

MISSOULA REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
CONDENSED BOARD MEETING MINUTES

May 15, 2025

DRAFT

A Regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Missoula Redevelopment Agency was held on Thursday, May 15, 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, Jack Lawson, Mike Nugent - City Council
Ex-Officio Board Member

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

Public: Janeen Hathcock - EideBailly; City of Missoula: Andy Schultz - Public
Works & Mobility, Morgan Valliant - Parks & Recreation; Rob Roberts -
Trout Unlimited; Carrie Schreiber, Katie Fairbanks, Alessandro; MCAT

CALL TO ORDER

12:00 p.m.

INTRODUCTIONS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[April 17, 2025 Regular Board Meeting Minutes](#) were approved as submitted.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no public comments or announcements.

ACTION ITEMS

[Fiscal Year 2024 Audit Report – Request for Acceptance \(Dunn\)](#)

Dunn said MRA's Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) audit was completed by EideBailly. Janeen Hathcock, EidyBailly in Denver, was online to present the result of the audit report. She thanked Dunn for her dedication to making sure the first year audit for EideBailly was a success. She said MRA's financial statements of governmental activities in its seven major funds were audited. The opinion is that it is clean and unmodified, which is the best opinion you can get. EideBailly found MRA's financial statements to be presented fairly in all material respects in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States. Hathcock said any other audit firm given the same set of audit information would come to the same conclusion. [View Eide Bailly audit presentation here.](#)

LAWSON: I MOVE THE MRA BOARD ACCEPT MRA'S FISCAL YEAR 2024 AUDIT.

Jones seconded the motion.

No further discussion. No public comment.

Motion passed unanimously (3 ayes, 0 nays).

West Broadway River Corridor Planning Study (URD II / Wards 1 & 3) – Additional TIF Request (Marchesseault)

Marchesseault said in March 2023 the MRA Board approved up to \$300,000 for a planning effort for the West Broadway River Corridor area. It is a comprehensive planning effort between the Montana Rail Link (MRL) Railroad Bridge and the California Street Bridge. It is looking at riverbed restoration, riverbank erosion restoration, trail connections, recreational and ecological opportunities. It grew out of a partnership between MRA, Parks & Recreation, Trout Unlimited and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP). She said the comprehensive planning effort was made possible with the City's purchase of the Flynn-Lowney Ditch in 2020.

Marchesseault said when the funding was approved in March 2023, the agreement was that the financing would be used for a comprehensive master planning effort and once a plan was in place there is the likelihood that grant funding and other opportunities for funding would be used for implementation. The agreement with the partner groups was that Trout Unlimited would manage the planning effort. A consulting team was engaged including engineers, landscape architects, ecologists and river recreationalists. That team put together [three concept plans](#) that were presented to the MRA Board in November 2024. They have also been presenting the concepts broadly throughout the community. The team also issued a survey through Engage Missoula. She said there is a great deal of enthusiasm and support for the concepts.

Marchesseault said as the management team and consultants get deeper into specific concepts, more questions arise. They include technical questions with engineering, in-stream flow, flow partitioning, etc. With these questions, the team doesn't want to put forward a concept that is not technically reasonable. Questions have been asked that were not in the original scope of services, and so the consultants have estimated they would need a little over \$53,000 in additional funds to answer the questions and finalize one master plan that would likely draw from each of the three concepts. The anticipated schedule is that they will finish by the end of the summer and have one complete plan that will go through an approvals process this fall. That will put them in a position to be able to look for grant funding.

Morgan Valliant, Parks & Rec, said this is an incredibly complex project. They are dealing with manipulating a river, moving material around and creating recreational features. He said they reached out to stakeholders early on to capture everybody's thoughts initially. They developed clear project goals for the entire scope. They discovered there are just a lot of different ways to do this and so that is what really got them into the three concepts. The results of the public process are included in Marchesseault's memo. Valliant said there was very fair support in public comment and every one of the presentations to key stakeholder groups across the community for Concept #3. It contains the most technically

rigorous analysis they would have to do because there is so much manipulation of the riverbanks and river.

Valliant said one of the things they knew going into this that was really reaffirmed is that people want to see change and the area reactivated. They want to see higher quality and more recreational opportunities, and they want the natural river characteristics preserved and enhanced. He said for project managers that requires a lot of balance, and so they really are trying to walk that line between supplying all of the things and doing right by the river. They are speaking for the people, the trees, the fish, etc.

Valliant said one of the things he was shocked by that came out of the process was developing the side channel that has so many potential benefits for the people and for the fishery, but involves losing the bridges that were built. He said it is a really interesting thing that they did not expect – folks are actually more excited about building the parkland and expanding usable park space and preserving the balance between having areas that might be harder to access and creating what they are calling urban wildlife refugia. Valliant said the balancing act and back and forth has required them to get to a point where they didn't want to put anything on page for a final master plan that couldn't be permitted, built and feasibly maintained.

Rob Roberts, Trout Unlimited, said the goal right now is to have a final master plan in the fall of this year that goes in front of City Council, Parks & Rec Board and MRA Board. The original amount of money for the project was \$300,000 and he doesn't think what they are doing right now is a cost overrun, he said there is a lot more activity that was done in the early stages of planning than they expected. The additional \$60,000 requested today is leveraging money down the road to make sure they have a project that is feasible and can be constructed. They have gone very in-depth on some of the features compared to what would normally be done in a master planning process of this scale and size. They have drilled down into technical details including hydraulic modeling, flow partitioning and county flood plain mapping to make sure they can do the project and not miss anything. More money was used on detailed pieces of the planning process early on and they now need to backfill some of that to do the final steps. Final steps include putting the design work together and putting the alternatives into a more sophisticated form along with 3D renderings. Then the next step is the rest of the engineering design process to create a plan they can raise money around and start to get permits. It will take time, but everything they are doing now will grease the skids for that to happen efficiently and effectively down the road.

Jones said they want to spend a little more now, but it would all be savings if things proceed. Valliant concurred and said a good example is the importance of the MRL Bridge. They want to make sure any flow partitioning or side channel development doesn't create scour that would impact the bridge. It was an analysis they had to do, and was something they would pay for anyway when they engineer it. Roberts said he thinks they actually save money down the road by spending it now so they don't make missteps, have revisions or spend more money on an engineering analysis when they get to those points.

Roberts said the recreational feature at the bottom of the side channel is something they did not want to overpromise on, or get people excited about something that will be there, until they knew they had the right amount of water, gradient in the stream to effectively pass fish,

and so on, and still have a fun structure. Their modeling and analysis shows they can have a fun surfwave for most of the year, which is a limitation on Brennan's Wave right now. Roberts said that was one of their main goals because Brennan's Wave is really only usable for a few months in the spring. This feature is going to take them all the way through mid-summer, and outside of really low base flows, will work most of the year. It will bring people to the area, attract attention and leverage all the trail connections and everything they do on the north side of the riverbank.

Lawson said they've talked about all three concepts, but really are planning around Concept 3. Valliant said they haven't spent the time yet to make a Concept 4, and it will be closer to Concept 3 and Concept 1 for sure. At the end of this summer they are looking at having something to go out for another final comment period and will do some minor revisions after that. The final master plan will then be brought forth for adoption. Valliant said he thinks they will come back to the MRA Board when they are ready to roll out Concept 4.

Marchesseault noted this broad project is one of the top priorities in URD II. Also, in her memo, the estimate for the work is a little over \$53,000 to finish. If the Board chooses to, she suggested adding contingency approval to that number just in case there are surprises.

LAWSON: I MOVE THE MRA BOARD AUTHORIZE UP TO \$60,000 IN ADDITIONAL TIF FUNDS TO AMEND THE MRA'S AGREEMENT WITH TROUT UNLIMITED TO INCLUDE ADDITIONAL SCOPE ITEMS TO FINALIZE THE WEST BROADWAY RIVER CORRIDOR MASTER PLAN AND AUTHORIZE THE CHAIR TO SIGN THE AMENDED AGREEMENT.

Jones seconded the motion.

No further discussion. No public comment.

Motion passed unanimously (3 ayes, 0 nays).

Oxford Street – Central Avenue Water Main Project (URD III / Ward 3) – Design & Engineering – Request to Approve Consultant & TIF Funding (Dunn)

Dunn said this is a continuation of MRA's Water Network Program that was approved by the Board several years ago. This project is in URD III and includes installation of 770 linear feet of water line and a fire hydrant on Oxford Street and Central Avenue. It is a partnership MRA is working on with Andy Schultz from the City's Public Works & Mobility (PWM) Department. Schultz said this area was identified as underserved with less than ideal fire flow and hydrants. This project will bring water service to buildings that currently don't have it and will improve fire flows. Dunn said staff is requesting the Board approve a contract with WGM Group for design and engineering services and they expect to have the work completed by November.

Nugent asked how long the project will take. Schultz said they are looking at two weeks per block and there are two blocks worth of work. He said as part of the Kensington project the MRA Board recently approved, they bored across Stephens Avenue and that took two days which was faster than expected. He said it just depends on what they bore into which could make it take longer. Schultz said they are only scoping through bidding and not construction services. They want to make sure they have the timing of the construction right

because it will impact a lot of businesses there including Albertson's and Trempers. They want it designed and ready to go so when the time is right they can build it, whether it is next summer or delayed another summer.

Jones asked if this will come back to the Board. Schultz said it will come back twice, once to award the construction administration services with WGM Group and again to award the actual construction.

Englund asked what the Stephens Avenue drilling was near. Schultz said it was by OnX Maps. Englund asked who the contractor was. Schultz said Knife River is the general contractor and they subbed the drilling out to Blue Mountain Drilling. Schultz said he is incredibly amazed at how successful this program has been and this will be the fifth project brought to the MRA Board. Two are completed and two are being constructed. With every single one of them they have had people reach out immediately to have services stubbed. Englund asked if Knife River is the contractor on all of them. Schultz said they have done two of them. Western Excavating is doing the Washburn-Idaho-Montana-Catlin (WIMC) project this year. Englund said Knife River has been working on Ronald Avenue and they are doing fantastic work.

JONES: I MOVE THE MRA BOARD APPROVE:

- 1. MRA ENTER INTO A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH WGM GROUP FOR THE OXFORD STREET-CENTRAL AVENUE WATER MAIN PROJECT IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$43,275, AND;**
- 2. MRA ENGAGE PUBLIC WORKS & MOBILITY TO OVERSEE THE PROJECT UNDER THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR MRA INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT MANAGEMENT FOR \$1,082 OR 2.5% OF THE TOTAL PROJECT PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FEES, 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 (3 ayes, 0 nays).

NON-ACTION ITEMS

[MRA Director's Spending Authority – Update on City Policy \(Gorski\)](#)

Gorski presented this informational item so the Board is aware the Mayor approved and signed a new Purchasing Policy. The language in the Policy gives department directors spending authority up to \$10,000. Historically, the MRA Director's spending authority has been up to \$5,000, and anything that exceeded that was brought to the Board for approval. Staff wanted to make the Board aware that moving forward, consistent with the Purchasing Policy, staff will bring items to the Board that exceed the \$10,000 amount.

Englund asked if MRA has a specific policy. Dunn said she is not aware of anything written down or in any internal policy document. She said when she started at MRA it was \$5,000 and has never changed. She said the Board has approved specific limits for certain

projects like Silver Park. Englund said MRA is part of the City so this is where it follows the City on certain rules like this. He said if anything internal needs to be changed they should do it, like if there is a policy that says \$5,000 then it needs to be changed. Gorski said staff could not find any internal policy documents. Dunn said she did the time value of money from 1997 when she started here of \$5,000 and what it is worth today which is \$9,960.

Johnson Street Shelter Bathrooms – 1919 North Avenue West (URD III / Ward 4) – Attorney’s Opinion on Reallocation of Excess Funds (Buchanan)

Englund said the Board has received the opinion of the City Attorney and the TIF funding is a qualified expense.

STAFF REPORTS

Director’s Report

North MRL Triangle Public Engagement Process & Redevelopment Plan (URD III / Ward 4) – Update (Hicks)

Hicks said Warren sent out a press release yesterday. The next public engagement event will be June 4th from 4:30-7:00pm at the Horticulture Building at the Fairgrounds. The consultant team is currently working through redevelopment scenarios based on a feasibility analysis and community input from the discovery phase. Chief among the takeaways from the first round of engagement was an interest in housing including entry-level home ownership and attainable rentals. Hicks said there was also interest in retail and community-oriented space. Market analysis indicated this could be a challenging retail location, although establishing the overall site as a destination could lead to an improved retail opportunity over time. The upcoming public engagement will explore scenarios that illustrate different levels of density. They are currently expecting 150-250 residential units with community and retail space incorporated into the scenarios. A community survey will go live on Engage Missoula in early June and anyone interested in the project is encouraged to take it and/or come to the event on June 4th. Engage Missoula will be updated regularly as more project details come forward.

Ravara Contingency

Gorski said there are no new updates and the project continues to progress on budget and on schedule. The first building along Scott Street is slated to be finished by the end of the year.

FY25 Budget Status Reports

COMMITTEE REPORTS

OTHER ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lesley Pugh

Lesley Pugh