

**MINUTES  
COUNCIL WORKSHOP  
AUGUST 26, 2014 6:30 P.M.  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

A Council Workshop was held in the Council Chambers and called to order by Mayor Mark Mace at 6:30 p.m. on August 26, 2014.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emelie Eaton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doug Poehls
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bruce McGee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Richard Herr
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chuck Dickerson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scot Stokes
<input type="checkbox"/> Tom Nelson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bill Mountsier

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Heidi Jensen  
Monica Plecker  
Shirley Ewan

**Public Input (three-minute limit):**

There was no public input.

**General items**

- Laurel Fire Department Appointments: Shane Willis, Jon DeRudder, Makayla Schessler, Andrew O'Toole

The appointments will be on the September 2<sup>nd</sup> council agenda.

**Executive Review:**

- Resolution – Professional Services Contract with Robert Peccia & Associates

Monica Plecker stated that the need for the Planning Department to have GIS services for the city was identified as a long-term goal during the last council retreat. A lot of equipment is not required to achieve GIS services, but some licenses will be needed on the computers. The real work will be to build a database. The contract with Robert Peccia & Associates includes the licenses for the computers, building the database, and training the staff how to use the GIS. Robert Peccia & Associates completed the city's Transportation Plan and also has a GIS manager, who would be the project manager on this contract. Monica is excited about the capabilities and how GIS will enhance her staff reports for the Planning Board and will also help other city departments. Since GIS can be integrated with asset management things, Public Works would benefit a great deal from it. The cost for the contract is included in the Planning budget. The city currently has an agreement with Yellowstone County to maintain data and contractors have to request that data from the County. Whenever Monica needs a map, the city pays a \$50 hourly rate for the creation of the map. With this GIS program, the city would keep its own data separate from the County. The city already has a lot of data related to the locations of water and sewer lines, manholes and fire hydrants. It will be an ongoing process to build the database. Monica stated that as-builts could be scanned, digitized and compared with the parcel data to get an idea of where things are without having to actually pay

someone to GPS a specific spot. She stated that it will be good to provide the services in-house instead of through the County.

- Resolution – Relocation of boundary line

This item was removed from the agenda.

- Resolution – CTEP Project Agreement

Heidi stated that she is the CTEP Coordinator for the City of Laurel. The CTEP program has been dissolved at the Federal and State levels, but the city was asked if it wanted to use the money before the program completely disappeared in 2015. Since a project had to be submitted to the State for approval by July 1<sup>st</sup>, Heidi worked with Great West Engineering on a couple projects. The project will be the design and construction of ADA compliant concrete sidewalks, ADA crossings, a retaining wall and curb and gutter. The location is: 1) on East Maryland Lane at the intersections with Pennsylvania and Washington Avenues, 2) along 8<sup>th</sup> Street from 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue eastward to just past the baseball fields, 3) on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue at the intersections with Montana and Colorado Avenues, and 4) on 8<sup>th</sup> Street at the intersection with Washington Avenue.

CTEP sent the agreement last week and it needs to be returned to their office by September 5<sup>th</sup>. Laurel will then be in the first round of allocation for the Federal funding. Hopefully, the funding will come in October. If so, Great West Engineering will get the preliminary drawings done in November and go out for bid for this project on one schedule this winter/spring. The city's sidewalk program will be attached as a second schedule in order to get more competitive bids for the project. There were problems last year with the sidewalk project, and there will be further discussion on tonight's agenda. Heidi stated that the CTEP project would do a lot of infill around town that the city does not have the funds to do.

Emelie asked if it was a coincidence that the sidewalks are close to schools.

Heidi explained that the city applied for the Safe Routes to Schools grant last year but did not receive the grant. Since the letter regarding the CTEP funds was received in the second week of June and a project needed to be submitted by July 1<sup>st</sup>, this project was mostly ready and could be submitted quickly.

- Resolution – Task Order with Great West Engineering for the CTEP Project Agreement

Heidi explained that the task order with Great West Engineering needs to be attached to the signed CTEP contract to show that a professional engineer will do the design of the sidewalks and handicapped ramps to meet State standards.

- 2014-2015 Preliminary Budget and Tax Resolutions (Public hearing on September 2, 2014)

Shirley Ewan distributed the 2014-2015 Preliminary Budget books and a list of the changes made to the Preliminary Budget since the Management Budget was approved in June.

Shirley reviewed the tax resolutions. The assessments for street lights, street maintenance and street sweeping were correct and the final assessments for the SID's will be available soon.

Shirley explained the general revenue levies, including the General Fund, Comp Insurance, PERS, Group Health Insurance, Fire Disability, Permissive Health Levy, Airport Authority, and Emergency Disaster. The General Fund has gone down from 23 percent to 19 percent because reserves were used

last year and some funds have been moved to the CIP Fund to get it in the black again. This is the first time the CIP Fund has had a positive balance since Shirley came to the city.

Shirley encouraged the council to read the Budget Message on pages 27-35 in the Preliminary Budget book.

There was a brief discussion regarding the city's financial position, the projections for 2015, and the need for more businesses.

- Council Issues:

- Update on Sidewalk Program (Scot Stokes)

Monica explained that the sidewalks that the council approved for replacement last October have not been done, as the contractor did not fulfill the contract. As Heidi said earlier, the city will add this as Schedule 2 to the CTEP projects in order to have more reliable contractors submit bids for the project. Code enforcement will attend the first meeting in October to propose three additional sidewalks to include in Schedule 2. The city is still accepting applications for the sidewalk replacement program. When someone submits an application, the code enforcement officer inventories the sidewalk, adds it to the list and prioritizes it.

Shirley mentioned that the city sent out the prices for the five sidewalks, but the new bids are coming in higher now. The city will have to pay the difference between what the property owners were told it would cost and what it will actually cost. The city will also pay for all the ADA ramps. The city will probably eat about \$3,000 to \$4,000 on the sidewalk program.

- Lease Task Force update

There was nothing to report on this item.

- Update on 2011 Yellowstone River flooding event

Heidi reported on today's meeting at the Yellowstone River with all agencies that were interested in commenting on the Environmental Assessment and that would be involved in finishing permitting the emergency rock that the city put on the top of the bank in May. Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the DNRC, the Army Corps, Yellowstone County, Great West Engineering, and Kurt and Heidi attended. DEQ did not attend. The city received a permit from the Army Corps to leave the rock on top of the bank. Heidi talked to FEMA last week about funding the emergency work, and FEMA said they would fund it if the agencies would permit it. The DNRC thinks that it makes sense to have the rock past the top of the high water mark and towed into the river and down against the bank. FWP is on board as long as DEQ is on board, but DEQ did not attend today. However, staff knows that DEQ's requirement will be to place topsoil to fill in the cracks in between the rip rap and then vegetate the areas where plants were lost. The city's suggestion is to put the dirt and vegetation five feet from the top instead of on the five feet closest to the river, as the vegetation will not have a chance to root and spread out before next spring's runoff. Great West was going to suggest to DEQ that we move the vegetation up the bank instead of down the bank. A sprinkler system was put in place on top of the berm in the last two weeks so that the grass could grow. With all the work done down there, the grass seed has been removed and there is no grass. The city has placed the requirement that reseeded be done this fall. The comment period on the Environmental Assessment closes on Friday and no comments have been received. As soon as the EA timeframe closes, the permitting process will begin.

Other items

There were none.

Review of draft council agenda for September 2, 2014

- Public Hearing:
  - 2014-2015 Preliminary Budget and Tax Resolutions

The public hearing is scheduled on September 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Attendance at the September 2, 2014 council meeting

All council members present will attend.

Announcements

Monica stated that some questions about the rumored refinery were brought up at the last meeting. She did some research and mentioned that there have been some articles in the *Billings Gazette*. Quantum Energy is a company that is looking to build three to five micro-refineries to basically have less EPA hoops to jump through. They have identified a few different areas, including Fairview, Baker, Minot and Billings. The other location is to be determined. There is some interest whether this would be a viable project in our area. In trying to find that out, Monica found that people are very tight-lipped about the plans. She found out that Quantum Energy is actually working with a private landowner on a site that they will not disclose. There is also quite a bit of question about the viability of this company right now as it is evident through the due diligence process that BSEDA is assisting them in the process of getting financial backing. Quantum Energy has said that they would like to begin construction next spring, but they do not have funding, they do not have an actual site, and they have not done any permitting. Because Big Sky Economic Development is taking the lead on this recruitment effort, Monica has expressed to them that there is interest in whether or not this would fit near Laurel. There is not a whole lot of information out there. Steve with BSEDA is aware that the council, LURA and city staff have questions and an interest in this possibility.

Doug asked for an explanation of a memo regarding the school's request to LURA.

Heidi explained that the superintendent of schools attended a LURA meeting and asked LURA to give the school \$57,500 for a connector at the new Middle School from the U-shaped parking lot to Alder where the buses could go out. LURA quickly approved this before staff could give guidance. Heidi and Monica did some research in state law and the mission of the TIF District and found that the TIFD cannot do this as there is no direct benefit to the TIFD with this project. A project has to either connect the TIFD, provide some sort of utility to the TIFD, or directly affect it and this is purely just a connector road that would benefit the school buses. Legal counsel recommended that the item not go forward on an agenda but that the council receive the correspondence for information. Staff is working to set up a step-by-step review process for LURA to approve funding projects. The school could ask for another gift, but LURA has been told not to do anything without staff support.

Bill asked Heidi for an update regarding the problem with the crosswalks on Maryland.

Heidi explained that the crosswalks are included in the CTEP program that was presented tonight. If the council approves the funding allocation and the task order with Great West Engineering, the documents will be sent to the State next week. Once funds are released in October, Great West will start the design in November and construction will be done next summer.

Emelie thanked Heidi and Monica for continuing to monitor the activities of LURA.

The council workshop adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cindy Allen".

Cindy Allen  
Council Secretary

**NOTE: This meeting is open to the public. This meeting is for information and discussion of the Council for the listed workshop agenda items.**

## **General Fund (1000)**

### Revenue Changes:

1. Increase General Fund revenue by \$12,363 after calculating admin fees.

These changes are reflected in the following amounts:

- Gas Tax, down \$1,001
- Planning, down \$631
- Street, down \$19,448
- Water, increased by \$12,256
- Sewer, increased by \$14,812
- Solid Waste, increased by \$63,886 – there was no original entry

2. Changed transfer in for the safety program to \$20,000 was \$28,000.

### Expenditure Changes:

1. Moved prosecutor to \$55,000 up \$3,000.
2. Added \$8,915 to Police salaries for training of temporary police officer.
3. Cut grant match to Transit Grant (Bus) by \$5,000 from \$10,000 to \$5,000.
4. Added 3 Tasers to court budget in the amount of \$1,000
5. Added \$3,000 to Library budget for janitorial service.

## **Planning Fund (2250)**

1. Added GIS system back into planning in the amount of \$40,000.
2. Added an additional \$4,712 to planning revenue according to county mill values.

## **Transit Grant (2928)**

1. Grant revenue down to \$40,787 per grant agreement with MDOT. Was originally \$59,962.

## **Water Fund (5210)**

1. Added \$342,000 to debt service to pay off WRF-99003R loan early.
2. Smart phone internet fee \$200.

## **Health Insurance Fund (2371)**

1. Added 1% inclusion of added cost of Health Insurance for fiscal year 14-15. Singles and employees with child cap has been raised to \$719/month.

## **Gas Tax (2820)**

1. Gas tax allocation down \$521 this year.

---

---

MEMORANDUM

---

---

**TO:** LAUREL CITY COUNCIL  
**FROM:** KEITH KOLSTAD, CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER  
**SUBJECT:** SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM - 2014  
**DATE:** AUGUST 26, 2014  
**CC:** HEIDI JENSEN AND MONICA PLECKER

---

In September of 2013 the city of Laurel solicited bids for five sidewalk projects in the city of Laurel in accordance with Ordinance No O12-07, the City's Sidewalk Replacement Program. Three firms bid on the project. P & H Concrete was the most acceptable bid. The Council voted on October 1, 2013 to include the five sidewalk projects in the program. On October 24, 2013, a contract was executed with P & H Concrete for the work and approved by the City Council on December 3, 2013. The contract called for the project to be completed by June 30, 2014.

It was generally agreed that the project would start in the Spring of 2014.

Owners of the properties affected were contacted by the City on October 4, 2013 and on April 8, 2014 regarding their selection and updates by the Code Enforcement Office.

When it became obvious that the contract was not going to be fulfilled on time, a 30-day extension was granted per Section One, Article B of the contract. The new completion date was July 31, 2014. This date was not met by the contractor and no further extension was granted due to lack of performance by the contractor over the course of the original contract and the extension.

The two other contractors who originally bid were then approached. One could not be located. The other did express an interest but also noted that the costs had increased since the original bid and a new updated bid would be proposed. That contractor was somewhat behind on jobs and noted that it would not be possible to complete all five sidewalks before the September 15, 2014 tax reporting deadline.

In an attempt to see if other contractors were interested contact was made with two other firms. In conversations with both it was doubtful if they could complete the project before the September 15 deadline for completion at this late date in the construction season.

With no contractor being able to complete the project within the September 15, 2014 time frame for assessment purposes it was decided to bid this project out again, along with other sidewalk owners who have asked to be included, for consideration by the Council at the first meeting in October. The five owners who were on the list in the original contract have been contacted and all wish to remain on the list. We have identified four other sidewalks that rate high on our list for replacement and those owners will be asked if they wish to be included in the new contract. Five contractors have been contacted to submit bids on the sidewalks with those bids to be returned by September 5th for review by staff and recommendations made to the Council.