

## Helena Business Improvement District

Board of Trustees Minutes  
 Tuesday, April 11, 2023 – 8am  
 330 N Jackson Street | [Zoom](#)

BID Board Members Present	Seth Brandenberger Chair; Rex Seeley; Ryan Stavnes, Treasurer; Alicia Pichette; Randy Burrington	
BID Board members Absent	Onawa Linden, Vice-Chair	
Public:	Emily Dean (Helena City Commission) (left at 4:30pm), Sarah Hamblock (DHI President), Tim Chisman, Tom Morrison, Alice Santos, Kate Picano, Jeff Buscher (arrived at 4pm), Emily McVey (joined via zoom at 4pm)	
Staff:	John Dendy (BID ED) and Jordan Conley (DHI Operations Director)	
<b><u>Agenda</u></b>	<b><u>Discussion</u></b>	<b><u>Motion/Action</u></b>
Welcome & Introductions	BID board chair, Seth Brandenburger, called the meeting to order at 3:33pm	N/A
Public Comment	Tom Morrison: Proposed recommendation of Plan 3 is not a good idea, particularly for those folks who have condos. Not a good revenue raiser and a good way to discourage people from bringing residential properties downtown. Propose something that would be sensitive to inflation and would protect BID investments; get rid of flat rate altogether, which is prejudicial to condo owners	N/A
Approve March 2023 BID Minutes		Motion to approve the March minutes by Ryan. Second by Rex. Motion passes 5-0.
Approve February 2023 BID Financials		Motion to approve the February financials by Alicia. Second by Ryan. Motion passes 5-0.
Downtown Helena Inc Update	<p>Events: Easter egg hunt coming up on Saturday. Hello Summer on April 22 at GNTC – food truck, carousel rides, sun safety presentation, giveaways of donated bike equipment. Gold Rush Days is May 5-7. Builds off of Vigilante Days and will include activities throughout downtown. Website: goldrushdaysmt.com. Alive at 5 final street party will be on Lawrence.</p> <p>Jordan is concerned about the permitting process. The city has a new system that should be an improvement up it's not up yet, and she needs permits approved. Through talking with each department head, she has events approved. She is compiling feedback for the city on the new permit process.</p>	
Fiscal Sponsorship of BID Fundraising by HACF	John: a subcommittee last year determined that BID/DHI should not start a 501c3—too much work with limited staff. Instead enter into an agreement with HACF. We will pay them 10% of anything we raise (\$500 minimum). First fundraising project: we've engaged MSU architecture students on site selection; good faith effort to raise some money. Calling the HACF/BID partnership the "Downtown Helena Partnership"	Motion by Rex to approve the agreement. Second by Randy. Motion passes 5-0.

	<p>Alicia: Would this be just for the downtown stage or other projects?</p> <p>Ryan: Do we need termination agreement or right to renew?</p>	
<p>Recommended BID Assessment Changes</p>	<p>John: What the plans have in common: all use DOR classifications; all proposals remove area part of the calculation (this removes the strangeness around the aggregation of condos); resolves various inconsistencies. The plan drops the area part and rolls out a flat fee and percentage of taxable value.</p> <p>John: Some of the effects of all these plans: Shift some of the assessment burden from non-condo commercial to commercial condos; they all increase the amount paid by commercial condos significantly; they keep the residential group as a whole pretty flat. Residents who live in buildings with more condos will see an increase, and those who live in smaller buildings will see a decrease.</p> <p>John: The nonprofit group pays more than they are currently paying in every one of these proposals.</p> <p>John: The committee has recommended plan 3. Plans are on a continuum. Committee has kept the fee the same for each property type (besides residential) in each plan. As you go from 1 to 4, commercial non-condos get a bigger break. City pays the least in Plan 1; pays what they are paying now in Plan 4. The non-taxed pay more as you move from Plan 1 to Plan 4.</p> <p>Seth: Little change to residential; Placer will increase 54 dollars.</p> <p>Sarah: Vacancy now exempt across all categories?</p> <p>Seth: Broken system for years; Jim Burrington has worked on it for 2 years.</p> <p>Lee: Has there been any discussion of applying the STIP fund to mitigate the charges?</p> <p>John: 166k is what has been set aside. The remainder in the STIP is spendable – it’s there to draw interest. We spent \$61K on the Multimodal/CIP Study.</p> <p>Rex: What about DHI?</p> <p>John: Yes, \$12,500 to DHI in January and another \$12,500 on July 1.</p> <p>Seth: All plans decrease revenue.</p> <p>Alicia: Board has already thrown around ideas for using the STIP money for big, ambitious projects.</p> <p>John: There are capital improvements to downtown that BID could pay for with reserves. There is no lack of good projects to spend money on.</p> <p>Sarah: Any concern that people won’t want to be downtown because of the extra fees?</p>	

	<p>Rex: No, because people want to be downtown and are willing to pay.</p> <p>Seth: The existing system is not fair; difficult to understand; this is an attempt to make it fair.</p> <p>Randy: This was not done in a vacuum. There are examples from Missoula and Bozeman.</p> <p>Tim: How many individuals does this money come from? John: 440 properties</p> <p>Seth: Ad hoc committee has recommended Plan 3.</p> <p>Motion Made; Discussion:</p> <p>John: One last pitch for Plan 1. First: at a time of inflation is no time to cut the budget; you are talking about a 5% budget cut with plan 3, with inflation, that's a 10-12% budget cut. Plan 1 keeps revenue the same. Alan Nicholson agrees. Also, each one of these plans increases the burden on the non-taxed. Impact on not-for-profits is lesser on Plan 1. Plan 1 maintains revenue; reduces the increase on the non-taxed; It still shifts a lot of the burden to commercial condos, but the it shifts the least of the plans. Plan 1 is closer to status quo and easier to sell. It is more inflation-proof, relies more on tax % and less on flat fees. Plan 3 is less responsive to inflations bc the flat fee has to be increase to keep up with inflation.</p> <p>Rex: We [BID] are also a non-profit. Plus, not-for-profits are taking up space that could be occupied by something else.</p> <p>Jordan: Non-profits do add significant value to downtown. Concerned about a plan that eliminates fees for vacant lots and increases them for not-for-profits. Will there then be an incentive to keep a lot vacant rather than developing?</p> <p>All: No, savings aren't significant enough to dissuade development</p>	<p>Motion by Alicia to approve Plan 3. Second by Ryan.</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>Motion passes 5-0</p> <p>Action: John will go to Sheila Danielson and Tim Burton right away about the change</p>
<p>Program Updates</p> <p>a. Grants</p> <p>b. Unhoused</p>	<p>a. John: We've started looking at the façade grants again. Went through and looked at previous rankings and allowed groups to amend their applications. Awarded \$2244 to MT Book Co. Others – Proof Marketing and Mosaic, dependent on whether they can get work done by 6/30.</p> <p>b. John: Port-a-potty is now up in Constitution Park. It has been there a week and it has been fine. No graffiti; no blankets thrown in, no damage.</p> <p>Alice: Can we put up cameras. Several: Kev Hamm has offered.</p> <p>Jeff: UW has put together some language for a handout that BID will edit, produce, distribute. Faith communities are also</p>	<p>a. N/A</p> <p>b. N/A</p>

<p>c. Banners</p>	<p>interested in how to appropriately engage with unsheltered population. Handful of non-profits are looking at old St. John's property for a number of services—this is a very early idea. Do you all think this would be an asset for downtown?</p> <p>Alice: I'm the listing agent. Excellent use of the property.</p> <p>Tim: Would United Way be the organizing group? Jeff: Yes</p> <p>c. John: Banners will be changed this weekend.</p>	<p>c. N/A</p>
<p>Adjourn</p>	<p>Meeting adjourned at 4:53pm</p>	
<p>Next meeting</p>	<p>Tuesday, May 9, 3:30 pm, Trailhead office, 330 Jackson St</p>	
<p>Submitted by</p>	<p>Jordan Conley and John Dendy</p>	