

Downtown BID Board of Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, April 15, 2025 at the Downtown Missoula Partnership Office & on Zoom

Present: Charlie Beaton, Carma Gilligan, Scott Stearns, James McKay, Ellen Buchanan, Karen Sippy, Dan Cederberg

Staff: Linda McCarthy, Jack Hall, Jake Treece

Charlie Beaton called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Sippy motioned to approve the March Board minutes. Gilligan seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

ELECTION OF BOARD PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

Buchanan nominated Charlie Beaton to serve as Board Chair in FY 2026, and Sippy seconded the motion. Gilligan moved to appoint Stearns as Vice Chair in FY 2026, and Buchanan seconded the motion. Both motions unanimously approved.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Cash is lower than this time last year. CD remains untouched and continues to earn interest. Depreciation recorded for both trucks. The BID is currently operating at a deficit, which is typical for this time of year. The BID received \$18,000 less in tax assessments compared to last year—\$382,000 budgeted vs. over \$400,000 received last year. The BID received \$15,000 from the Parking Commission for policing, and we have invoiced Mountain Line for \$7,500 for policing support. The \$6,943 is from the garbage contract with the city. Snow removal in February and March was \$1,818.

Despite the deficit, overall income is higher than last year due to revenues for the policing program. March maintenance included supplies, a tire replacement, truck repairs, and gas. Clean Team is under budget, and we expect year-end savings in that area.

We spent funds for maintenance of the Stoverud’s Clock at \$468.75. A deposit was made for 10 additional holiday garland wraps with the balance due in November. New brackets have arrived for the Orange Street Bridge banner expansion; installation is scheduled for May. The final quarterly payment to MEP has been made. March closed in the black, but projections show we’re trailing. Discussion ensued on the cost of the policing program and potential options for revisions. The Missoula Parking Commission will pay \$15,000 per officer. Officer salary contracts have significantly increased this year.

REVIEW OF DRAFT BUDGET FOR FY 2026

The board reviewed the FY 2026 draft budget. Discussion focused on budgeting strategies, anticipated savings, and historical deficits. Discussion ensued on what a healthy amount of cash is for the BID to retain, and Beaton reminded the group that the goal was to invest the funds, not hold them. The BID remains in a stable cash position, but continued evaluation is needed.

BID CONTRACTS FOR REVIEW

Two specific contracts must be reviewed and renewed before the end of the fiscal year: the Dedicated Downtown Policing (DDPO) contract and the Business Development Contract with the Missoula Economic Partnership.

POLICING CONTRACT

Costs for Downtown policing are shifting, which sparked a conversation regarding how to meet the shortfall of funding for officers. Potential solutions were to lower the number of Downtown Dedicated Police Officers (DDPOs), ask for more funding from the city, or hire private security. Conversations with the Mayor regarding DDPOs are pending. The first draft budget includes increased allocations for MEP and Clean Team, while project implementation and master plan funding have been scaled back.

MEP CONTRACT

We are at the end of a three-year partnership with MEP. Business development and prosperity is important to a vibrant downtown, and Business Development Director Christine Littig is working with many different entrepreneurs in Missoula. MEP is seeking a larger increase in fees and would like the BID to consider funding for business recruitment travel expenses. Littig's work has also resulted in more touch points with Downtown ratepayers and more communications around business retention and leasing. The Board expressed preference on a 5% increase per year and travel requests on a case-by-case basis.

Discussion ensued regarding the need to enhance communication for projects like the Downtown SAM and leveraging DMP resources. Helping businesses prepare for two seasons of construction and providing consistent communications and support will be necessary and valuable. We will be working on BID renewal shortly after the Downtown SAM project comes to completion.

DOWNTOWN BID BOARD COMPOSITION

The BID board is actively seeking new members. The application is live on the city's website and open until the end of May. McCarthy has reached out directly to about 15 individuals, and it will be published in the upcoming BID newsletter. Conversations with the Mayor are ongoing.

ANNUAL MEETING PREVIEW

The BID Annual meeting will take place on Thursday, May 29 from 8:30-10am at the Residence Inn by Marriott. The meeting will include presentations from Mayor Davis, Matt Mellott, and Kristen Sackett. A Q&A session will follow. Handouts will be available. The semi-annual newsletter has been mailed to ratepayers and included a brief on the annual meeting. Formal invitations will go out in the first week of May.

PARTNER UPDATES: MDA & MDF

- We are gearing up for Garden City Brewfest on Saturday, May 3. Caras Park events kick off this weekend.
- Unseen Missoula Guided Tours are underway with many private bookings.
- The Caras Park Canopy Campaign has launched with direct asks in progress.
- The MDA has about 100 members who have yet to pay dues. The most recent membership workshop was on Social Media Tips on April 15.
- There were 13 applications for the Foundation's Arts & Culture Impact Grants, and the Board funded three projects: one at Worden's Market, one at The Wren, and the MAM's Teen Art Project.

ADJOURNMENT

With no new business or announcements, Beaton adjourned the meeting at 4:48 pm.