

MISSOULA REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

CONDENSED BOARD MEETING MINUTES

January 21, 2021

FINAL

A Regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Missoula Redevelopment Agency was held on Thursday, January 21, 2021 via Zoom at 12:00 p.m. Those in attendance were as follows:

Board: Karl Englund, Nancy Moe, Ruth Reineking, Melanie Brock, Tasha Jones

Staff: Ellen Buchanan, Chris Behan, Annette Marchesseault, Tod Gass, Jilayne Dunn, Lesley Pugh

Public: Dale Bickell, City of Missoula Chief Administrative Officer; Jaeson White, City of Missoula Chief of Police; Joe Easton, Jackson Contractor Group; Stephen Thomas, Jackson Contractor Group; Brent Reimer, RBH Investments; John Corwin, Missoula Downtown Partnership; Gwen Jones, City Council; Missoula Access Community Television (MCAT)

CALL TO ORDER

12:05 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

December 17, 2020 Regular Board Meeting Minutes were approved as submitted.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Englund asked for the numbers to be shown to call in for public comment. There were no public comments.

ACTION ITEMS

Police Facility Upgrades – 101 North Catlin (URD II) – TIF Request (*Buchanan*)

Buchanan presented this request from the City of Missoula Police Department. She said it is a request to fund some renovations to the facility that the City bought a few years ago at 101 North Catlin Street. It is mainly used as a Police Evidence Building and houses detectives and patrol officers. One of the things that has been lacking in the Police Department is adequate shower and changing facilities. Patrol officers are exposed to a lot of things they would probably prefer not to be exposed to under normal circumstances; with COVID-19 amongst us it has become even more of an issue and concern. Officers are having to go home to change clothes if there is something that causes that to happen during shift or they are having to go home at the end of their shift, potentially with the virus as a

contaminant. Buchanan said the need for lockers, a changing area, and at least one shower become that much more pronounced. Staff talked about bringing this to the Board shortly before the end of last year and she suggested the Police Department put the work out to bid so they have real numbers. It turns out that the numbers are a lot better based on bids than what the architect's estimates were.

Buchanan said this request is for renovations to the building itself which would provide shower facilities, locker and changing rooms, and some external security measures. Right now there are portions of the building that are accessible to the public that Police Chief Jaeson White would like to have secured through fencing and an electric gate. The base bid is \$162,171, with a 10% contingency, an allowance for lockers of \$30,000, and professional services fees for MMW Architects of \$24,950. This is a publicly owned/City owned building and is eligible for use of TIF funds for physical improvements to the building. MRA also helped pay for the purchase of this property in 2018. MRA committed \$1 million to be used for debt service at \$250,000/year for four years.

Police Chief White thanked the MRA Board for considering their request. He said the 101 North Catlin building does not have a shower facility or locker room/changing facilities. The officers are required daily to come to work in their uniform in their personal vehicle, complete their shift and go home without the ability to change into civilian attire, get out of their uniforms, or be able to use a shower facility to clean up. This has really become an issue with COVID-19 in particular, but even before that they still struggled. The officers encounter biohazards and go on scene where there is drug paraphernalia and drugs. They get all of that material on their uniforms and don't have the ability to get clean before going home and dragging those hazards to their own residences and subjecting their families to some of the hazards they face at work. This request is a true health and safety request for the officers and their families in order to be able to get clean when they need to during the course of their work, and be able to change in and out of uniforms at the beginning and end of their shift.

Chief White spoke to the external security measures. He said the building is the Police Department's evidence facility. Having two unsecured doors provides direct public access to a sensitive area, where they keep all the evidence for criminal prosecutions. If they had a breach of that facility they could be jeopardizing not only the safety of employees, but also the entire criminal justice system by having someone from outside get access to the building. It would also allow them to more securely store their vehicles, which also have a lot of sensitive material in them. They would like to keep the vehicles in a secured lot that is not accessible to the general public.

Buchanan said the Budget Report shows an excess of \$800,000 in URD II. There is adequate cash to fund this request and still have plenty of capacity for other projects as they get closer to the end of the Fiscal Year. Buchanan added that MRA only pays for what the expenditures are, and this request has a 10% contingency and locker allowance which could move around a little bit.

Jones asked how many law enforcement officers and staff utilize that building. Chief White said the Police Department has 116 uniformed members, and 90% of the department works out of this facility. He added that there are not lockers or shower facilities at the main facility

on Ryman Street either. Jones said she supports this whole-heartedly. She finds it embarrassing that Missoula's public servants, who are exposed to much in their job, don't have basic hygiene facilities.

Moe said she also supports this. She asked about adequacy because of the number of police officers that would be using the new shower/lockers. She said there has been some discussion in the community about auxiliary services provided by people who may assist the police in certain situations. She asked if the facilities will be available to those individuals also. Chief White said that is the Mobile Crisis Team. They are run through the Fire Department and have access to their facilities. Moe asked if the A/E Contract item is the MMW Architects contract and if it is an actual charge. Chief White said yes. Moe asked if there are additional fees to be anticipated from MMW Architects. Chief White said no.

Reineking referred to Chief White's memo that was attached to Buchanan's memo. It says "We believe this design will meet the needs of the Department for the time being...." She asked for expansion on what that means. Chief White said they don't have space to add more than one shower in that facility. It will be a co-ed, single-use so officers will need to get shower in a rotation versus having dedicated male and female locker rooms with showers. He said the locker room square footage is sufficient at this time, but as the department continues to grow they could run into not having enough lockers to support the officers. Reineking asked if the inadequacy may be more related to the lockers than to the showers. Chief White said he would prefer to have a shower room that is attached to the locker room on both sides, but they just can't physically do that at this facility. There are some other considerations about where City services are going to be housed and they will have those conversations. Reineking said she read in the Missoulian about potential shift changes and perhaps that will ease some of the use. Chief White said they are going from three shifts to four shifts. There will only be seven officers coming off shift at once, so that will help with that volume issue, versus the current schedule where they have 15+ officers coming off shift at the same time. Reineking said she'd like to think that not all of the officers are exposed to biohazards every day. Chief White said that is their hope, but nonetheless, the ability to get out of their uniform so they can get into street clothes to go home is ideal. Reineking asked if they have to take their uniforms home to clean themselves. Chief White said yes. He has had numerous conversations with officers and their significant others about incidents where officers have gone to some pretty bad calls and have a lot of biohazard on their uniforms and have to drag them home.

Brock thanked Chief White for keeping male, female and non-binary officers in mind with the design incorporation. She said she supports this project.

Englund recused himself from voting on this Action Item. He represents the Police Department Union. He said the idea of having a shower and locker room facility has been something that the Union has asked for for many years in negotiations. In light of that, he said he feels it is best to recuse himself from the vote. He added that he and Chief White have been working on the new schedule with employees for a while and is happy to see that it got done. A study shows that the efficiency increase is remarkable.

REINEKING: I MOVE THE MRA BOARD APPROVE THE STAFF RECOMMENDATION TO FUND RENOVATIONS TO THE POLICE FACILITY LOCATED AT 109 NORTH CATLIN IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$233,718 WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE CITY WILL BE REIMBURSED FOR THE IMPROVEMENTS UPON COMPLETION OF THE WORK, THE ISSUANCE OF A CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY, LIEN WAIVERS AND OTHER DOCUMENTATION AS REQUIRED AND AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTION OF A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN MRA AND THE MISSOULA POLICE DEPARTMENT.

Moe seconded the motion with the understanding that the documentation is the documentation that MRA requires for pay out on the request.

REINEKING: I ACCEPT.

Dunn posted the information for the public to call in and comment.

Englund and Chief White discussed the shift change. Englund said officers bid for which shift they would be on for six months at a time. It hasn't been done in Missoula before and one of the concerns was how long that process would take. Chief White said they got it done in 24 hours.

No further discussion. No further public comment.

Motion passed unanimously (4 ayes, 0 nays, 1 abstention with Englund recusing himself).

Horizon Credit Union – 1502 Dearborn Avenue (URD III) – TIF Request
(Marchesseault)

Marchesseault said staff received an application for Façade Improvement Program (FIP) and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) assistance for a project at 1502 Dearborn Avenue, formerly Fat Cat Restaurant and Casino. She noted that MRA has recently made other improvements in this neighborhood including the Fine Line Building, Les Schwab, Dairy Queen, and Three Rivers Pediatric Dental. She said the old Fat Cat building was built in the 1970s and is very dated. The applicant is doing a gut renovation to separate the building into two separate businesses. The north end will be occupied by Horizon Credit Union and the developer, RBH Investments, is still seeking a tenant for the south end. There is patio space there that would nicely accommodate a restaurant.

Marchesseault said the applicant is proposing to do façade work in addition to the interior renovations. Without MRA assistance they would do some façade work, but they would retain some portions of the metal awning, repaint the concrete masonry unit (CMU) brick, and partially remove some of the parapet wall. With MRA assistance, they would be able to take down all of the metal awning, remove the whole parapet wall, include new metal siding over the CMU, and upgrade windows. Staff feels this would significantly update this facility. The FIP allows up to \$50,000 in a grant, or 25% of the overall cost of the façade improvements, whichever is less. [Post meeting note: The FIP program allows up to 25% of the **total** project cost, or \$50,000, whichever is less.] The estimate for the façade improvements being proposed are a little over \$215,000; \$50,000 would be 23% of that.

[Post meeting note: \$215,000 represents approximately 11% of the total project cost.] Marchesseault said the overall investment that RBH Investments are putting into this building is a little over \$2 million and that number includes both the interior and exterior renovations. If the Board were to approve the request, the ratio of public to private funding would be 1:30, well below the recommended ratio of 1:10.

Marchesseault said because of where the project is located, staff did take a look with regard to Design Excellence. It sits on the Brooks Corridor which is within one of the Design Excellence corridors and is near a node. The project has gone through Design Excellence review and has obtained approval. Staff feels that what is being proposed is a really attractive façade and big upgrade to what is there now.

Marchesseault said staff also looked at the relationship to what is very conceptually being proposed in the Brooks Street Corridor Transit-Oriented Development Infrastructure Study. There is the potential that the alley to the north of this building could be closed in the build-out of the Brooks Corridor TOD concept, but that would not affect the operation of this facility. Staff feels that the proposed improvements fit within whatever long-term planning is envisioned for this area. Staff is recommending the Board approve \$50,000 in a FIP grant and \$13,607 in TIF assistance for site improvements. The site improvements would be in places where the public right-of-way (ROW) interfaces with the private site.

Joe Easton, Jackson Contractor Group, said they are the general contractor on this project. Stephen Thomas, Jackson Contractor Group, is the Project Manager who will be leading the actual construction of the project. Easton introduced Brent Reimer, RBH Investments, to speak to their project. Reimer said RBH Investments is excited about the opportunity to improve that part of URD III. When they purchased the building they were thinking about how to best make it presentable and update it. They have an opportunity with Horizon Credit Union to come in and work with them on that. He said but/for the MRA FIP grant, it would be hard for them to get all of the façade done that they would like, as well as all of the updates that need to be done. He said RBH Investments are very excited and want to see what they can add to the community.

Brock asked if Horizon Credit Union just has one branch now on Reserve Street, and this will be an expansion to a second. Reimer said yes. Brock said the design looks fabulous. She said she's been asked twice in the last 60 days if something is going to happen to the Fat Cat building, so she thinks Missoula is ready to see that parcel redeveloped. Reimer said that area needs improvement, and they are excited to do that.

Englund asked where RBH Investments are on their search for a second tenant. Reimer said right now they are working with Sterling Advisors on that. He said because it's gutted right now it is harder to present to any possible client at this point, but they have had a couple of serious inquiries. They are hoping to get a restaurant in there because it would be a neat little space for that. Englund asked if the viability of the project depends on them getting a second tenant. Reimer said it would help dramatically, but they are moving ahead with Horizon Credit Union regardless. He added it will help to have a warm shell done there for clients to see exactly what the potential is.

Reineking said she hopes if it is a restaurant it's something other than fast food; a place with a different menu than, for example, Dairy Queen next door. She is glad to hear they are renovating and not tearing the building down. She asked if RBH Investments has plans to recycle what they are removing. Reimer said yes, they are recycling everything they can. Thomas said there is roofing material they will reuse. Inside the building there are existing steel studs that came down when the interior was demolished and they plan to reuse those, as well as some ceiling tiles. They are going to try to prep and repair the asphalt that is currently there and keep everything on site. Until they tear up the asphalt to see what the subgrade looks like they really won't know how much they'll be able to reuse. However, Thomas expects they will be able to reuse the majority of it. Reineking asked if the asphalt on site will be reduced and/or if there are landscaping plans. Thomas said there are landscaping plans. They will try to keep the asphalt replacement to a minimum. It is in rough shape and when they do the construction his fear is that they will end up having to tear up more than they've anticipated. Reimer is aware of that and they budgeted to replace the whole parking lot, but will try to save as much as possible. Englund asked if they are reducing the square footage of the parking lot. Thomas said no. They are improving Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access and walkways. The approaches on the sidewalks are not up to code and the slopes of the sidewalks are fairly steep. This project will create better ADA parking spots and locations to enter and exit the building.

Reineking said she is glad they are conforming to the Design Excellence requirements. She said she assumes that includes a certain amount of landscaping and lighting for the public. She appreciates Marchesseault including consideration of the Brooks Corridor TOD concept.

Jones asked if RBH Investments has any plans to buy and renovate the building in front of Fat Cat. Reimer said they had dreams of being able to do that but it hasn't quite worked out yet. Jones said the trend of redevelopment in this area is a positive indicator that their project may stimulate another. She said she likes and supports this project.

Moe asked if there is anything in the facility's design that encourages daily recycling or recycling of materials by the businesses that move in. Thomas said not currently. They just started working with the interior designer of Horizon Credit Union and have not discussed that yet, but will definitely bring it up with them. Moe asked if this facility lends itself to solar panels. Reimer said they haven't approached that subject with Horizon Credit Union or anyone else, but it's not a bad thought. Moe asked Marchesseault if that was part of Design Excellence. Marchesseault said it is not. Buchanan pointed out that some of the Credit Unions in town are doing good loan rates for solar adaptation.

REINEKING: I MOVE THE MRA BOARD APPROVE A FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM GRANT TO RBH INVESTMENTS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$50,000 FOR EXTERIOR RENOVATION OF THE BUILDING LOCATED AT 1502 DEARBORN AVENUE, AND TAX INCREMENT FINANCING REIMBURSEMENT IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$13,607 FOR IMPROVEMENTS WITHIN THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY, WITH THE STIPULATION THAT REIMBURSEMENT WILL BE MADE AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE PROJECT UNDER SUBMISSION OF ANY REQUIRED LIEN RELEASES AND PROOF OF EXPENDITURES, AND AUTHORIZE THE CHAIR TO SIGN THE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT.

Jones seconded the motion.

Dunn posted the information for the public to call in and comment.

Jones asked if the property where the car wash used to be on Brooks Street is part of this project. Marchesseault said that is not part of the application that was submitted. Easton concurred and said it is owned by RBH Investments. Reimer said they do not have any plans for that property yet, but are open to suggestions. Buchanan asked how much the uncertainty around COVID-19 is entering into discussions as they look for potential tenants for the Horizon Credit Union building. Reimer said that is a big impact and he wonders, for that reason, if they will have a hard time finding a restaurant for that space. They do hope it will work out for somebody. Buchanan asked what the square footage is. Reimer said it's about 2,000 square feet. Brock said the food truck network is booming around Missoula. She said on any given day there are about 10 of them and they are adding more, so hopefully they can look at this as an incubator and maybe when spring/summer hits there will be a new wave of restaurants needing bricks and mortar.

Moe noted there are sufficient contingency funds in the District to fund this.

No further discussion. No further public comment.

Motion passed unanimously (5 ayes, 0 nays).

MRL Property – 1919 North Avenue West (URD III) – TIF Request (Buchanan)

Buchanan said this project is in reference to the MRL Property that was purchased by the City in 2017. When the City purchased it, they knew there were tenants on the property who owned their buildings but were leasing the land. The Sovereign Hope Evangelical Church (SHEC) was one of those entities. Camp Mak-A-Dream also owns their own building and are still operating out of there. When it became obvious that SHEC could not remain in that location with the redevelopment plans the City had for the area, they began looking for a new home for the church. That entity has two operations. One is the church. The other is gymnasium-type activities – mostly being offered because there was an existing gymnasium in the building they were occupying. Buchanan said SHEC has a sizeable congregation, but not a wealthy congregation. In 2018 they asked MRA for modifications to their lease and asked that MRA try to set a value on the buildings. Understanding that MRA wanted to help them find a new home, and then being able to accumulate finances, was critical to that. A local commercial appraiser looked at the buildings and came up with a methodology whereby they looked at what SHEC paid for the buildings when they purchased them, depreciated the value of those over time, and set a value of \$46,500. At the same time, the City reduced their rental rate so that SHEC could begin to accumulate funds. Since that time, one of their parishioners bought the former Coca-Cola plant on 3rd Street and a space within that building to SHEC. It is currently being renovated. They had to put in a sprinkler system, along with other improvements they need to legally have church services there.

Buchanan said SHEC thought they would be out of their old space last summer, but that was delayed for several reasons including a delayed closing and delays in construction.

Therefore, SHEC still had a need for temporary space until March or April of this year, if things stay on the current schedule. They are now holding church services on Sundays in the old library on the Payne Block that was gifted to the City. SHEC is paying rent there and have vacated the space at 1919 North Avenue. In the meantime, the City was looking for space it could use for an emergency winter shelter. Buchanan said it was necessitated in great part by COVID-19 because the Poverello Center and Salvation Army had to reduce their populations for social proper distancing. The former SHEC building is one of the locations that is now housing less fortunate homeless people this winter.

Buchanan said MRA wanted to transfer the property to the City as quickly as possible. She said it gave her pause to have an emergency winter shelter being operated in a building owned by a church that had little or nothing to do with the operation of that center. The transaction has taken place, and the City now owns the buildings. The purchase was paid for out of a maintenance fund that was established initially by the rents generated by the MRL property buildings. As the City has acquired other properties the need for that maintenance money has increased, potentially with improvements needed in the old library building in order to lease that space out and keep it occupied until the City is ready to redevelop that block.

Buchanan said the City has requested that MRA cover the cost of acquiring the MRL property buildings so that the maintenance fund can be reimbursed in the amount of \$46,500. She said there is more than adequate capacity in URD III. It will not be a burden on the District. It will allow the City and MRA a fair amount of flexibility in terms of having that maintenance fund available when unanticipated situations arise. The staff recommendation is that the Board approve the request of \$46,500 for reimbursement to the City.

Moe asked if there are other buildings remaining on this site. Buchanan said there are. Moe asked what is going to happen with those and if MRA is going to be asked to purchase those as well. Buchanan said the only building that will still be on the site that is not owned by the City is the building that houses Camp Mak-A-Dream. It is their intention to continue to operate out of that building until the City is ready to redevelop those eight acres. The City has had conversations with them about actually accommodating them in whatever redevelopment happens there. They like the location and it is central enough to suit their needs. They have shoe-horned themselves into that building because it's what they have, but with the redevelopment they could actually have a space that is designed to work much more efficiently for them if they became part of a mixed-use development or redevelopment that occurs on the property. Buchanan said all of that remains to be seen. There is no pressure right now for Camp Mak-A-Dream to move out of where they are or for the City to purchase their building from them.

Moe said she is impressed with how agile and committed the City has been to putting the building to use for the homeless, and how SHEC appears to have been easy to work with. Buchanan said the City's working relationship with SHEC has been terrific. They are wonderful to work with and very appreciative of everything the City has done. Buchanan said it has worked out really well and they are getting into a place that they will be happy with. She said the winter shelter facility is actually part of SHEC's mission as they are part

of Family Promise of Missoula. They have been providing services to homeless folks for many years.

Jones asked if the \$46,500 is for the church structure that exists on the MRL Property. Buchanan said yes. Jones asked if those building parts and pieces would have some sort of resale value when the City is ready to redevelop that property. Buchanan said SHEC tried to find anyone who was interested in buying those buildings and moving/reusing them somewhere else. They were not successful, however that was a couple of years ago, and it may be that there is a user out there now. She said the buildings are metal and certainly can be recycled. There is value in scrap metal but it probably offsets the cost of deconstruction. The City's first effort would be to try and find a party that wants to reuse those buildings in another location. Englund asked if they can be moved or be deconstructed and reconstructed on a new site. Buchanan said they would have to be disassembled and reconstructed elsewhere.

Reineking congratulated the City on its creative work in putting everything together. She asked where the gymnasium users would be able to continue meeting. Buchanan said like most non-profit operations, they are pretty good at scrambling and finding another place to exist. She said it struck her how many of them there are and it is something to keep in mind as they go through the various planning processes for different areas and uses because there is a need for that type of space. Buchanan said one of the things staff knows from working with Parks & Rec is that there is a pressing need for gymnasium space. Englund asked if the building is suitable for Parks & Rec purposes. Dale Bickell, City of Missoula Chief Administrative Officer, said Parks & Rec has used that facility before so it is possible. He said once the pandemic is over and that facility is no longer needed for a winter shelter he thinks they would entertain City use, but also any of the non-profits as well. That added capacity will help the City keep that facility in use while master planning and redevelopment are done. Buchanan said as soon as the environmental assessment/remediation is done the City will be ready to do the necessary planning and start redevelopment, especially because of the pressure to get housing on the ground.

Jones asked if there are carrying costs going forward. Bickell said the carrying costs are related to maintenance of the facility. They are high now because of winter shelter operations, but in normal times it would mostly only include weed and snow removal, etc. He said the maintenance fund is adequate to cover those expenses now.

Moe referred back to Reineking's comments about the various non-profits using the gymnasium and where they may be able to have their activities. She asked if there are any plans for buildings that would facilitate that at the Fairgrounds. Buchanan said not that she is aware of.

Englund asked whether the purchase of the building and the cancellation of the lease means SHEC will be completely out of the property. Buchanan said that was correct. SHEC is currently doing services in the old library and then will transition in March or April to their new facility on 3rd Street at the former Coca-Cola plant.

MOE: I MOVE THE MRA BOARD APPROVE AN EXPENDITURE FROM URD III IN THE AMOUNT OF \$46,500 TO REIMBURSE THE CITY'S PROPERTY MANAGEMENT FUND

FOR THE PURCHASE OF THE BUILDINGS FORMERLY OWNED BY THE SOVEREIGN HOPE CHURCH, LOCATED AT 1919 NORTH AVENUE WEST.

Brock seconded the motion.

Dunn posted the information for the public to call in and comment.

Reineking asked if staff has heard if anything else is happening at the former Coca-Cola property. Buchanan said she has not heard anything specific.

No further discussion. No further public comment.

Motion passed unanimously (5 ayes, 0 nays).

Front/Main Conversion to Two-Way (Front Street, Riverfront Triangle, Hellgate URDs) – Request to Issue RFP for Final Design (Buchanan)

Buchanan said this request is MRA being opportunist. The Front/Main Conversion to two-way streets has been a top priority in both Downtown Master Plans. The challenge has been funding. In 2014, MRA allocated funding for a feasibility study of the two-way conversion. MRA engaged HDR after a Request for Proposals (RFP) process. They worked with businesses, property owners and residents up and down that strip and created a conceptual plan for how that conversion would lay out. They did the traffic modeling necessary to examine what impact that conversion would have on the state routes it intersects with, which are Madison Street, Higgins Avenue and Orange Street. To a great extent, the study done with HDR was to help the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) understand it would not degrade levels of service at those intersections, and to set it up as a project if funding became available, and to open this up if there ever was a need for pass-through federal funding through MRA's Urban Renewal Programs through the Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), that we would be able to access those. Buchanan said there just hasn't been any money to do this project. The only game in town right now are the URDs, and this is part of three different URDs. There is not adequate capacity to take it on until the Front Street URD really comes into its own in terms of revenues coming in from the big investments MRA has made.

Buchanan said there is a lot of speculation with the new administration in Washington D.C. that there will be an infrastructure bill within the first 100 days. It may be patterned somewhat like the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) money during the recession that the City was able to access to redo North Higgins Avenue from Broadway Street to the north. Buchanan said she would like to issue an RFP for design services to start doing the engineering on this so there can be a project much like the North Higgins Avenue project was during ARRA that is close enough to shovel-ready that the City can be competitive for any federal infrastructure funds. Today's request is to authorize staff to put together and issue an RFP for final design. Once there is a selection and staff knows what professional services for that will cost, staff will come back to the Board with a monetary request.

Jones said this is exciting. As a point of procedure, she asked if it really is something that the Board needs to vote on. Buchanan said it is a judgment call. She said typically when

staff issues an RFP to something of this magnitude, the Board is asked to authorize staff to do that. Jones said she liked to hear about it, but wondered if it really is a voting issue or not.

Jones referred to Buchanan's memo stating there is adequate capacity currently available to fund the design process. She asked Buchanan if she had a ballpark sense of what the RFPs will come in at. She said she suspects the significant work that has been done around the conversion process would make this design process more efficient. Buchanan said yes, concept design is done. One of the variables is going to be how much public outreach is warranted at this point because things are always changing downtown. There are different players with respect to some of the properties and a majority of them are still the same. Public outreach for an engineering consultant can be pretty scary in terms of how to anticipate the amount of time it is going to take. Buchanan said there has been a second Downtown Master Plan completed which had a lot of engagement and included this conversion. It is one of the top recommendations of that Plan. She said the work HDR did in 2014 was somewhere around \$120,000. She said it will be six figures for sure.

Jones asked if there has been public outreach related to the conversion on the past projects, and if there was any opposition to the conversion other than the short-term implications of a large construction project. Buchanan said yes, there have been people that have come to the Board and spoken, particularly with respect to the property around Kiwanis Park. That is one piece that will make it more extensive than just what is being done on Front and Main Streets and the intersections. She said it is a mess in terms of how to get in and out of Kiwanis Park. The folks in the condominium development on the Riverfront Trail have expressed concerns to the Board, City and MRA staff about what happens to their ability to get in and out of their neighborhood if Front Street becomes two-way. It has to be included in the contemplation around the conversion. There will be public outreach in that area that exceeds anything that has been done in the past. That end of the project is where the most concern has come from because there are some single-family residences that are owner occupied.

Moe asked if there is an assumption about the validity of the 2015 study, or will this result in a rewrite of that study. Buchanan said the 2015 study is the basis for what happens to Front & Main Streets and the intersections. She said the intersection of Madison Street and the intersection of Orange Street are the big challenges. The studies have been done to lay out the best way to do that and MDT is in our court in terms of impact on their system. Buchanan said the study will be a given unless there are some really good reasons to vary from it. It has been used to guide improvements along Front and Main Streets as private developments come on board. That was one of the reasons the City wanted to do it then. They didn't want to pay for something at one of the intersections that needed to be torn out when they finally got the funding to do the full conversion.

Moe asked about the timeline of this taking place. Will there will be a time limitation in the RFPs. Buchanan said the City wants to get it done as quickly as possible, especially if they want to position themselves to take advantage of any federal infrastructure funding that may come down the pike. It will be competitive and it will be internally competitive within Missoula, as was the ARRA funding. The City had its ducks in a row and got North Higgins Avenue done with that funding. There were ten other projects in the City that wanted to go

after that funding. Moe confirmed they want to get it done as quickly as possible with public participation. Buchanan concurred. She said the public participation is not going to be lengthy or extensive. It will be very focused and detailed.

Englund asked for a run down of a schedule if the MRA Board approves it today. Buchanan said her “as soon as possible” means they need something tangible that will make them competitive for infrastructure funding. Real engineering has to start quickly once a contract is awarded. If the Board approves it today, staff will do its best to have an RFP out on the street in early February. That will give respondents two to three weeks to have their proposals in. Then staff will go through a selection process and it will come back to the Board in March. Staff will then be in a position to award a contract and get going on engineering. Englund asked what the order of magnitude of the contract would be. Buchanan said it will be a few hundred thousand dollars. There will be three URDs to pull from, and a new Fiscal Year starts July 1st. Staff is hoping for better numbers in the Front Street URD than in the last few years. Englund asked if the deliverable is something that gets built off of or is it more conceptual. Buchanan said they have the concept, so this is construction documents.

Brock said she is so happy to vote in favor of this. She thinks it is the best investment MRA can make in downtown Missoula in the next 20 years. She said she is happy to help move it along if needed. Brock thanked Buchanan for putting it on the agenda. Buchanan said this is one of those projects that is kind of an orphan when it comes to funding. There are lots of little places MRA can pull funding from, but unless they had super healthy URDs that this was going through, it has no home. She wants to get MRA in a position where it can go after anything that comes down the pike.

Englund said traditionally the MRA Board has always approved these big RFPs. He said Jones’ point is well taken and doesn’t necessarily know they have to under state law because MRA isn’t writing checks. He said years ago there was some ambivalence on the Board, and they decided they needed to approve it to show the contracting community that they were serious about the process and not just putting out an RFP to see what came in. Jones said she wasn’t being critical, just simply wanted to have that clarified. She said she wouldn’t want staff to be delayed in pursuing something like this because they felt they needed to bring it to the Board. When there is a time sensitive issue like this, she would be very understanding to hear about it later.

Moe asked if there are other partners for the funding. Buchanan said if MRA can afford to do this without stressing the Districts, she would prefer to save those partners for any matching funds that might be needed once construction funding is figured out. If the numbers come in and they exceed the comfort level of the three URDs, MRA will definitely look to the Downtown Foundation, Business Improvement District (BID), and others to try to put together a funding package.

Gwen Jones, City Council, said Bryan von Lossberg, City Council President, asked her to pass on a message for him. Several constituents have contacted von Lossberg and Heidi West, who represent Ward 1, regarding the exit and entry onto Parsons and Hartman Streets. She said Buchanan already addressed this, but von Lossberg wanted to make sure the issue of residential access, if there is a conversion, is addressed in the RFP.

Buchanan said it will absolutely be front and center. Jones added she is in favor of the Front/Main Conversion.

BROCK: I MOVE THE MRA BOARD AUTHORIZE STAFF TO ISSUE A REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TO ENGAGE A FIRM OR TEAM TO FINALIZE DESIGN OF THE FRONT AND MAIN STREET CONVERSION PROJECT BASED ON THE CONCLUSIONS AND DESIGN CONTAINED IN THE 2015 HDR REPORT, THE FRONT STREET/MAIN STREET TWO-WAY CONVERSION FEASIBILITY STUDY, ALONG WITH ANY ANCILLARY STUDY AREAS AND BRING A RECOMMENDATION BACK TO THE BOARD TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES.

Jones seconded the motion.

Dunn posted the information for the public to call in and comment.

No further discussion. No further public comment.

Motion passed unanimously (5 ayes, 0 nays).

NON-ACTION ITEMS

STAFF REPORTS

Director's Report

Moe asked for any comments on the Legislature that the Board should be aware of. Buchanan said there are a lot of bills that have "tax increment" in the title, but they do not have any substance yet. They seem to be place holders. Staff hasn't seen a lot of overt bills that are aimed at TIF. There is a bill out there that deals with the Business Equipment Tax that could have an impact on MRA's revenues. However, the bills are indirect at this point. Behan said there are several people combing the bills. The Mayor's Office is doing a good job of separating out key words, as well as MRA staff keeping an eye on it. He said so far it has been tangential, although there is finally some legislation regarding energy conservation loans through government operation that MRA would be interested in. Englund asked if the League of Cities and Towns is still a viable operation. Behan said it is still in effect. Right now it is a communication group and they have not met for quite some time. Buchanan said they still can be mobilized if needed. One of the things that came out of the working group for the League of Cities and Towns is that now they use each other as sounding boards and to circulate information. When COVID-19 hit, one of the big questions was if anyone figured out a way to use TIF to help keep local businesses in operation or shore up economic impacts. She said it has become a tool for things other than just the legislature.

Pugh updated the Board regarding the Communications Plan. She said Spider McKnight, Six Pony Hitch LLC, is currently conducting interviews with City Council members. She is compiling a list of other people in the community to interview. She is getting a lot of great information from her interviews and has already started a list of recommendations for MRA.

FY21 Budget Reports

Dunn said the beginning balances are audited numbers now and the auditors (Anderson Zurmuehlen) have all of MRA's information. They will come back to staff with a final report to review. They did request an extension on the audits for MRA, Missoula Parking Commission and the City regarding a circular being released on the CARES Act funding they were waiting for. She said they are shooting for that to be done at the end of January.

Buchanan said the North Reserve-Scott Street URD looks pretty anemic on paper. She said there is in excess of \$1.3 million budgeted for Villagio Apartments that will not get expended for quite some time.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

OTHER ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Lesley Pugh