

**Downtown Business Improvement District of Missoula**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**Tuesday, August 15, 2023 at 3 pm at the DMP Office (218 E. Main St.)**

**All Present:** Carma Gilligan, Charlie Beaton, Karen Sippy, Scott Stearns (via Zoom), Ellen Buchanan (3:15pm)

**Absent:** Dr. Jim McKay, Dan Cederberg

**Guest:** Christine Littig

**Staff:** Linda McCarthy, Jack Hall

The meeting was called to order by President Beaton at 3:05pm.

**Presentation from Missoula Economic Partnership Business Development Officer, Christine Littig:** Littig provided a *Year in Review* in her position. Littig stated she mainly sees herself as a “boots on the ground” operator for the Downtown BID and MEP, where business advisory support takes up roughly 20% of her time. MEP staff set a goal for 50 Business, Retention, & Expansion meetings (BREs) this past year and they conducted 72. They have seen success with their new EDGE forums. Paradise Dental Technologies (PDT) & Cascadia Management received Big Sky Trust Fund grants this past year. Additionally the owners of Pearl Boba Tea were awarded the Small Business Entrepreneurs award from SBDC. MEP has also secured a developer for the Payne Block which will be announced at the City Council meeting tomorrow morning. Plant Perks is entering the Missoula scene which Littig sees as another win. Year two looks like continued engagement with businesses, community partners and execution of big economic development projects. Littig has not done a lot of business attraction in this past year but would certainly like to do more in FY24, during year two of her position. Success from her perspective with downtown business development derives from the power of our local community. Littig sees that living in Missoula historically has taken a strong level of creativity, entrepreneurialism, engagement, and investment compared to other places. The biggest challenges Littig sees with downtown is that some businesses feel squeezed out of the downtown scene from external forces. Rising rents has had an impact but also the notion that Missoula and downtown is a tourist town, which does not support year-round cashflows for business owners. Littig and the MEP team will likely be pushing a succession planning EDGE forum within the coming months, since she sees that as a need for many local businesses.

**MEP Request for Funding - Johnson Street Shelter:** McCarthy noted that Grant Kier with MEP will no longer be coming to the meeting today since the City is shifting focus for funding the Johnson Street Shelter upgrades.

**Approval of Minutes:** Gilligan motioned to approve. Sippy seconded and **June Minutes passes unanimously.**

**Financial Review:** Hall reviewed the Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss statements for the month of July 2023. Currently the Downtown BID has a total of \$294,616 in current assets. Third year depreciation for the 2012 Toyota Tacoma was realized at year end June 30<sup>th</sup>. On the Profit & Loss, Hall noted that tax assessments are down from what was received July of last year. Hall noted that the garbage removal contract with the City of Missoula reflects the increased amount from the new three year contract. Besides assessments and the garbage removal contract, there are no additional revenue streams to note for the month of July. On the expense side, the BID paid out a quarterly contribution to the Downtown Missoula Partnership for salaries and benefits on July 1<sup>st</sup>. The Homeless Outreach Team contribution was paid out in July amounting to \$10,000. Ray Kroenke, Maintenance Manager, ran out of the product *Elephant Snot* for graffiti removal and purchased more for graffiti remediation within the district which amounted to approximately \$1,000. Overall, net income is negative for the month and will likely be so until December, given the timing of tax assessments received. Buchanan noted that tax assessments this year will be more than anticipated given the increase in property values. Hall also noted that the Cash Flow Statement has been updated with FY24 Budget numbers.

**Business Activity in the District:** McCarthy noted that there have been twelve business openings so far this year downtown with two more on the way. Sa Wad Dee will be closing September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. The new art gallery for 312 N Higgins, Laughing Mule Press, has not opened yet and may not open at all.

**Downtown Policing, Maintenance & Clean Team Update:** Sippy mentioned that she saw Officer Hardin riding her bike on Higgins. McCarthy mentioned that both officers have been on the beat. Officer Brown has made some open container citations along with a few felony level citations. Chief Mike Colyer was out walking downtown with Officer Hardin last week and popped into a few trouble hotspots within the district. The Clean Team has been struggling to keep up with weeding lately. Our maintenance team Ray Kroenke and Spencer Bryant have kept up on graffiti removal this summer and have done some large power washing projects lately. Sippy mentioned that Spencer seems to be a nice young man and is happy to see that Ray has some relief. McCarthy mentioned that Spencer seems to enjoy the position in his first few months. We will also have a volunteer named Steve Kempel helping water downtown trees in September. Sippy mentioned that there is certainly a need for watering trees within the district.

**Master Plan Updates:** McCarthy mentioned that the city will likely take six months to negotiate a contractor and RFP for the Safety & Mobility Project. There are two large murals being completed this week and next. Our staff still has not received a permit from MDT to implement the Beartracks Underbridge playground. Installation of the Northwestern Energy art wall will happen next summer. There are multiple planning processes happening in town including the Missoula Citywide Parking Plan, the Parks Heritage Interpretation Plan, the Clark Fork River Restoration & Access Plan, the West Broadway River Corridor Project, the *Our Missoula* Growth Policy Update & Code Reform, PROST (Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails) Plan Update, Tourism Stewardship Plan, and the Urban Forest Management Plan.

**Partner Updates – MDF & MDA:** Hall reiterated what McCarthy noted about the two art murals being completed this week and next. There will be an unveiling for the Missoula Art Museum Wednesday evening. Board members are encouraged to attend this event along with the *Greeting from Missoula* mural celebration next Friday August 25<sup>th</sup>. Both projects were funded in part by the MDF's Arts & Culture Impact Grant Program. The MDF board voted unanimously to fiscally sponsor the return of the Festival of Remembrance to Downtown Missoula held November 2<sup>nd</sup>. Tarn Ream and Nikki Robb are spearheading that effort. Brandon Dewey was able to install a Legacy Trail medallion in front of the Zootown Arts Community Center building on Main Street last week. The Heritage Interpretive Plan for Caras Park is expected to be completed in October. Curated dinner tours for donors will be hosted by in September by the MDF. This will signify the beginning of the Fall Campaign for downtown fundraising. The Director of Giving position with the Foundation remains open to date. On the MDA side, the staff is working hard to produce the River City Roots Festival happening Friday August 25<sup>th</sup> & Saturday August 26<sup>th</sup>. Event series, Out To Lunch and Downtown ToNight, will wrap up at the end of August, with three more dates for each event series remaining. Hall noted it has been a successful season with higher attendance numbers than last year. Hall especially noted that the *Great Griz Encounter* returns to Downtown ToNight as *Griz in the Park* Thursday August 24<sup>th</sup>. Grizzly athletes along with Monte will be on hand to sign autographs and engage with the community, which should draw quite the crowd to Caras Park. There are still a few stragglers left on with 2023 membership dues list. Termination letters will go out September 1<sup>st</sup> for any unpaid members.

President Beaton adjourned the meeting at 4:50pm.