

DRAFT - Missoula City Council Administration and Finance Committee Minutes

**July 7, 2021
12:50 PM
ZOOM Webinar**

Members present: Stacie Anderson, John P. Contos, Heather Harp, Jordan Hess, Amber Sherrill, Sandra Vasecka, Heidi West

Members absent: Mirtha Becerra, Gwen Jones (chair), Julie Merritt, Jesse Ramos, Bryan von Lossberg

1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

1.1 Roll Call

No quorum at this time.

1.2 Approval of the Minutes

The minutes were approved as submitted.

1.2.1 Approval of Minutes from 6/23/2021 Meeting

The minutes were approved as submitted.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

3.1 Resolution of the Missoula City Council requesting the Missoula County Commission adopt a resolution and referral to the people of Missoula County for authorization of a local-option marijuana excise tax of up to three percent.

John Engen, Mayor - We have an opportunity to enact a local-option tax on marijuana. This is to indicate the City's support to put this on the ballot. We feel it will probably mean around \$300K revenue for City of Missoula and a bit more for the County.

Jessica Miller - Reviewed slide show presentation and resolution. See attachment for presentation specifics.

Amber Sherrill - Thank you for the thorough presentation. I am very excited to have this option, as we do not have the local option for sales tax on very many items. Is there any difference on how medical marijuana would be taxed?

Jessica Miller - On this tax, I believe it is the same.

Heather Harp - We can use these funds on anything we want, correct?

Jessica Miller - Yes.

Heather Harp - This only give a minute amount to each property tax payer. I am very disappointed that the state legislature gave the option for this small sales tax, rather than the gas tax, which would have generated so much more revenue for the City. Local governments need more flexibility to generate the revenue to do as they see fit. I will make the motion.

Stacie Anderson - I agree with Heather. I will be supporting. I have the same frustrations as she does. We are backed into a corner with regard to property tax. We need more tools in our tool kit to fund our municipalities. Does this go to the voters only once?

Jessica Miller - I don't think this one has an expiration date. I do not recall coming across that, but I will look and let you know for sure.

Sandra Vasecka - I disagree with this. I think the price increase goes right onto the consumer, especially the low income consumers. It is just another opportunity to tax our constituents.

Jordan Hess - In Whitefish with the local option tax, my impression is that that shows up as a rebate or credit on the property tax bills. Could we do that?

Dale Bickell - We can talk with the County about this and also discuss during the budget process.

Jordan Hess - I am appreciative of this. I do have the same frustrations with the local option gas tax, but am glad we do have this available to us.

Heidi West joined the meeting at 1:07 pm.

Sandra Vasecka - If this does pass, does this go to the General Fund or will it be used for something specific. Currently the resolution says it would be to assist with property tax reduction.

Jessica Miller - This will go to the Council to decide (through public channels) on how the details work as to when the funds are received from the County, etc.

Public Comment Called for and there was none.

This will be placed onto Consent Agenda

Moved by: Heather Harp

adopt a resolution of the Missoula City Council requesting the Missoula County Commission adopt a resolution and referral to the people of Missoula County for authorization of a local-option marijuana excise tax of up to three percent.

AYES: (6): Stacie Anderson, John Contos, Heather Harp, Jordan Hess, Amber Sherrill, and Heidi West

NAYS: (1): Sandra Vasecka

ABSENT: (5): Mirtha Becerra, Gwen Jones, Julie Merritt, Jesse Ramos, and Bryan von Lossberg

Vote results: Approved (6 to 1)

3.2 Agreement for Architectural Services for Municipal Court

Matt Lawson - Facilities manager for the City presented. This is to approve the design for the remodel of the municipal court to add a 3rd courtroom as required by law. This is fairly preliminary. We need to have something in place by January. The contract is a time/material document at this point to get someone on board.

Jordan Hess - Is part of that a testament to the best place for this court?

Matt Lawson - We are going to try and use the space we have now and shuffle staff to other space.

Heather Harp - How was MMW chosen for the short list?

Matt Lawson - This was pretty much based off of them working with us in the previous City all-remodel so we already have current, up-to-date drawings in place, which should save us time and money.

Heather harp - In the event that MMW was not able or willing to work with us, is it part and parcel of the process that a subsequent firm could have those drawings or would they have to start from scratch?

Matt Lawson - There is probably a process where we could get those drawings and share with someone else. Just have never done that before.

Heather Harp - I do think with them having the knowledge of our properties, that is a good choice.

Stacie Anderson - How does the acquiring of the Federal Building fall into this process? If we get the building, will the plans change?

Matt Lawson - This is basically a stop gap measure. It is not a permanent solution, as we just do not currently have the space to come up with a more permanent solution. This will get us through the next 5 years or so until hopefully the Federal Building does come online to allow for more space. If that does not happen, we would have our 3 courtrooms and the issue we would have would be with office space and staff space.

Heidi West - I saw that the courtrooms would have to be operational by January 3. That seems like very fast timeline. Do you think that is feasible to meet that timeline?

Matt Lawson - That is the hope. It is feasible, is it plausible? Possibly not. At this time, we just need to move forward.

Heidi West - Makes the motion.

Public comment called for and there was none.

This will be moved onto the consent agenda.

Moved by: Heidi West

approve and authorize the mayor to sign the agreement with MMW for architectural design services in the remodel of the Municipal Court to create a third courtroom as required by law, in an amount in accordance with the rate schedule and not to exceed 10% of construction costs.

AYES: (7): Stacie Anderson, John Contos, Heather Harp, Jordan Hess, Amber Sherrill, Sandra Vasecka, and Heidi West

ABSENT: (5): Mirtha Becerra, Gwen Jones, Julie Merritt, Jesse Ramos, and Bryan von Lossberg

Vote results: Approved (7 to 0)

4. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 1:17 pm