

**Downtown BID Board of Trustees Meeting  
Tuesday, Aug. 20, 2024 at the DMP Office**

**Present:** Charlie Beaton, Karen Sippy, Dan Cederberg, Carma Gilligan

**Absent:** James McKay, Ellen Buchanan, Scott Stearns

**Staff:** Linda McCarthy, Jack Hall, Kristen Sackett

**Guest:** Blake Nicolazzo

President Beaton called the meeting to order at 3:05PM

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Beaton called for any review and or edits to the minutes. Hall mentioned he fixed a few grammatical errors but content remains the same. With no other comments, Karen Sippy motioned to approve the minutes. Cederberg seconded. All approved.

**DMP REBRANDING PROJECT**

Sackett introduced the project reminding the board that she first presented this project to the board in June. What has been done since, is meetings with the marketing committee, introduction of Nicolazzo and Bonfire Brands to the MDA and MDF boards, along with the creation of a questionnaire that is meant to collect feedback from each of the boards and key downtown stakeholders. Sackett handed it off to Nicolazzo to introduce herself and more about the rebrand. Nicolazzo first moved to Missoula in 1995, left to work as a Sales Representative for Patagonia on the east coast and then returned to Missoula and started Bonfire Brands in 2012. Bonfire Brands is selective of their clients and working with the Downtown Missoula Partnership felt like the right fit. As a collective, we are in the discovery phase of the process and looking for plenty of feedback. Gilligan mentioned she doesn't want to lose the BID identity through this process. Sackett proposed her vision stating that each organization will still have its own identity and logo but each brand will look cohesive under the Downtown Missoula Partnership umbrella.

McCarthy stated the importance of completing the questionnaire and providing valuable feedback to the Bonfire team. There are two upcoming coffee chats with Nicolazzo and Sackett at Break Espresso to provide more in person conversations about the rebrand.

What inspires you to spend your time with the Downtown Business Improvement District Board?

- Loves working with the people.
- Also, loves working with the people and actually feels like he can make change locally and feel good about it.
- Really enjoys working with this group and the various expertise/background. Feels like as a collective we are effective and gets things done.
- Keeps stakeholders informed and how projects will affect our community

How would you describe the magic of Missoula/Downtown to someone who has never been here before?

- Missoula is so eclectic. This mountain town is beautifully weird.
- Loves how Downtown Missoula has such a low vacancy and how we enjoy s tree canopy which can't be found in some urban areas. Missoula has also thrived recently with art and murals. The events that also draw people to this center are so cool.
- There is a lot of activity Downtown with murals, events, various shops and always something to partake in.
- There's a certain vibe downtown with retail, restaurants and the river that runs through it.

How do you describe the Downtown Missoula Partnership and its work?

- The overarching umbrella that runs the administration of the organization. The organization responsible for events, retail, property owners and residents making sure Downtown continues to tick.
- Well how much time do you have? Each of the organizations has their specialty and the newest organization, the Missoula Downtown Foundation, has some truly tangible work to show the community and to be proud of.
- Each section brings something to Missoula. Whether that's events, work to fill store vacancies, a place to host a wedding or even keeping everyone informed.
- MDA makes the economic activity happen, the BID is the infrastructure part keeping downtown safe and clean, while the MDF brings major funding to the table and allow people to give back to their local community. With that funding, the frosting on the cake happens which makes this place so special.
- Nicolazzo tapped in and mentioned we are all about "holding space to make a place."

If the Downtown Missoula Partnership disappeared tomorrow, what would also disappear?

- Caras Park would still be a parking lot and un-active.
- You would take away the incentive for people to come downtown. Without the fundraising arm of this organization, so many projects would have never come to fruition.
- To imagine what downtown would look like without this organization is scary. It certainly would not be a place the public would want to work, stay and play in. No holiday décor, no downtown police officers, no investment in garbage removal alongside recycling efforts.
- Without the DMP you would lose the support and personality for this downtown.
- Nicolazzo chimed in stating the color and vibrancy would be removed and downtown would look so bland and beige.

McCarthy again encouraged the completion of the questionnaire by this Friday, August 23. Nicolazzo and Sackett will use this information to link commonalities between everyone's responses. There will be more work to be done at the upcoming joint strategic meeting of the three boards in October.

#### **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

In reviewing the Balance Sheet for July 2024, Hall reported that the BID's CD matured on July 16, so we pulled \$50,000 plus interest out and purchased a new CD for \$50,000 at 5.02%. The BID has made the second quarter payment to the DMP. The balance of funds in the city's account is about what it was last year. Hall noted under assets that we will see another year of depreciation on the pickup truck. He noted the BID's commitment to the rebranding project is coming out of FY2024 budget, as will a final payment for the DDPO program, so the FY2024 financials are subject to change.

In reviewing the Profit & Loss Statements, Hall noted that BID assessments were quite a bit more than anticipated in FY2024. We budgeted for \$389,000 in assessments and received \$436,000 in assessments due to the increase in property values and potentially new properties coming online. Due to timing, BID received a very small income item for July assessments and reviewed some of the month's expenses: cookies for streets department for repaving Caras Park; new headlights for the pickup truck, new hose for the powerwasher; can liners, and gasoline. He also noted the BID added a third pick-up date for the dumpsters, based upon increases in garbage. He also highlighted that the BID will be paying MEP on the front-end of the quarter instead of the back-end of the quarter, which is why there were two payments this month for Business Development. He suggested the BID would be in a negative income status until fall assessments are paid in the fall. He also noted there would be some expenses associated with rebanding the streetlights (for holiday décor) around the Missoula Mercantile.

## **BRIEF REVIEW OF DOWNTOWN BID RATEPAYER SURVEY**

McCarthy asked for takeaways from the board after reviewing the Ratepayer Survey. Beaton mentioned the survey was largely positive and stakeholders are informed about major plans that will affect Downtown. There exists some frustration around parking and parking communications. Discussion ensued about the partnership the MDA holds with the MPC for marketing Downtown. Gilligan again noted the sign on the parking garage is misleading between leased parking and public parking. McCarthy also highlighted the comment about garbage and alleys being neglected and suggested we consider more management may be needed by this organization. Sippy talked about her work with neighboring property owners to consolidate garbage and recycling services in her alley, and highlighted the conflict around space needed for compactors. Grease traps from restaurants also create unwelcoming and really unhealthy alleys. Another theme that stuck out to Hall was comments around parking lot maintenance and landscaping neglect.

## **POLICING UPDATES**

McCarthy noted that Officer Rob Castro has been promoted and fully onboarded as the new Downtown police officers. Student Resource Officers begin school on Monday and will no longer be patrolling Downtown until next summer. There was a recent incident at a downtown retail site that is being investigated. The Downtown Police Officer has suggested the installation of a camera at the site.

## **MAINTENANCE & CLEAN TEAM UPDATES**

McCarthy highlighted what a great job the maintenance crew has been doing this year, despite some health challenges. Spencer Bryant has been with us for a year, and he has been a great addition to the team, giving Ray Kroenke opportunities for family vacation. he BID is still looking for a small pickup truck to replace the old 1991 truck. It has been difficult to find the right vehicle that is 4wd and meets the needs of our maintenance team. Missoula Car and Truck was suggested by Cederberg to check in with about this need. The other thing concerning maintenance is that the Parking Commission has requested we remove the Mobile Information Kiosk currently stored at the Central Park Garage. The kiosk may still have worth for another organization but the question begs does the BID still want to keep for the potential revival of a downtown ambassador program. Ideas generated included Destination Missoula, the River Ambassador Program, Parks & Recreation, the Paddleheads, the Clark Fork River Market, or maybe Uptown Butte, if they get its BID approved. If no other useful application can be made at another location then potentially Free Cycles could find value in the kiosk. Hall suggested we provide it on loan to another organization in case the downtown ambassador program is ever propped back up. Beaton asked if the ambassador program would ever come back, and McCarthy responded that the double down investment in Downtown policing was more effective right now. The board felt it was ok to let the mobile kiosk go.

## **MASTER PLAN UPDATES**

The Zoning Plan has been doing some outreach recently. Implementation of the Parking Plan is underway. The Missoula Parking Commission has started geofencing the Hip Strip area and that increased fines will likely go ahead of City Council this winter. Parks and Recreation will likely be using the old Missoula Public Library for three or four more years, meaning the redevelopment of that site has been stalled. The City of Missoula has hired a project manager - Megan McMeekan - for the Downtown SAM project.

## **PARTNER UPDATES**

McCarthy did a review of property ownership within the Downtown BID stating that 85% of parcels are owned by Montanans, with 75% being owned locally by Missoulians.

The MDF will be starting the *Past to Plate* dinner tours in September. If there are people in board members personal circles who feel should be invited, please direct them to staff or the [missouladowntown.com](http://missouladowntown.com) website. It has come to light that the Caras Park Pavilion canopy will need to be replaced, likely in 2025. Each of the Partnership organizations will likely be asked to make a contribution to that project when the time comes. The underbridge playground is well underway and pillar painting is underway. The Legacy Trail is close to being completed alongside the kiosks.

For the MDA, there are two weeks left for the Out To Lunch and Downtown ToNight Summer Series. River City Roots Festival will happen September 6-7. DMP staff will be headed to Seattle the week after for the International Downtown Association.

## **NEW BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Downtown Missoula Partnership Strategic Planning will take place on Wednesday, Oct. 30 from 11am-5pm at Stockman Bank. There will be a celebration of the mural completion at 131 W Alder alongside other downtown mural efforts on September 5.

With no new business or announcements, Beaton adjourned the meeting at 4:40PM.