

# Missoula City Council Public Safety, Health and Operations Committee Minutes

June 12, 2024

12:30 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, Bob Campbell, Daniel Carlino, Sierra Farmer, Gwen Jones, Kristen Jordan, Eric Melson, Mike Nugent, Jennifer Savage, Amber Sherrill, Sandra Vasecka

## 1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

### 1.1 Roll Call

### 1.2 Approval of the Minutes

#### 1.2.1 Minutes of the May 22, 2024, meeting

The minutes were approved as submitted.

## 2. PUBLIC COMMENT

## 3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

### 3.1 Code Amendments and Resolution Response to Spike in Youth Cannabis Use

Dr. Melody Cunningham of the American Academy of Pediatrics supports the amendment. She states that there are various harms that cannabis can cause because of greater access to stores. She discussed the consequences of having high THC levels in cannabis.

Dr. Lauren Wilson, local pediatrician and president Montana Academy of Pediatrics, states that research shows negative impact of early marijuana use in youth.

Dr. Blair Davidson, pediatrician and general psychiatrist to children and adolescences presented next. She has experienced persons having serious mental and health consequences from use of cannabis. Consequences of exposure are not reversible.

Police Chief Mike Colyer discussed the experience of School Resource Officers (SRO) with those under the influence of cannabis. In that past four years at least six students that they know of were hospitalized. One SRO states that the numbers are staggering and embarrassing. Children, as young as the 5th grade are using marijuana products. Proximity of dispensaries is key.

Substance use overall has gone down, however, cannabis use has gone up. Cannabis is the second highest used substance behind alcohol. He states that there is a low perception of harm among youth. The more potent, more used, the more impact on health. The average age of use of cannabis is 13-14 years old.

Leah Fitch-Brody of the Missoula City-County Health Department presented results of a survey, Montana Prevention Needs Assessment 2022 (Grades 8, 10, 12), that states that substance use has decreased overall; however, that is not the case for cannabis use. In addition, Missoula youth's use of cannabis is higher than the national average. There is also the perception by youth that the risk of harm is not that great. The potency of THC has gone up considerably over the decades. As of June 2024, there are 51 dispensaries in the City of Missoula. Those youths who live within 5 miles of a dispensary are more likely to use.

A list of possible laws and policies were presented as a way to curb use of cannabis in youth, such as enforcement of laws, marketing, buffer zones, limiting the number of retail outlets, dedicating a portion of marijuana tax revenue to substance use prevention and treatment, and local compliance check of dispensaries.

Council Member Nugent asked about the comparison of youth cannabis use in Missoula compared to Billings and their lower number of dispensaries.

Council Member Carlino asked if people will have to go through multiple court systems if a fine is enacted because of both federal and state laws.

**Moved by:** Sandra Vasecka

Set a public hearing for July 8, 2024, on an ordinance amending Title 5 of the Missoula Municipal Code, to add a new Section 5.08.121 to enact a prohibition on new business licenses for retail adult use or medical cannabis dispensaries pending review of the regulations applicable to such operations as a part of the City's Uniform Development Code Project. [First reading and preliminary adoption on June 24, 2024]

AYES: (11): Stacie Anderson, Mirtha Becerra, Bob Campbell, Daniel Carlino, Sierra Farmer, Gwen Jones, Eric Melson, Mike Nugent, Jennifer Savage, Amber Sherrill, and Sandra Vasecka

ABSENT: (1): Kristen Jordan

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

**Moved by:** Sandra Vasecka

Set a public hearing for July 8, 2024, on an ordinance amending Title 8 of the Missoula Municipal Code, to add a new Chapter 8.39 entitled "Restrictions on the Sale of Transaction of Cannabis Products" intended to impose additional regulations concerning the sale of transaction of cannabis products in the City, including imposing a new criminal sanction of those that sell or give cannabis products to individuals under 21 years of age. [First reading and preliminary adoption on June 24, 2024]

AYES: (11): Stacie Anderson, Mirtha Becerra, Bob Campbell, Daniel Carlino, Sierra Farmer, Gwen Jones, Eric Melson, Mike Nugent, Jennifer Savage, Amber Sherrill, and Sandra Vasecka

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

**Moved by:** Sandra Vasecka

A resolution initiating a moratorium on accepting new business license applications for cannabis dispensary operations and calling for a review of the public health concerns regarding the large number of cannabis dispensary operations within the City. [First Reading on June 24, 2024. Set for 07/08/2024]

AYES: (9): Stacie Anderson, Mirtha Becerra, Bob Campbell, Sierra Farmer, Gwen Jones, Eric Melson, Mike Nugent, Jennifer Savage, and Amber Sherrill

NAYS: (2): Daniel Carlino, and Sandra Vasecka

**Vote results: Approved (9 to 2)**

#### **4. ADJOURNMENT**

1:32 p.m.