

**JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION**  
**February 17, 2026 -- City Commission Work Session**  
**Civic Center, Gibson Room 212 -- Mayor Reeves Presiding**

**CALL TO ORDER: 5:38 PM**

**ROLL CALL/STAFF INTRODUCTIONS:**

City Commission members present: Cory Reeves, Joe McKenney, Rick Tryon, Shannon Wilson, and Casey Schreiner.

Also present were City Manager Greg Doyon; City Attorney David Dennis; Finance Director Melissa Kinzler; Park and Recreation Interim Director Jessica Compton, Park Manager Kevin Vining and Forester Todd Seymanski; Acting Fire Chief Jeremy Virts; Police Chief Jeff Newton; and, Deputy City Clerk Darcy Dea.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**James Rickley**, City resident, President of the Eagles Manor Residents Council and Vice-Chair of Neighborhood Council 6, explained that residents at the Eagles Manor are concerned about the sale and changes in conditions at the Manor. The food service in which the residents depend on will be discontinued after June 30, 2026. The residential units and occupants are not up to this challenge, and this presents major difficulties including fire and safety issues. The new owners have removed the plus 55 status, opening occupancy to all within the law's limits, subject to legal numbers. There has been an increase in crime in the area, notably in the past two months, with assaults. There are unanswered questions about the zoning, lot split, and change in contractual services. The Council is looking forward to working with the new owners and community to find viable solutions. Mr. Rickley provided and discussed a handout about the changes in housekeeping and food services, lease negotiations, rent fees, a lot split, Montana Secretary of State Certification Letter, Ness Management LLC letter and lease report with regard to Eagles Manor.

Mayor Reeves commented that the City and state legislators are aware of the issues at the Eagles Manor.

**WORK SESSION ITEMS**

- 1. ANNUAL UPDATE FROM THE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID)**

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Kellie Pierce, Executive Director BID/DGFA, reported the following for 2025:

- Over 26,895 volunteer hours contributed downtown at \$34.79 per hour.
- Over \$7.9 million invested in renovating and rehabilitating downtown buildings; and \$30,000 of that was public investment.
- 34 new businesses chose to locate downtown, which created approximately 100 jobs.
- Two major public projects were completed that included the replacement of an old stormwater drainage system on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South and an update to the streetscape on the 700 block of 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue South in front of the O’Haire Motor Inn.

Ms. Pierce reviewed and discussed PowerPoint slides (available in the City Clerk’s Office). Highlights included:

- Mission and Vision:
  - The mission of the Great Falls Business Improvement District is to represent the unique interests of the businesses and property owners located in the district. The goal of the BID is to create an environment that is appealing to shoppers, office workers, residents, tourists, and new businesses and investors. Overall, the BID is responsible for downtown revitalization through economic development, real estate development, short and long range planning, grant program administration, and physical and environmental improvement programs.
- Business Improvement District Boundaries:
  - From the Civic Center to 8<sup>th</sup> Street, alleyways and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South.
- Downtown Master Plan Boundaries:
  - 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue North to 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, west of 15<sup>th</sup> Street to the river.
- BID Assessment Formula:
  - A flat fee of \$200.00 for each lot or parcel without a Land Use Code of 125.
  - A flat fee of \$50.00 for each lot or parcel with a designated Land Use Cod of 125 which is a residential condominium.

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- An assessment of \$.00165 times the market valuation as provided by the Montana Department of Revenue.
- An assessment of \$.015 times the square footage of the land area.
- Services the BID offers:
  - Interior Improvement Grant program; Business Incentive Grant program (paying 1 months' rent for new businesses); Public art programs and graffiti removal; Coins for a Cause; Bike rack programs; Boulevard tree program; Garbage and snow removal; Holiday décor and banners; Flower baskets and sound system management; Community Resource Ambassador program; Great Walls Great Falls (ArtFest MT) – 68 murals with at least 5 more – Alley lighting project to create safer spaces and light the murals; Assisted streetscape improvements and provided assistance with the stormdrain improvement projects.
- Growing our boundaries:
  - Original boundaries set in 1989 with the formation of the BID; Successfully expanded once in 2021 on to the 700 block of Central; Unsuccessful expansion effort in 2023 to include the 800 block; Expansion passes if a vote of 60.1% of property owners are in favor, and City Commission approves.
- Downtown Partnerships:
  - Downtown Development Partnerships – Downtown Development Partnership (Accredited National Main Street Organization); Downtown Great Falls Assoc. (Promotion); Great Falls BID (Design); Great Falls Development Alliance (Economic Vitality); Safety Alliance; TIF Programs/District; Parking Commission; Wayfinding Signage; Downtown Master Plan; Transformation Strategies; Revitalization Projects; ArtsFest Montana/Traffic signal boxes.
- Development projects - GFDA:
  - Station District, Baatz Block and Clearwater Credit Union.

Commissioner Tryon received clarification that Coins for a Cause donations have been up to \$500; however, it has dropped over the last couple of years to approximately \$350 because of the economy. The BID held off on a donation this year because it was only \$168. The Safety Alliance decides which nonprofit organization will receive the money and some of those have included the YWCA, Rescue Mission, St. Vincent de Paul and Opportunities Inc.

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Commissioner Tryon stepped out at 5:55 p.m. and returned at 5:57 p.m.

**2. PARK AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT UPDATE**

Park and Recreation Interim Director Jessica Compton reviewed and discussed PowerPoint slides (available in the City Clerk's Office). Highlights included:

- Enhancing Community Well-Being and Public Health:
  - Department: Improve services, programs, events and facilities to enhance the health and livability of the community.
  - S.A.H.B.S.: “We strengthen Great Falls by helping people move, play, and connect – in the pool, on the court, and in the community”.
- Parks and Trails:
  - Providing safe places for community and visitors to recreate regardless of race, wealth and age. The Park Maintenance District; FY26 Projects; Morony Park – ADA Accessible Playground; RET Trail Segments; Memorials and Donations – Trees, Bench’s, Swings, Art; Vandalism; Graffiti; Stickers; Destruction; Sleeping under Central Avenue Bridge.
- Forestry and Boulevard District:
  - Honoring the heritage of Charles Gibson by caring, planting and trimming Great Falls urban forest. 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Tree City USA; 40K trees maintained; Leaf pickup; Downtown Christmas Tree; Gibson Roots Revival Completed (#50 Trees purchased and replanted\*courtesy of community support); Green Ash Trees; Dutch Elm Disease; Polinator Bio-Blitz; Planted #108 Trees/#252 Stumps; Firewood; Mulch and Wood Chips.
- Scheels Aim High Big Sky – “We strengthen Great Falls by helping people move, play, and connect – in the pool, on the court, and in the community”.
  - Reset in Summer 2025 – Staff Transition; Marketing; Facility Operations and Culture; Scholarship Program; Programming – Swim Lessons, Classes, Partners.
- SWOT Analysis of SAHBS Strengths:
  - Modern consolidated aquatics and recreation facility; Only full-scale indoor aquatics venue in region; Strong community anchor (schools, university, clubs); Diverse revenue streams (memberships, rentals,

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programs); Cost Recovery implemented for all programs; Year-round programming capacity.

- SWOT Analysis of SAHBS Weaknesses:
  - Enterprise fund structure with high fixed costs; Operating deficit; reliance on General Fund subsidy; Mechanical and infrastructure instability (boilers, controllers, equipment); Limited local pricing elasticity; Staffing constraints limit program growth; Digital presence still maturing.
- SWOT Analysis of SAHBS Opportunities:
  - Membership conversation to long-term local users; Corporate, medical, military partnerships; Clear cost-recovery policy framework; Sponsorships/naming rights/ foundation support; Regional draw marketing strategy; Strategic pricing decisions during partial closures.
- SWOT Analysis of SAHBS Threats:
  - Mechanical liability exposure (high intensity aquatic environment); Perception risk if amenities remain offline; Utility and chemical cost volatility; Economic downturn reducing discretionary spending; Competing free recreation alternative; Policy misalignment (break-even vs. access expectations).
- Aquatics – Improve public health, safety, and community engagement through water-based recreation:
  - 2025 Overhaul of the Safety and Operations of Outdoor Pools (Daily Audits, Increased In-service and recuring training, Standards and expectations of staff and patrons).
  - Concerns 2026: Lazy River/Flow Rider cost to repair; Decreased revenue; Operational window; Liner at each pool; 30-40 year equipment.
- Matrix Consulting Group Fee Study and Efficiency Review:
  - Month 3; Mini-Poll Results (55% SAHBS not visited/63% SAHBS positive asset, 81% satisfied with Parks and Trails – RET Crown Jewel, Biggest Priority (Restrooms upgrade/operational more needed, Next steps.
- Community Impact and Future Goals:
  - Membership increases at SAHBS.

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- Outdoor and indoor sporting courts.
- Onboard a new Park and Recreation Director.
- Continue to do Park and Recreation projects.
- Trail system connections.
- Expanding the River's Edge Trail.
- Conclusion and Volunteerism:
  - Park and Recreation is successful because of community support; Adopt-A-Park; Volunteer at Ice breaker, Egg Hunt, Triathlon; Report suspicious behaviors and activities in and around your neighborhood and premiere parks.

Mayor Reeves received clarification that the biggest staffing constraint is the Forestry Division because it requires a certain amount of skill set to do that job.

Commissioner Tryon received clarification that cost recovery is for the whole Park and Recreation Department and the SAHBS mechanical liability exposure included replacing controllers.

Mayor Reeves inquired if repairs are covered under warranty or coming out of the general fund.

City Manager Greg Doyon responded that Park and Recreation is working on a master list of all issues at SAHBS and it is under review.

Commissioner Schreiner received clarification that the Salvation Army is on the list to be included in the Matrix fee study and efficiency review.

Commissioner Tryon received clarification that Matrix was informed to be straight forward with presenting their recommendations in a couple of months and Matrix consultants received City staff's input as well as community feedback. He further received clarification that Park and Recreation is committed to educating the community about cleaning up after their pets in parks and waste bag dispensers are located in some parks; however, the dispensers get vandalized.

Commissioner Tryon expressed appreciation to the Park and Recreation staff for their efforts with regard to the added staff and innovative things at SAHBS.

Commissioner McKenney expressed appreciation to Park and Recreation Interim Director Compton for her efforts with regard to the presentation.

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**DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL UPCOMING WORK SESSION TOPICS**

City Manager Greg Doyon reported that an update on ARPA projects will be a topic for the March 3, 2026, work session. A 2026 budget kickoff will be a topic for an upcoming work session.

City Manager Doyon explained that he suspended the process over the holidays for a Park and Recreation Director. Initial screening interviews were conducted in January, and he asked for the Commission's patience because leadership positions are important.

Commissioner Tryon requested that an update about Little Shell be a topic for an upcoming work session.

City Manager Doyon responded that the City is in the process of developing a submittal to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and working with others to identify potential areas of concern. He spoke with Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana Chairman Gray about creating a publicly accessible website that outlines the process. At this stage, a work session may not be helpful other than for the City to communicate what was shared with the BIA about the City's areas of initial concern. The BIA is requesting that agencies provide information and feedback on a land use application that is advancing. He invited the County in on the conversation and received a response from Cascade County Commissioner Hinebauch.

Commissioner McKenney reported that there is pledged funding available for a security fence to take care of the liability issue at the Boston and Montana Barn; however, it is his understanding that they are not going forward with it until there is an agreement with the City that it won't take the barn down once the fence is up.

City Manager Doyon responded that had not heard about that, would investigate the matter and report back.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further discussion, Mayor Reeves adjourned the informal work session of February 17, 2026 at 6:45 p.m.