

MISSOULA REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
CONDENSED BOARD MEETING MINUTES

January 16, 2025

FINAL

A Regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Missoula Redevelopment Agency was held on Thursday, January 16, 2025 in the Hal Fraser Conference Room, 140 W. Pine St., and via Microsoft Teams at 12:00 p.m. Those in attendance were as follows:

Board: Karl Englund, Tasha Jones, Ruth Reineking, Melanie Brock, Mike Nugent - City Council Ex-Officio Board Member

Staff: Ellen Buchanan, Annie Gorski, Annette Marchesseault, Michael Hicks, Jilayne Dunn, Ashley Warren, Lesley Pugh

Public: Julie Lacey, Missoula Economic Partnership; Chad Bauer, Missoula Chamber of Commerce; Martin Kidston, Missoula Current; GGLO: Mark Sindell, Josiah Brown; MCAT

CALL TO ORDER

12:00 p.m.

INTRODUCTIONS

Dunn introduced a new member of the MRA staff, Ashley Warren, Communications Specialist III.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[December 19, 2024 Regular Board Meeting Minutes](#) were approved as submitted.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

ACTION ITEMS

[Missoula Economic Partnership – Multi-Year Partnership – Update & TIF Request \(Gorski\)](#)

Gorski said this item is a request for an additional fiscal year 2025 Tax Increment Financing (TIF) of \$50,000 to support MRA's contract with the Missoula Economic Partnership (MEP). In June 2024, the MRA Board approved a three-year contract with MEP to advance City and MRA redevelopment goals. Gorski said the Board motion included authorization of an initial \$100,000 contract amount for FY25 with the opportunity for up to \$50,000 in additional funding if MEP staff time exceeds projections. Based on MEP's submitted hours and projected workload, they are requesting approval of the additional \$50,000 referenced in the contract.

Julie Lacey, MEP, reviewed what they have been doing and what they see coming in the next six months. She referenced three main areas they have been working on: Roseburg Property, Midtown/Southgate Crossing and business development work. Lacey said MEP has been aware of the closure of the mill for some time. A representative from Roseburg came to MEP with an intentionality for a future there that aligns with what Missoula needs. Given that, MEP wants to make sure they have a good outcome for Missoula and talked to Roseburg about the long-term vision for that site including goals already in place and shared with them the scope of planning that has been done. When MEP understood their willingness to consider an annexation, they went to the City and told them about the opportunity.

Lacey said a team of dedicated individuals including City staff was put together to work through the process. She said the City has long had Roseburg and its 235 acres on their eye for annexation. Lacey gave kudos to the staff and City leadership for putting the team together as well as Roseburg's willingness to be collaborative throughout the process. The team consisted of City, County and Transportation staff and Roseburg's legal representative and engineer. They met weekly for six months. There were some bumps to work through in terms of future land use and how it coincides with the Our Missoula project, what it would look like in terms of annexation, possible expansion of the North Reserve-Scott Street Urban Renewal District (NRSS URD) and ensuring all of those timelines fit. There is still work to be done and MEP will continue to work with the current owners of Roseburg and any possible future owners. She said it is an incredible opportunity for the community.

Lacey spoke to the mill closure itself. While MEP made some initial introductions there in terms of workforce, a lot of credit should be given to the Job Service. They were on site hosting job fairs and giving information about opportunities at the state and local level for future employment and retraining opportunities. Of the 159 employees that left, MEP is aware that 20 went directly into retraining programs and a number of them retired. The Job Service still exists for services and resume help to get folks into new opportunities. Lacey stated that often what people see is from the highway and is vacant land outside of the berm. Inside of the berm, where the mill was, still has the existing buildings but Roseburg has done a lot of demolition. She said it was challenging to situate the demo to make sure the buildings could remain. It allows for commercial use in a more expedited fashion. While they can't speak to what the future commercial use looks like, they know with those buildings on site and intact, the ability for someone to walk in and put it to a new future use can happen much more quickly. It also creates a nice buffer from the existing neighbors into possible future land use there.

Lacey spoke about the Southgate Crossing property which is 13 acres behind Bob Wards Sporting Goods that the City recently purchased in URD III. MEP has been in long conversations with the Beach family and Southgate Partners to bring them to the table. Those conversations align with what MEP calls their strategic relocation efforts, looking at opportunities for organizations to meet their long-term needs in terms of land use. MEP helps move businesses through those conversations and helps them find opportunities in all of the URDs. Now, MEP is poised to help find a redevelopment partner(s) for the site. They created a brief, which is an outline of the opportunity including a description and available incentives. They know the goals include a public park and housing, so they are working with development teams to hone in on their vision and look at what they are interested in

putting forth to the City as a redevelopment project. MEP has shared the brief with over two dozen development partners and are already engaging in conversations to look at more specifics of what their projects could look like. She said MEP expects this solicitation period to be open through the end of January and over the next several months they will do due diligence on the teams and bring a short list to the City to interview. The City will make a selection and move through that process, similar to the former Library Block. MEP have also talked to adjacent land owners who have both concerns about a future project and are excited about it.

Lacey spoke to MEP's business development work. Christine Littig, MEP's Business Development Director, joined their team about a year ago and has really allowed them to have boots on the ground to be talking to businesses. Littig's work ranges all over the county and in the URDs. It has allowed the MEP team to focus on larger strategic efforts including land development, workforce and communications to elevate the stories of the projects they are doing. Lacey said she is really proud of the MEP team and what the strategic alignment has allowed. She thanked MRA because the contract and work done in the URDs has really allowed them to make the effort possible.

Lacey said in partnership with NeighborWorks Montana, the Missoula Housing Impact Fund was created. She said Grant Kier, MEP Director, was able to secure \$5 million from an anonymous donor in order to seed the Fund. First Security Bank came in with another \$3 million and Clearwater Credit Union donated \$500,000. There is an ask out right now to three other financial institutions. She said they hope the Fund will grow to \$10 million this year and how it will roll out is being formulated right now.

Brock said she would love for next year to think of a way to make sure MEP has the resources needed for their work. She said once code reform is done this spring, they are hoping every vacant lot becomes a redevelopment opportunity in the URDs, and want MEP to make it to the finish line with adequate resources without spending time fundraising to keep the lights on.

REINEKING: I MOVE THE MRA BOARD AUTHORIZE AN ADDITIONAL \$50,000 TO COMPENSATE MEP FOR THEIR INCREASED FY25 WORKLOAD, NOTING THAT THE TOTAL FY25 CONTRACT SHALL NOT EXCEED \$150,000. MEP WILL PROVIDE A SUMMARY OF CONTRACT ACTIVITIES COMPLETED FROM JANUARY TO JULY 2025 SO THAT MRA CAN CHARGE TIME TO THE CORRESPONDING URBAN RENEWAL AREAS.

Brock seconded the motion.

No further discussion. No further public comment.

Motion passed unanimously (4 ayes, 0 nays).

[North Reserve-Scott Street Master Plan Update \(NRSS URD / Wards 1 & 2\) – Request Authorization to Issue a Request for Proposals \(Gorski\)](#)

Gorski said staff is requesting authorization to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for consulting services to update the existing NRSS Master Plan. The original Master Plan was

completed in 2016 to guide redevelopment priorities in the NRSS URD. It included major infrastructure recommendations, land use recommendations and redevelopment strategies. Significant public input was gathered to inform the Master Plan recommendations.

Gorski said several changes have occurred since the Plan was created. It recommended preserving and protecting the industrial core in the County which included the Roseburg property. If City Council approves annexation of the Roseburg property later this month, staff expects to initiate a boundary adjustment to the NRSS URD. She said Roseburg has requested to add their 235 acres into the URD. Staff is contemplating proceeding with an update to the Master Plan in tandem with the boundary adjustment process. The Master Plan update will look at infrastructure to support new land uses on the Roseburg property. It will also look at new infrastructure connectivity within the URD, given the density that's been added with new housing and commercial uses, as well as potential new open space areas and trail connections.

Staff is requesting authorization to proceed with crafting and advertising a RFP to update the NRSS Master Plan. Staff will come back to the Board to request budget authority and entering into a contract. Buchanan said there is a bill pending in the Legislature right now that could have an impact on this. Currently, when an URD ends, all of the value that has been built in the district comes in as newly taxable. Senate Bill 2 (SB2) proposes that it no longer come in as newly taxable which has a negative impact on our taxes and revenues. MRA will not move forward with this until the status of that bill is known.

Jones asked staff if they need action from the Board to issue a Request for Proposals. Buchanan said if staff is issuing a RFP it will typically come to the Board for approval to direct staff to issue one. Then staff comes back with the chosen firm and a price. Staff won't issue a RFP without Board action.

BROCK: I MOVE THE MRA BOARD AUTHORIZE STAFF TO PREPARE AND ADVERTISE A REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS SOLICITING CONSULTANT SERVICES TO UPDATE THE NORTH RESERVE-SCOTT STREET MASTER PLAN.

Jones seconded the motion.

No further discussion. No further public comment.

Motion passed unanimously (4 ayes, 0 nays).

NON-ACTION ITEMS

North MRL Triangle (URD III / Ward 4) – Introduction of Consultant (Hicks)

Hicks said at the last meeting staff received approval to enter into a contract with GGLO to lead the public engagement process and redevelopment plan. MRA has entered into that contract, and Mark Sindell and Josiah Brown from GGLO were present to introduce themselves and answer questions.

Sindell said GGLO are very excited about the project. Collectively as a firm they have 40 years of experience in this type of work. Over the last 10 years they have been working with cities throughout the mountain west and in Montana on significant development projects that

include housing and open space. At the last MRA Board meeting there were a few questions around how GGLO will keep the Board and City Council updated and who will approve what happens next. Sindell said they will be in Missoula for several days every couple of months and plan to give the Board updates. They will build onto the Midtown Master Plan so they aren't reinventing the wheel on that and will be giving the Board a purview of where they're heading and their process. As they get into the draft plans they will come back to the Board with updates on community feedback. They plan to do the same thing with City Council. Sindell said as GGLO refines things in the process and move towards a final plan, they will be back for a briefing. Ultimately, as they get to the right place, they will come to the Board for approval of the plan and will give a courtesy update to City Council.

Sindell said they have an economic development firm and affordable housing development experience on their team. They want to make sure they are hearing from the community and stakeholders to understand and make sure they know what the priorities are and can incorporate them. At the same time, they want to be working with MRA to support needs and make sure it all works. GGLO will be testing everything along the way so they know they are setting MRA and the City up for something that can ultimately be developed and meet goals. He said it will include renderings suitable for a broad audience as well as numbers that support the vision.

Englund asked Buchanan if a committee will be put together. Buchanan said yes, there will be a working group/committee and a technical advisory committee assembled. Brock said she and Nugent have already put multiple hours into this. Englund said they need to make sure MRA and City Council are proceeding with a common understanding of where they are and where they might be going, and that sounds like something GGLO is willing to take on. Sindell said they are and if they see a need to do a joint session that is a possibility too.

Jones asked about a general timeline for the deliverables. Hicks said they are looking at January to September. There are three public engagement sessions anticipated and they are looking to hold the first one in March.

STAFF REPORTS

Director's Report

Buchanan said staff is staying busy and she was happy to answer any questions.

Ravara Contingency – Update

Gorski noted there have been no changes since November 2024.

FY24 Budget Status Reports

Dunn said she updated the FY24 reports as of June 30th as part of the audit process that is currently happening.

FY25 Budget Status Reports

Dunn reviewed the reports for each of the URDs. Brock asked about the Railroad Quiet Zone project and if it might be paid out in 2025. Buchanan said it is still moving along and City staff is working on figuring out what it will cost to implement. Dunn noted that for URDs

II and III she created a “FY26 Committed” column for projects staff thinks will not be paid out in FY25 so the money can be considered available in FY25 for expenditures.

[FY25 Staff Activities Reports](#) (10/19/24 – 12/14/24)

COMMITTEE REPORTS

OTHER ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 12:54 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lesley Pugh".

Lesley Pugh