

MISSOULA REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
CONDENSED BOARD MEETING MINUTES

April 17, 2025

FINAL

A Regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Missoula Redevelopment Agency was held on Thursday, April 17, 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, Ruth Reineking, Melanie Brock, Jack Lawson, Mike Nugent - City Council Ex-Officio Board Member

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

Public: City of Missoula: Mayor Davis, Dale Bickell - Chief Administrative Officer, Eran Pehan – Director of Community Planning, Development and Innovation, Mark Todorovich, Public Works & Mobility; Matt Ellis – Big Sky Professional Baseball LLC; Katie Fairbanks; MCAT

CALL TO ORDER

12:05 p.m.

INTRODUCTIONS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[March 27, 2025 Special Board Meeting Minutes](#) were approved as submitted.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no public comments or announcements.

ACTION ITEMS

[Our Missoula Code Reform \(All URDs / All Wards\) – TIF Request \(Mayor Davis/Buchanan\)](#)

Mayor Davis thanked the Board for considering this item. The request is to complete the Our Missoula effort the City is making to update building codes into a Unified Development Code (UDC). It is a massive undertaking that requires consultant support. There were two different phases of code updates that were made to be in compliance with the new law that was put into place after the 2023 Legislative Session. The City will need to set up a very large mailing to residents in the City and there is work to be done to graphically illustrate what is happening with the new code. She said a major part of the code that most people are interested in is zoning districts and the zoning map. Having that graphically appropriate and well understood is important. The City is looking for a contribution from the MRA to

help fill out the project. The Community Planning, Development and Innovation (CPDI) Department has spent around \$500,000 in planners' staff time when it comes to this effort. Eran Pehan, Director of CPDI, was present to speak more about the effort. Mayor Davis said the new development code benefits all of the Urban Renewal Districts (URD) significantly in the sense of being able to have a more streamlined and predictable development code that will help the private sector respond to both residential and commercial developments.

Buchanan spoke about why it makes sense for MRA to do this and precedent that exists already for similar efforts. Every project MRA does in any URD has to wrestle with the City's existing codes, which is not always a fun undertaking. MRA learned a lot about that in the project with Ravara on Scott Street where staff was down in the trenches with the development partner as a true partner, different than MRA's normal public/private partnerships. Staff learned a lot about the challenges that exist with current codes. Buchanan said she has worked all over the country with development and zoning codes, and what Missoula has is not unique. There are too many zoning districts and a very cumbersome code. MRA stands to benefit as an Agency as much from the rewrite of these codes as the rest of the City and general public.

Buchanan said there are a number of instances where there is precedent for contributing to this sort of thing, especially with respect to the funding to finish the efforts of the consultants and the City staff to get us to the point of an adoptable code and the implementation piece of it. Dating back, MRA provided funding that created the Historic Preservation Office and Historic Preservation Officer. MRA had representation on its Board for years from the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) during URD I. MRA provided funding for the creation of Design Excellence and initiated that effort with Winter & Co. and others to create that piece of code that gave MRA standards for the URDs that exceeded what was out there at the time. Design Excellence addresses corridors, and MRA made the decision that Design Excellence address any project within an URD whether it was on one of the designated corridors or not, which gave a higher design standard to aspire to because Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funding is not an entitlement. You have to meet the City's goals and earn it. She said this is an appropriate request and represents about 10% of the total cost of the undertaking. Buchanan said that is not excessive considering the benefit MRA will get from the effort. If the Board chooses to approve this, staff will figure out how that funding should parse out among the six URDs, much like when a remittance is done.

Englund asked if the consultant is writing the new code book. Mayor Davis said they are writing parts of it, but the majority of the writing is coming from staff, and that is by design. Pehan said the consultant is primarily working on crafting the new zoning designations which will be the most substantive change that the community will feel. They are also working on parking and landscaping requirements. The rest of the UDC creation includes consolidating, removing conflicts, providing more clarity and presenting codes like Public Works codes for infrastructure in the right-of-way (ROW) that impacts private development. Staff is working to consolidate, clarify, align and present those more graphically in the UDC. All of it will come together before City Council for adoption. There will be separate engagement phases for the zoning districts, future zoning map and consolidated UDC alongside a standards and specifications manual that is more technical.

Englund asked what the implementation aspect looks like. Pehan said implementation is creating all the policies and procedures around how the code is implemented. It includes how staff review applications, what the applications look like, the process for reviewing building permits, ensuring initial interpretations of the code align with guiding principles and what the Mayor and City Council have charged them to do. It also includes putting in important key performance indicators, identifying metrics and creating a performance evaluation system so they know if the code is performing and producing the results that are important to the community. Implementation will also include constant and real-time evaluation as the code is put to practice on the ground. She said efforts in the first year will be focused on this so they are poised to re-address the code as early as possible where they may not have gotten it right.

Englund asked if the City will be hiring staff to do the implementation. Pehan said CPDI currently has a full team of planners. Those planners will work differently after this code is implemented. She said CPDI believe they have the skill and expertise internally. They have had to funnel almost all of their capacity towards this once in a lifetime effort because of the tremendous impact it will have on the community. That has negatively impacted quite a few of their other initiatives. The support from MRA will allow them to move capacity back to other initiatives including how the City is addressing houselessness.

Englund asked when this is expected to go to City Council for approval. Mayor Davis said it will come in two different pieces. The zoning code and zoning map will be brought separately in terms of a separate engagement with the public, and then the UDC and operations manual will be brought. All of it will be open for the public to review prior to being approved. Pehan said it will be rolled out in different phases to the public so they are able to really engage deeply with the materials, especially as it applies to the zoning districts and new zoning map. Key stakeholders and frequent code users will also get the time they need with the code and manual. Staff will roll out the zoning districts and map with broad based community engagement by June. That will be followed up with the release of the new code and new development manual by July. The two documents will stay in the community under review and that process will define the adoption schedule. She said adoption and moving through the legislative bodies takes about six to eight weeks so it could happen as early as September. The community may also want more time with the documents, so CPDI is going to let the process play out.

Brock asked if \$447,000 will be in next year's budget for the staff. She said this request seems like a budget relief situation right now. Mayor Davis said it is, and they will need to ask for a budget amendment in order to complete the \$67,000 amount they are asking for as additional consultants' contract work.

Brock asked what the likely percentage of URD III funds is to carry this request. She said it will likely be at least 50%. Buchanan said not necessarily. The North Reserve-Scott Street URD will benefit greatly from this. Staff will also look heavily at URD III because of the Midtown Master Plan and the desire to implement it, which would be challenging under current codes. She said the Front Street URD will not see as much benefit because it is by and large Central Business District (CBD) zoning. Although, trying to get permits and go through Design Excellence has been challenging at times in the downtown, so there will be benefit there. She said she doesn't think 50% will necessarily come from URD III, but staff

will do an analysis. Englund asked what the analysis will be based on. Buchanan said it will be based on development potential and what the positive impact will be in achieving the goals of the Master Plan and City's Strategic Plans. It will affect all of the URDs. She said staff can come back to the Board with the split once it is determined. Englund suggested staff does bring it back. He said the memo mentions there is precedent for doing this and he went through the statutes and MRA clearly does have the authority to do this. He said this falls under planning, and you plan for a district regardless of the potential and regardless of how much you guess it might affect the district. He said MRA needs to be careful about how it is divided up so it is done equitably. He was unsure if MRA could use a lot of subjective criteria when it comes to saying it will affect one district more than another. All of the districts will have new zoning rules and whether or not they are going to be used immediately doesn't really matter because it will be the effect in the long-term of the plan of the district that counts. Buchanan said she doesn't think about this much differently than funding Design Excellence and not knowing precisely how much effort would come from each district. She said some assumptions could be made based on the impact of the Design Guidelines in a district, but they didn't have guidelines for what would happen if you weren't on a major corridor like Brooks Street or Russell Street. In that instance, URD III was one of the biggest motivations for MRA to even suggest doing Design Guidelines.

Brock said if MRA uses URD funds to pay for these staff positions, and if this helps with procedures in implementing this code and getting things through CPDI, everyone would say it is a great investment. She said she knows the property and business owners in URD III are incredibly frustrated with the process right now to get projects through CPDI. It seems like a great use of resources, however, she wants to know what happens to the budgeting for the next year and asked if TIF funds will be used to sustain the positions. Brock said there will be a heightened level of scrutiny moving forward if the City is using redevelopment funds and commercial projects are still not the priority. As Pehan said, this is residential priorities, and the reality is residential priorities and then refocusing on the unhoused. What is happening is commercial projects are not getting a fair process going through the system. So if they are using redevelopment funds, especially for this, she wants it to rise to that level of standard and get more redevelopment projects happening. Nugent said this is step one. Code reform was phase one and phase two is how they then take it and culture change. The code is going to have a lot of direction for staff on things being done differently than before.

Brock asked for updates on how the City is fixing the procedural piece, not just the policy writing, in 2025-2026. She said she wants to be able to speak intelligently on why redevelopment funds are being used. Mayor Davis said they will come back with procedural updates. She said residential and commercial are both big aspects of this. She knows housing is a major priority as well.

Reineking said one of the missions of the MRA is economic development, so when CPDI comes back with updates it will be good to let MRA know how its expenditures are making a difference in terms of economic development. If MRA is funding positions within the City, this funding isn't going to go very far. Ideally, if the economic development is there, then the City would have the budget to fund those positions in the future. She said she agrees with Englund in terms of precedence, and precedence is not the same as policy. She does think MRA needs to be careful about that and is glad Englund brought it up and looked to make

sure it is covered by statute. Englund said the statute gives the ability to plan for the districts and that is what this request is.

Nugent said today's recording could be clipped and shown to any state legislator or member of City Council who says there is never any pushback from this Board. He said as a frequent repository of people's complaints about development, the reality is it can't get better or change unless we take this process. He hears the Board's concerns, but is asking of the MRA to go forward with this, and if it doesn't make a difference MRA can hold everyone accountable. If this isn't done thoroughly or right then everyone will be able to notice it.

Brock asked what happens in the next fiscal year and if CPDI plans on keeping the four staffers on and funding them at the \$447,000 amount. Pehan said CPDI has eight full-time planners who work on the Land, Use and Planning (LUP) team. They review applications, subdivisions, building permits and everything that comes in on a daily basis. CPDI has an additional two full-time planners on their Community Planning team and they do long-range planning, Our Missoula development guide, projection, population and growth planning. Members from those combined planning teams have been supporting code reform. They have been pulled off of other duties that they have been working on because this is a once in a lifetime/all hands on deck project. Pehan said CPDI knows their capacity will change when they are administering a new code. It will be simpler and better for all development. Their goals are chief among them the creation of more housing, but if you go back to their guiding principles and goals for the project, it is a clearer, simpler and more effective coding process for all development. They are very much paying attention to commercial development in this process and have been elevating it throughout. She said they know all of the code will be easier to administer. They will be on different cycles for growth policy projections and updates which will be in alignment with the new Montana Land, Use and Planning Act. All this to say CPDI will be able to work more effectively with potentially less capacity in the future. Pehan said these are things they need a little bit of time to implement, assess and play out. They envision a future where they may not need the full capacity they have today, or they have their current planners working differently across the department.

Pehan said CPDI will not need ongoing support from MRA year over year to ensure implementation of the code and amendment of the code as they evaluate its effectiveness. They do need it initially in this period of time where they are assessing what those changes will mean for the organization and function of CPDI.

Brock said if this original expenditure is off \$67,000 because of the last legislative session, she asked if CPDI anticipates there will need to be an additional course correct on some things to make what they are about to roll out congruent with the current session. Mayor Davis said there are some slight tweaks to the Montana LUP Act, but in 2023 it was a complete overhaul and very different from what they are seeing in this legislature. Right now the legislation is basically doing what they are calling "cleanup" items and clarifications. The City has been lobbying and advocating that there be no substantial changes and she doesn't anticipate any major changes. Nugent said at the last legislative session the City had to pivot right as they were beginning this because they had to get some changes made. They have an emergency ordinance they just updated for another year to get through this

process that had to get done before the work really started. He said they expect to identify areas of cleanup and do that quickly. Pehan said what they saw last session that threw them for a loop was a complete overhaul of the Montana LUP framework. They aren't seeing anything that comes close to that level of necessary adjustment in this session, they are just small tweaks that can be easily incorporated.

Reineking said she is hearing that once MRA's funds are spent on implementation, CPDI will not be coming back to MRA for funding staff in the future. Mayor Davis said that was correct. Reineking referred to the suggested motion stating "direct staff to determine how to best allocate the funds". She said she would like to amend that to require staff to come back and have that allocation approved. The Board concurred. Buchanan said with respect to staff support in this, it is not unlike when the City created the Housing Office within CPDI. MRA did a contribution over several years to get that effort off the ground. Lawson asked if the inclusion in the motion would slow implementation down. Buchanan said no, and it can be a reconciliation at the end.

Brock said she would like to see updates quarterly or bi-annually on the procedural changes. Pehan said CPDI will be bringing those to City Council and the public anyway and can tailor it to make sure they are reporting to MRA as well.

REINEKING: I MOVE TO APPROVE THE MAYOR'S REQUEST FOR \$179,000 IN TIF FUNDING FOR THE COMPLETION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUR MISSOULA PROJECT AND DIRECT STAFF TO DETERMINE HOW TO BEST ALLOCATE THE FUNDS FROM THE SIX URBAN RENEWAL DISTRICTS, BRINGING BACK A RECOMMENDATION ON THE ALLOCATION TO THE BOARD FOR APPROVAL.

Lawson seconded the motion.

No further discussion. No public comment.

Motion passed unanimously (4 ayes, 0 nays).

Johnson Street Shelter Bathrooms – 1919 North Avenue West (URD III / Ward 4) – Funding Update & Request for Reallocation of Excess Funds (Buchanan)

Buchanan said in December 2023 the MRA Board approved funding for two modular bathroom facilities to be constructed for the Johnson Street Shelter. At that time, the City was under mandate by the Health Department to have proper, acceptable bathroom facilities by a date certain, and what was currently on site was not suitable. Donations were raised by the Missoula Economic Partnership (MEP) totaling \$274,225 and the MRA Board approved up to \$500,000 in URD III TIF funds to supplement the modular bathroom facilities. The modules are now on site and have been serving their purpose well. There is \$44,420.16 in total funds remaining (\$42,175.49 in TIF and \$2,244.67 in private donations). Buchanan is recommending that if the Board sees fit, MRA reallocate the remaining funds to support the Housing Sprint the City is undertaking in phases through August with the anticipated permanent closing of the Shelter. The Housing Sprint is a pilot program the City undertook with some grant funding over the holidays called "Housed for the Holidays" where there were a number of veterans the City housed. It was 80% successful in getting them into housing or reunited with family, and they are no longer on the streets or houseless.

Buchanan said the estimated undertaking of this Housing Sprint will cost \$400,000 and the motivation is that as the shelter population is phased out, the City will intensively work with them to get housing.

Buchanan spoke to why MRA would do this and why it is an appropriate use of TIF funds. She said she looks at this as an investment in protecting MRA's previous and future investments in the inner core of the city. It is where the URDs are and where the work has been done including parks, trails, investment in commercial areas, etc. It is ground zero impact for the folks who aren't fortunate enough to have a permanent home. There is a negative impact on the investments because of the houseless population. Buchanan said it is an appropriate use of TIF in terms of benefit to the districts and the investments MRA has made. There is a pretty clear nexxus and we've seen it in the Johnson Street area, parks and downtown. The more folks the City can successfully house, the more the negative impacts on facilities are mitigated along with the cost to maintain them.

Mayor Davis said she had to make the decision to not continue to fund the Johnson Street Shelter after Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) because there are no federal funds left. One of the things she wanted to make clear is that it is not the City taking \$2 million out of its City budget to not operate the Johnson Street Shelter. Moving forward it is federal dollars the City had available to operate it that are no longer available. The City doesn't have the ability to absorb that cost into its general fund. Mayor Davis said the thoughtful way to unwind this is what has been proposed with the Housing Sprint and phased wind-down of the Shelter.

Mayor Davis spoke about the housing sprint that occurred over the holidays. She said Missoula is a "Built for Zero" community and there are 100 communities in the United States that were selected to be part of a technical assistance program. She said it targets a certain group of people, although there are many people facing houselessness. Targeting something specific helps a city learn about the system in their community as best they can and find where there are places to improve to shorten the time period that people are spending on the streets and in emergency shelters so they can be housed quicker. The Missoula community chose houseless veterans as the case study for the Housed for the Holidays pilot program. Fifteen individuals were identified, all of which were homeless with different backgrounds and circumstances. Twelve of them were able to be housed in the sprint over 60 days. She said a lot of it is this radical common sense of people being homeless because they have back rent, utilities they can't pay, and they cannot make first and last month's rent along with a security deposit. On average, other communities that have done this estimate that \$2,000 per person gets folks over the barrier. Today, eleven of the twelve veterans that were housed in Missoula are still in their homes.

Mayor Davis said the City is the backbone of the houseless programs and system in Missoula. The City is constantly finding ways, alongside its homeless service partners, to ultimately try to work on solving the issue. She said the answer to homelessness is housing. A lot of the folks at Johnson Street are going to need additional services to be supported and that is why the City is saying the \$400,000 Housing Sprint number is based on the number of folks that can be the max occupancy at the Shelter which is 165 people. She said it is not enough to keep people permanently housed in perpetuity.

Mayor Davis said the City has \$40,000 of the \$400,000 currently in the bank. They have another \$150,000 commitment that has not been able to be made public yet. MRA's contribution would bring the number over \$200,000. She said they anticipate being able to meet the goal well before the five month period.

Mayor Davis said there are four people that have found housing solutions in the last two weeks. The City has turned its Houseless Programs Team on this project where they are doing office hours at the Shelter to work with folks to find what their solution is. She said it was encouraging to see that during the office hours there were 13 people that came to a second session to continue working on their barriers to figure out what their solution is, typically including permanent housing, reuniting with family or friends, or connecting people with more appropriate resources for substance abuse and mental health treatment. She said she does not expect 165 people to find housing by the end of the five months, but will work very diligently to connect people. The \$400,000 will go towards application fees, rent, deposits, utility arrears and that sort of thing. The City is leaning on other communities that have gone through similar programs for technical assistance.

Mayor Davis said with the support of MRA and private donors the modular bathrooms that were built at the Shelter were meant to be modular. The City is working with the County because there is a need for them at the Temporary Safe Outdoor Space (TSOS). TSOS is a project of the County, United Way and Hope Rescue Mission. They have a need for better showers and bathrooms there and the City would like to see the modular bathrooms relocated there.

Buchanan clarified this is not a request from the Administration. It was her idea. Reineking said she loves the idea and what the program is doing, but doesn't see MRA as a service partner and asked how it is an appropriate use of TIF funds. She said it sounds like prevention of anticipated blight. Buchanan said she thinks it is protection of the investments MRA has already made. Reineking likened it to doing maintenance on the parks, for example. Buchanan said it is preventing the need to do maintenance on the parks. She said if that is a stretch, it is certainly the Board's decision and consideration. Englund said the bathroom modules are in an URD and Buchanan talked about how funding for support of that population is also funding in support of that neighborhood that was suffering all kinds of consequences because of the lack of bathroom facilities. If there is a way to target it to the neighborhood and park, maybe that is a way to support this.

Brock asked if the City has the funds needed to clean up North Johnson, McLeod and Montana Rail Link (MRL) Park as the kids get out of school for the summer. She said right now the ROW along those streets is not in great shape. Mayor Davis said City Council has provided approval through the FY25 budget for there to be resources to do cleanups in all parts of town. Brock asked if part of the wind down is not only the Housing Sprint, but also restoring the neighborhood. Mayor Davis said it is. Englund asked if MRA can program this money for that. Brock said there will be more requests coming for deconstruction of the Shelter building. Nugent said to get to that point, they can't not do this. This is where these conversations get difficult because they are talking about human beings. The MRA is obviously focused on blight and things like that. He said trying to help connect people to better living situations is part of cleaning up. MRA invested in the North MRL Triangle because of the future and what could be there, and the neighborhood would like to see that

next step go forward as a commitment of the MRA. To get there, this needs to be done first. He said there are people that think it is as simple as just telling people the shelter is closing and they need to go somewhere, but that is just not the reality. The City has to do what it can to find people housing and it is important to note this is not a stand-alone, it is part of a project that included significant private fundraising as part of it. Since there is some funding left over, it should go towards achieving part of the broader goal of MRA.

Dale Bickell, Chief Administrative Officer, said there may be two avenues to look at the eligibility of this. One is the partnership of the public and private sector for the bathroom modules and the entirety of those funds that were raised for the public infrastructure investment. The leftover could be considered the private sector side of this and then MRA isn't tied with that eligibility. The Board could consider this as a way to deem eligibility. Bickell said the other way to look at this is that in urban renewal statutes there is a somewhat undefined eligibility for relocation expenses. It could be considered an eligible expense. Brock said that is used when a building is being deconstructed. Buchanan said MRA is ultimately going to deconstruct the building.

Englund asked Bickell if this money could be earmarked for the physical cleanup of the area and continued work to keep the park clean and functioning. He said Mayor Davis indicated there is City money for it and asked if that amount of City money could be reallocated to the Housing Sprint. Mayor Davis said that money is coming from the Road and Park Districts and may have limitations. Bickell said it could be considered. Certainly the cleanup expenses are Road and Park District eligible and whether they are TIF eligible could be made through the argument that it is an investment in public infrastructure for its betterment and/or to extend the life of it. Englund asked if the money that would be saved by the other entities could be used in the Housing Sprint. Bickell said the piece of the Housing Sprint that would be eligible out of the Urban Camping budget is narrow, so most of it is not eligible in the type of expenses being anticipated here.

Buchanan suggested delaying this decision until she can go through the statutes and review with the City Attorney if there are concerns about the legality or appropriateness of using TIF funding in this way under state statute. She said the money doesn't have to be transferred immediately, so if the Board will be more comfortable having City Attorney opinion it can wait. Lawson said for him it is a permissibility question and the appropriateness arguments he's heard are satisfying, it is the permissibility and whether MRA would be stepping outside of statute or not. Brock said she is cognizant that this is a sprint and doesn't want to hold that up. Bickell said the Board could vote today and add a contingency related to the City Attorney finding this an eligible use.

BROCK: I MOVE THE MRA BOARD APPROVE ALLOCATING THE \$44,420.16 IN REMAINING FUNDS FROM THE JOHNSON STREET TEMPORARY SHELTER BATHROOM PROJECT TO THE HOUSING SPRINT FUND BEING OPERATED BY THE CITY AND ITS PARTNERS, CONTINGENT ON CITY ATTORNEY OPINION IT IS A PERMISSIBLE USE OF TIF FUNDS.

Lawson seconded the motion.

No further discussion. No public comment.

Motion passed unanimously (4 ayes, 0 nays).

Mayor Davis thanked the Board for being so diligent around the scope of MRA and TIF. She said she appreciates the conversation on both of the action items today. This is a massive undertaking and it is difficult. The City appreciates the support and are asking everybody in the community to consider ways they can help.

Ogren Park at Allegiance Field – 700 Cregg Lane (URD II / Ward 2) – TIF Request (Buchanan)

Buchanan said the baseball stadium was built over 20 years ago on property that was donated to the City because of the efforts of a group of citizens who became Playball Missoula. The property was part of a large lumber operation, the Champion Mill site, that took place on the south side of the Clark Fork River and the stadium was built on what was originally the log pond. The logs were floated down the river and processed at the lumber yard. The operation began accepting logs via rail on the Bitterroot Branch Line and the pond was filled up with the material that was available. Buchanan noted that former MRA Board Chair, Hal Fraser, was very instrumental in getting the baseball stadium developed.

Buchanan said all facilities have a certain life span due to wear and tear and usage. The stadium has more exceptional issues because of the fact it was built on wood waste. She said the concourse, concessions, offices, restrooms and seating are all built on piles which were driven down to refusal which is something that will support structures. Grade beams are then built and concrete is poured in between the pilings with a slab poured on top of the grade beams. It is a structural system under the ground. Over time the wood waste has broken down and settlement has occurred. Buchanan said it is not unusual in terms of the age of the building in spite of what it is built on. It has been exacerbated a bit because there are voids under the stadium at this point where wood waste has broken down. There are instances through the concourse of differential settlement and spalling of the concrete where those pilings are. Buchanan said the biggest issue is the area outside the fence on the south side of the stadium which is simply a slab on grade without the subterranean structure the stadium itself has. The slab on grade has settled a good four to six inches in places, creating a number of trip hazards throughout the stadium that Matt Ellis, Big Sky Professional Baseball (BSPB) LLC, and his team have done wonders to band-aid and eliminate liability. It is at a place where it has to be dealt with because of the liability on the part of the City as the owner and on the part of BSPB as the operators of the facility. The heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) units on the first and third base sides of the facility have run their course and need to be replaced.

The stadium is a City-owned facility and is located in URD II. It is an eligible use of TIF funding to maintain City-owned facilities and to invest in City-owned facilities. Buchanan said quite frankly, this is the only funding source available. The way it has been set up to be as smooth and expedited as possible is that BSPB has requested TIF funding be used to reimburse them for contracting concrete and masonry work that needs to be done as well as HVAC replacement and repair. She said it will not be unlike a public/private partnership in that there will be a development agreement spelling out all of the conditions of the reimbursement. Ellis and his crew will contract to have the work done and will coordinate it effectively with activities going on at the stadium which have already started for the season.

Buchanan said the major challenge with this has been lack of access to contractors. She said Jed Dennison, Zilla State, has served as the City's property manager for a number of these properties the City owns like the Former Library Block, Johnson Street facility and the stadium. Dennison was able to contract with DCI Engineering to do the structural analysis that laid the bid specs of what needs to be done to take care of the immediate need with respect to the settlement and concrete issues. Buchanan said Dennison reached out to at least eight different construction entities to find somebody who would do the work. Ellis took on trying to find an HVAC contractor and secured Air Quality Mechanical to do that work. Scariano Construction will be doing the repair work in the stadium. She said the other piece of this is that based on DCI Engineering's investigation in the stadium, staff would like to have them brought on board to do a more serious and detailed structural investigation. Englund asked if anyone on City staff can be part of this. Buchanan said City Facilities staff just do not have capacity. There are a number of older City facilities that require TLC every day.

Ellis passed around information reviewing how the stadium facility is used by events and non-profits. He said there is no baseball information included, but stated that in addition to the things they do community-based wise, they have a pretty good baseball team with the best record in professional baseball for five years running. He said it is hard not reflect over 20 years ago being in the room and talking about this project and looking at what the site has become. He congratulated the MRA Board and community for their foresight because it is a lot more than a baseball stadium with Silver Park and Old Sawmill District's mixed-use development. Ellis said they had almost 100 events last year with over 80,000 people attending. They have created a baseball showcase for high school and helped get high school baseball started. A tournament was developed for all high school teams to help get their programs going with 14 games in the next three days. They also host Challenger Baseball with over 60 kids and have raised over \$94,000 for non-profits. The facility is being used for a lot more than baseball. Ellis added he is very confident in the status of the ballpark from a structural standpoint. They do have maintenance and some of it is liability related, but they have done their best to where they weren't having to pay a lot of money for the work. It is good to do the work now so there aren't bigger problems down the road.

Reineking said she is slightly concerned the assessment is going to show they will be back for more money, but she does not question the appropriateness or permissibility of the request. She said she is in favor of this ask. Buchanan said MRA has URD II right now, and ten years from now it will not exist. Part of what the structural assessment will do is help understand what they will need to look at down the road. Brock said she is in support of this. The Strategic Exit Plan for URD II is taking a look at the long-term facility needs because there are only so many years left and the City wants that facility set up for success. Buchanan said they have gotten 20+ years out of a baseball field that in most cases would not last that long. Ellis said they currently have one of the worst fields in the league, and it is their only real black eye from a professional baseball standpoint right now. They are doing the best they can with it and are working on the best path forward for everybody in the long-term. As a company, BSPB is in this for a long-term lease and the long haul so they want to do what is best for them, the community and the city.

Lawson recused himself from voting. He said he has no personal interest in this, but the Clearwater Credit Union holds a significant asset on its books which depends on revenue.

REINEKING: I MOVE THE MRA BOARD APPROVE THE REQUEST FROM BIG SKY PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL FOR REIMBURSEMENT OF COSTS FOR REPAIRS TO OGREN PARK AT ALLEGIANCE FIELD, REPAIR AND REPLACEMENT OF THE HVAC SYSTEMS, PROJECT OVERSIGHT BY JED DENNISON AND A STRUCTURAL ASSESSMENT OF THE STADIUM BY DCI ENGINEERS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$220,000 AND AUTHROZE THE BOARD CHAIR TO SIGN THE REQUIRED AGREEMENTS WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

- 1. REIMBURSEMENT WILL BE MADE UPON COMPLETION OF WORK AND FINAL INSPECTION BY THE CITY.**
- 2. BSPB WILL PROVIDE PROOF OF PAYMENT AND LIEN RELEASES FOR WORK PERFORMED.**

Brock seconded the motion.

Buchanan stated this is really the last year the field can be played on. There will be subsequent expenditure requests.

No further discussion. No public comment.

Motion passed unanimously (3 ayes, 0 nays, 1 abstention with Lawson abstaining).

Montana Rail Link (MRL) Property (URD III / Ward 4) – Request to Reallocate Unused Brownfields Grant Match (Marchesseault)

Marchesseault said this request is to reallocate local match for a federal grant that the City applied for to cleanup the North MRL property. The estimation for the amount when the application for the grant was submitted was about \$394,000. MRA provided \$67,000 for a 17% match. The actual cost of the Voluntary Cleanup Program-Remediation Proposal (VCP-RP), cleanup and delisting was \$261,943.75. In turn, that lower amount only required an MRA match of \$41,529.89. With that additional remaining grant amount, Tyler Walls, Brownfields Program Specialist, received authorization from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to use that funding for planning efforts on the property. Marchesseault said it is a permissible use of the funds. The request is to reallocate up to \$21,371 of MRA's match from the cleanup to the North MRL Triangle Public Engagement and Redevelopment Planning Project which was brought before the Board in December 2024. She noted she feels it is a really significant milestone that this property is no longer on the state superfund list.

LAWSON: I MOVE THE MRA BOARD REALLOCATE UP TO \$21,371 IN TIF LOCAL MATCH FUNDS FOR THE CITY'S EPA BROWNFIELDS CLEANUP GRANT FROM THE VCP-RP, CLEANUP AND DELISTING PROJECT TO THE NORTH MRL TRIANGLE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROJECT.

Reineking seconded the motion.

No further discussion. No public comment.

Motion passed unanimously (4 ayes, 0 nays).

River Road Sidewalk Project (URD II / Ward 4) – Request to Approve Professional Services for Survey Work & TIF Request (Dunn)

Dunn said this project is a continuation of the MRA Board's commitment to build out the sidewalk infrastructure in URDs II and III. This project is in URD II and is part of the missing segments of sidewalk network identified several years ago by Tod Gass, retired MRA Project Manager. She said over the past two years staff have attended several meetings in the River Road Neighborhood where the neighbors expressed interest in having this particular section of sidewalk constructed. The improvements made on Russell Street and connectivity of the trail system has increased utilization from the neighborhood of folks accessing them. MRA and Public Works & Mobility (PWM) identified this sidewalk as a priority for the neighborhood and staff is asking for approval to go out for surveying. This is not full design and engineering because the River Road area needs a lot of work including additional surveying and ROW investigation that will be required to inform the design and engineering scope. Dunn said before staff can bring a full design and engineering scope for the project more information is needed.

Dunn said the Birch-Maple-Sherwood project previously brought to the Board did include those three streets. In looking at the information on the ground, needs of the area and infrastructure on Sherwood Street, it was decided that Birch is the street that really needs a lot of work. Sherwood is a shorter street that has existing sidewalk on the south side and mature trees on the north. The mature trees would have to be torn out in order to put sidewalk in and the City would need to acquire additional ROW. The focus was shifted to Birch Street because it is part of the greenway that connects Mullan Road to the Westside Neighborhood and has greater need. She said the City has also asked staff to look at street construction projects in a more complete way so the street/area isn't torn up more than once when improvements are being done. Staff decided to take a deeper dive into Birch Street to make it a more complete street including milling and paving, sidewalks, bike lanes, adding a bulb-out for safer crossing and rapid flashing beacons for pedestrians. Staff has backed off on Sherwood Street and now the project is just Maple-Birch. There will be a public meeting at the end of April to invite the neighbors out to look at and help design the area.

Dunn said PWM has requested the River Road surveying work be added as an amendment to MRA's current Professional Services Agreement with IMEG Consultants for the Maple-Birch Sidewalk Project to expedite this process. IMEG will look at ROW, utility locates and do survey work. The estimated cost for surveying is \$8,857.50. PWM will act as the project manager and their fee is 2.5% of the total project cost, estimated at \$222 for this amendment. Survey work will begin immediately and staff will bring a design and engineering scope to the Board as soon as possible with the hope that construction can begin in 2026. Dunn said with URD II sunset, the urgency of getting these projects taken care of before that resource for this area is gone is important.

REINEKING: I MOVE THE MRA BOARD APPROVE THE FOLLOWING:

- 1. AMEND THE IMEG CONSULTANTS PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR THE MAPLE-BIRCH SIDEWALK PROJECT TO INCLUDE SURVEY AND ROW WORK ON RIVER ROAD AS AMENDMENT #1 IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$8,857, AND;**

2. REIMBURSE PUBLIC WORKS AND MOBILITY FOR PROJECT MANAGEMENT SERVICES IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED 2.5% OF THE TOTAL PROJECT COSTS, ESTIMATED AT \$222 FOR THIS AMENDMENT #1, AND;
3. USE TAX INCREMENT FINANCING TO FUND THE PROJECT, AND;
4. AUTHORIZE THE BOARD CHAIR TO SIGN THE RELATED DOCUMENTS.

Lawson seconded the motion.

No further discussion. No public comment.

Motion passed unanimously (4 ayes, 0 nays).

NON-ACTION ITEMS

STAFF REPORTS

Director's Report

2025 State Legislature

Buchanan gave an update on bills in the Legislature.

Communications Update

Warren highlighted the fact that MRA interacted with nearly 700 people in the first quarter of 2025. It was a combination of in-person and online activities. Staff has additional outreach activities planned for the future, as detailed in her report. She said in general, MRA's outreach and in-person communication activities seem to be the most successful. Staff is getting positive feedback when meeting with people in-person. For example, for the Downtown Safety-Access-Mobility (SAM) project, she and others are doing door to door business visits to make sure the tenants and business owners downtown are aware of the project and surveying activities. Warren said because of the Downtown SAM project scope they have decided to enhance its presence on Engage Missoula. The City is upgrading the project to what is called a "hub", meaning it will be one of three prominent projects on the home page.

Ravara Contingency

Gorski said the project continues to remain in-budget and on schedule. She encouraged everyone to drive by and take a look. She said in the future a tour could be arranged.

FY25 Budget Status Reports

COMMITTEE REPORTS

OTHER ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Lesley Pugh