

**Missoula City Council Committee of the Whole Minutes - DRAFT**

**June 21, 2023**

**1:45 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, Daniel Carlino, John P. Contos, Sierra Farmer, Gwen Jones, Kristen Jordan, Mike Nugent, Amber Sherrill, Sandra Vasecka, Heidi West

**Members absent:** Jennifer Savage

**1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS**

**1.1 Roll Call**

**1.2 Approval of the Minutes**

The minutes were approved as submitted.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Travis Matteer spoke on efforts to clean up river areas and ...

Matts Larson inquired about a capital assets list for the city. Stated that he had requested this in the past. Also inquired about budgeting for houselessness and homelessness.

**3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

**3.1 Resolution calling for the method of City elections and considering whether or not to hold primaries in any offices on the ballot**

**Primary Races Discussion**

Claire Trimble, Senior Deputy City Clerk, gave an update on primaries that were triggered by law and the updated information the county. See the email dated 6/21/2023 from Nathan Coyen.

Council President Jones clarified that a primary is no longer required in Ward 3. In Ward 5, there may be three candidates if one completes the remaining paperwork in a timely manner.

Amber Sherrill clarified that the two candidates' names would not appear on the November ballots if they drop out or fail to complete the paperwork.

Stacie Anderson made the motion to proceed with a mail in election.

**Mail In vs. Polling Place Election Discussion**

Claire Trimble spoke to the cost differences between the two options based on the estimates provided by the county. Gwen Jones added that mail in ballots both increase participation and decrease cost.

Amber Sherrill asked if there is a drop off option in mail-in ballots. Yes, drop off is still available.

Daniel Carlino asked about whether or not voters may vote same day in a mail-in ballot. Stacie Anderson answered that the state legislature removed the same-day registration option.

Sandra Vasecka asked if the motion would be split into two motions. Gwen Jones stated they would be taken up together.

#### Public Comment

Matts Larson commented that he would be in favor of having staffed in person voting to increase potential for voter participation and job creation.

#### Council Comments

Sandra Vasecka proposed an amendment to change the motion to a polling place election.

Stacie Anderson commented that mail in ballots increase voter participation and is cheaper and is a secure form of voting.

Mike Nugent wanted to clarify that the motion is to have mail in ballots for absentee ballots only.

Daniel Carlino asked about having all mail in ballots and open polling places. Nathan Coyen, from the Missoula County Elections Office, noted that there are only two options for voting under state law; either all mail in ballots or polling places for everyone not registered absentee.

Heidi West commented on the process from the standpoint of an elections judge, that it would be logistically difficult.

Sandra Vasecka commented that the reason she is in support of having in person voting based on concerns about predatory ballot collecting in places like nursing homes. There are options for both filling out absentee ballots or in person voting, if you don't have the time to go vote then don't vote. The cost for doing in person is worth it for increased integrity.

Amber Sherrill spoke to the difficulty for the elderly and disabled to go to polling places in person.

Gwen Jones spoke to the election investigations that happened and about the sessions she attended presented by the Elections Office and that she gained appreciation for how hard the Elections Office works.

Nathan Coyen clarified that the differences between all mail and polling place elections. Currently, Missoula has about 85% registered as absentee to receive mail ballots regardless. He also reiterated the suggestion that the Ward 5 race be contingent on the proper paperwork being filed.

Daniel Carlino asked about having polling places open and mailing all voters a mail in ballot. Nathan Coven reiterated that this is not an option under state law. Mail in elections do include drop off locations. If a voter loses their mail in ballot they can either get a replacement at the Elections Office or they can vote on a provisional ballot.

Daniel Carlino spoke in favor of the motion.

Mike Nugent clarified that only the Ward 5 primary would be cancelled in the event of incomplete paperwork in that race.

**Moved by:** Stacie Anderson

Adopt a resolution of the Missoula City Council calling for 2023 municipal government non-partisan elections to be conducted by mail ballot and for primary elections to be held for the following races on September 12, 2023: Mayor and Ward 5 (dependent upon all candidates filing the appropriate paperwork with both the Commissioner of Political Practices and the county to be candidates on the ballot).

AYES: (11): Stacie Anderson, Mirtha Becerra, Daniel Carlino, John Contos, Sierra Farmer, Gwen Jones, Kristen Jordan, Mike Nugent, Amber Sherrill, Sandra Vasecka, and Heidi West

ABSENT: (1): Jennifer Savage

**Vote results: Approved (11 to 0)**

**Moved by:** Sandra Vasecka

Amendment to change the motion to a polling place election.

AYES: (1): Sandra Vasecka

NAYS: (10): Stacie Anderson, Mirtha Becerra, Daniel Carlino, John Contos, Sierra Farmer, Gwen Jones, Kristen Jordan, Mike Nugent, Amber Sherrill, and Heidi West

ABSENT: (1): Jennifer Savage

**Vote results: Failed (1 to 10)**

### **3.2 Resolution Relating to \$1,327,000 Sewer System Revenue Bond, 2023B; Authorizing the Issuance and Fixing the Terms and Conditions Thereof**

Leigh Griffing, Finance Director, spoke to this resolution.

**Moved by:** Mirtha Becerra

(Adopt/Deny) a resolution relating to \$1,327,000 Sewer System Revenue Bond, 2023B; authorizing the issuance and fixing the terms and conditions thereof.

AYES: (11): Stacie Anderson, Mirtha Becerra, Daniel Carlino, John Contos, Sierra Farmer, Gwen Jones, Kristen Jordan, Mike Nugent, Amber Sherrill, Sandra Vasecka, and Heidi West

ABSENT: (1): Jennifer Savage

**Vote results: Approved (11 to 0)**

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

Adjourned at 2:35