan, and Heidi West

**Vote results: Approved (9 to 0)**

**3.3 Professional Services Agreement with Herrera Environmental Consultants for the Bitterroot Outfall Project**

Adam Marsh presenting,

The professional services agreement is with Herrera Environmental Consultants. The project would consist of designing, permitting, and managing construction at the Bitterroot Outfall. The Bitterroot Outfall is the primary discharge point for all of the stormwater originating in the South Hills and Pattee Creek. The outfall needs to be improved to reduce settlement before entering the Bitterroot River.

**Moved by:** Amber Sherrill

Approve and authorize the Mayor to sign a Professional Services Agreement with Herrera Environmental Consultants for the Bitterroot Outfall Project at a cost not to exceed \$190,917.00

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

ABSENT: (3): John Contos, Kristen Jordan, and Heidi West

**Vote results: Approved (9 to 0)**

**3.4 Bid Award to RLC Enterprise, LLC for the URD II Montana Idaho Water and Sidewalk Project Phase 1.**

Andy Schultz and Todd Gass presenting,

This project is for a water main replacement and sidewalk project on Montana, Idaho, and River Streets. Public Works and Mobility has partnered with Missoula Redevelopment Agency (MRA) to put this project together. The area is between Russell Street and Old Sawmill district, and this area has been underserved in both utilities and sidewalks. The MRA board has approved this project, and the funding will be with Tax Increment Funds (TIF). This project has been on the MRA list for two years.

Mr. Carlino asked about the development going on in Idaho and why the developer is not required to pay for the sidewalks. Mr. Gass said this is part of a program the MRA has already developed to build out the sidewalks in the area. They would like to set the district up for success regardless of the development.

Ms. Jones asked if this was a new water main replacement or installation. Mr. Schultz said this is a new water main install, and the home are currently on wells. Ms. Becerra added that she appreciates seeing the City departments working together on projects like this.

**Moved by:** Gwen Jones

Award the bid for the URD II Montana Idaho Water and Sidewalk Project Phase 1 to RLC Enterprises, LLC at a cost not to exceed \$733,988.59 and authorize the return of bid bonds.

AYES: (10): Stacie Anderson, Mirtha Becerra, Daniel Carlino, Sierra Farmer, Gwen Jones, Kristen Jordan, Mike Nugent, Jennifer Savage, Amber Sherrill, and Sandra Vasecka

ABSENT: (2): John Contos, and Heidi West

**Vote results: Approved (10 to 0)**

### **3.5 A Resolution finalizing the Mullan BUILD Water and Sewer Special Development Fees**

Logan McInnis presenting,

These fees are part of the Mullan BUILD project and are subject to eleven total properties. The City has been in coordination with the developers and they are aware of the fees.

**Moved by:** Amber Sherrill

**Motion for February 6, 2023** : [First reading and preliminary adoption] I move the City Council set a public hearing on February 27, 2023, to adopt a resolution of the Missoula City Council establishing the final Mullan BUILD Water and Sewer Special Development Fees to be applicable to new development within the Mullan BUILD Project Area to be effective March 7, 2023.

AYES: (10): Stacie Anderson, Mirtha Becerra, Daniel Carlino, Sierra Farmer, Gwen Jones, Kristen Jordan, Mike Nugent, Jennifer Savage, Amber Sherrill, and Sandra Vasecka

ABSENT: (2): John Contos, and Heidi West

**Vote results: Approved (10 to 0)**

### **3.6 Presentation on the Higgins Avenue Corridor (Brooks to Broadway) Planning Project**

Aaron Wilson presenting,

The City has conducted public outreach and has solid feedback on a preferred concept plan. The Higgins Avenue Corridor is from Brooks to Broadway. This project is challenging to make decisions on because there needs to be more room for everything to accommodate everyone. The City uses a lot of policies and goals to help inform the decisions made on Higgins. These include Vision Zero, Complete Streets, Downtown Master Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan, Sustainability, and Equity. The North side of the river, Higgins would have a single travel lane in both directions and a dedicated turn lane with protected bike lanes. The South side of the river would be the same design with a narrow right of way. Some parking will be lost on one side of Higgins in a few

blocks. The Beartracks Bridge originated as a bridge rehabilitation and was designed to connect to the existing lanes on both sides of the bridge, including pedestrian crossing. The bridge is designed to last twenty-five to fifty years. The Higgins plan only suggests restriping the bridge and not taking away any future capacity. The benefits of four- to three-lane conversion are increased safety, protected left turns, reduced crossing distance, improved lane widths and maintenance, and emergency access. This conversion may slow cars down but will increase safety. This is the opportunity for Higgins to become a destination street where people want to be.

Mr. Nugent asked if the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) was open to this project. Mr. Wilson said he believes they are in support of this project. They want to support our community priorities and partner with the City. Mr. Nugent also asked about traffic during events at the Adams Center and how the new plan will affect the traffic. Mr. Wilson said the consultants did not look at the event situations because they are only a few times a year and are challenging to manage.

Ms. Sherrill added that we currently have a four-lane street, but the lanes are tight and, in the winter, even tighter and unsafe. She has heard some comments that this plan concentrates more on bikes and buses than cars. Ms. Sherrill says this presentation also shows its moving vehicles more safely. She asked Mr. Wilson to explain how the bus stops would work with this plan. Mr. Wilson said this plan would improve the bus stops and make them more efficient with designated stops.

Ms. Anderson explained that she represents the southern part of the City but has heard from her ward that most of them drive downtown due to where they are located. She says they see this plan as taking away parking, which is already hard to come by. Mr. Wilson said the loss of parking is an issue, but we need a better-managed approach to parking. The Parking Commission has found a lot of untapped parking downtown, and we need to manage these spaces better. It could also be managed better that Higgins should be reserved for quick stops and other spaces long term.

Ms. Jones added that we have been using the bridge at a two-lane capacity for the last two years, and it has been working fine. However, she says that the bridge has not been safe for years, and now several people are using this bridge to bike and walk.

Ms. Farmer has heard concerns about why the City is focused so much on Higgins rather than other areas. Mr. Wilson said that Higgins is not the only project; it is essential because it is a primary connection to downtown.

Owen Kelley, a Missoula resident, spoke about his concern about the Front Street and Main Street projects that will take place simultaneously. This project will take away the angle parking and go to parallel parking. He feels downtown can't afford to lose any more parking. Three new hotels have been added to the area with no additional parking.

Eliminating traffic lanes in a growing city is a bad idea. He also mentioned that if the City/County employees take over the Federal Building, this will add more people looking for parking. Mr. Kelley said we tend to cater to bicycles when most people drive cars. He thinks we need to focus on how the majority of people get around. He feels this project only supports a select few of the majority.

Carma Gilligan spoke about parking and would like to know what forty-two percent amounted to in the number of parking spaces lost. Also, she wonders where the elderly and people who can't walk or bike ride will park.

Scott Billadeau, co-owner of Pangea and Liquid Planet, spoke about the need for more notice to the business owners. He feels the outreach should have occurred sooner in the process. It is upsetting that the City is so far in this process, and he had no idea this was happening. Mr. Billadeau added other business owners around him were also frustrated

with the lack of notice and are not in support of this project. He feels we should pause and take a step back. He has been downtown for 20 years and feels that downtown is already successful for biking and walking. He says he has never heard of anyone complaining about safety downtown. He added that many people already complain about how hard it is to drive and park downtown and feels this would be a setback.

Alex Skyato is a business owner on South Higgins. He says South Higgins is a very dangerous road for bicycles, and he has experienced this. He feels the majority of business owners on South Higgins are in support of this plan. Bicycles do not use Higgins much because there is not enough room to ride safely. He added if you make improvements to transportation, it will improve business. It will increase the quality of life for people who live and work in the area.

Peter Walker-Keleher, a Missoula resident, explained he is part of the project team and a member of the parking commission. He is in support of this project. He had kids that attended Hellgate High School and would like to see the safety increased in that area. He said he feels the project group has done a great job trying to accommodate everyone. He has been involved in public outreach and says he reached out to several people in many different ways.

City Council will vote on this topic in a following meeting.

#### **4. ADJOURNMENT**