

**JOURNAL OF INFORMAL SPECIAL JOINT WORK SESSION OF THE GREAT  
FALLS CITY COMMISSION AND CASCADE COUNTY BOARD OF  
COMMISSIONERS, AND LOCAL LEGISLATORS  
CIVIC CENTER, 2 PARK DRIVE SOUTH  
GIBSON ROOM 212  
March 5, 2019**

**CALL TO ORDER:** 3:00 p.m.

City Commission members present: Bob Kelly, Bill Bronson, Tracy Houck, Mary Sheehy Moe, and Owen Robinson. Also present were Deputy City Manager Chuck Anderson, City Attorney Sara Sexe, and City Clerk Lisa Kunz.

Cascade County Board of Commissioners present: Jane Weber and Jim Larson.

Legislators present: Jasmine Krotkov, HD 25; Casey Schreiner, HD 26; Joshua Kassmier, HD 27; Brian Hoven, SD 13; Carlie Boland, SD 12; Bruce “Butch” Gillespie, SD 9; Fred Anderson, HD 20, arrived at 3:15 p.m.; Tom Jacobson, SD 11, arrived at 3:21 p.m.; and, Wendy McKamey, HD 19, arrived at 3:27 p.m.

Handouts provided: Transmittal Break – March 2019 – 66<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, Legislation affecting the Cascade City-County Board of Health; City-County Health Department letter to the Honorable Mike Lang, Chairman, Senate Local Government Committee, regarding SB 179; Legislation affecting the Cascade County Region; and, a Memorandum dated March 5, 2019 from the Great Falls City Commission to the Cascade County Legislative Delegation, regarding Legislation of Interest to the City of Great Falls.

**1. Welcome and Introduction**

Mayor Bob Kelly welcomed everyone, and introductions were made.

**2. Public Comment**

**Shyla Patera**, North Central Independent Living Services (NCILS), 1120 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, commented that NCILS focuses on accessibility issues and housing infrastructure. She was recently made aware that FTE’s are being cut from the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS), particularly in the area of vocational-rehab. She encouraged the legislators to keep in mind during budget season that NCILS has been advocating for services to be restored, and for employing people with disabilities. NCILS was also hoping to see bills pass that enhance housing accessibility, and support low income housing throughout Montana. She further noted that HB 16 is important to NCILS.

**Abigail St. Lawrence**, Montana Building Industry Association, reported that the Association has been working to support HB 236 along with the Montana League of Cities and Towns, and that HB 105 is important to military families.

**Jane Weber**, on behalf of the Cascade City-County Board of Health, reviewed and discussed the handout titled: “Legislation affecting the Cascade City-County Board of Health.” In summary, the Cascade City-County Board of Health takes the following positions on key legislation:

- Oppose – HB 481: An Act Revising the Clean Indoor Air Act Relating to Private Establishments
- Oppose – SB 179: An Act Prohibiting the Expansion of Prohibitions Under the Clean Indoor Air Act
- Oppose – HB 516: Provide Small Herd Exemption for Raw Milk Producers

### **3. 2019 Legislative Bills affecting Local Government**

Commissioner Bronson reviewed and discussed the handout titled: “Memorandum” with the Subject: “Legislation of Interest to the City of Great Falls,” and noted that the list is not all-inclusive. In summary, the City of Great Falls takes the following positions on key legislation:

- Oppose – HB 462, pertaining to Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
- Monitoring – SB 321, pertaining to TIF
- Support – HB 16, proposal for utilizing the coal tax trust fund as backing for affordable housing programs
- Support – HB 236, pertaining to local government building code programs
- Support – HB 331, authorizes municipalities to establish, adjust, and collect rates, rentals, and charges for solid waste services
- Monitoring – HB 553, pertaining to infrastructure
- Monitoring – Entitlement Program: the City remains concerned about proposals to utilize a portion of the entitlement program share to fund the public defender program
- Oppose – HB 300, pertaining to taxation
- Oppose – SB 315, pertaining to appropriations and the entitlement program and funding for the Office of Public Defender (OPD)

Mayor Kelly added that the City supports HB 236 in its current form that was sponsored by the Montana League of Cities and Towns. The bill asks for a one year period of time extension (total of 24 months) for Planning and Community Development departments to better plan and utilize the funds from fees.

Commissioners Weber and Larson continued discussion on the following 2019 Montana Legislation affecting Cascade County:

- Support – SB 291: An Act Revising Voting Systems and Ballot Form – Accessible Voter Interface Devices
- Support – HB15: An Act Revising County Motor Vehicle Recycling and Disposal Laws
- Support - HB 105: Reciprocity for Practitioners Licensed in Other States
- Support - HB 190: Allowing Local Authority to Set a Speed Limit Without an Engineering Study

- Support - SB 224: Increasing the Fine for Encroachment on Highway Roadways
- Support - HB 299: Removal of the \$250,000 Cap on Intercap Loans for Rural Special Improvement District (RSID) Projects
- Support - HB 372: Increase Inflation Limitation on Government Entities for Property Tax
- Support - SB 161: Allow Concurrent Services as Water/Sewer Director and Rural Fire Trustee
- Support - HB 635: Establish a DUI Reduction Grant Program
- Oppose - SB 26: Remove Requirement for State to Pay for Certain Prosecution Witness Fees
- Oppose - House Appropriations Request for Bill Draft Possibly for HB 2: Relating to Use of Entitlement Funds to Pay for Certain Public Defender Costs
- Support - MACo Policy #16 from the Health & Human Services Committee: Reauthorization of Medicaid Expansion

It was noted that draft bills not yet on the internet can be requested from Legislative Services.

Additional County legislative consideration:

- Mental Health Crisis and Regional Jails

Mental health issues touch families across Montana; and Montanans with mental health issues are often unnecessarily housed in regional jails during times of crisis. Many of these individuals have committed misdemeanors, minor offenses like disturbing the peace or petty theft caused by delusionary episodes. Due to a reduction in community services and reductions in payments to providers, many regional jails have become the proxy facility for housing Montanans in mental health crises. Diverting these individuals to appropriate mental health facilities is a priority but is not easily accomplished.

Cascade County sees the need to create a crisis bed facility, but funding for the development and sustained management of such a facility is not achievable given the relatively flat tax base. Cascade County currently sets aside \$1/resident (approx. \$82,000) to supplement the Center for Mental Health's budget in providing crisis management training for first-responders and a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) to evaluate an individual's situation and divert them from a conviction and unnecessary incarceration. Every attempt is made to prevent incarceration, which can exacerbate mental health issues and escalate a mental health crisis. The County will continue to seek long-term resolutions for our citizens suffering with mental health issues.

- An Act Transferring Juvenile Parole Supervision from the Department of Corrections (DOC) to Youth Court

The DOC is seeking legislation to transfer its responsibility for supervising juveniles released from a juvenile correctional facility to the local juvenile probation offices and originating court jurisdiction where the youth offended. This legislation illustrates the "shift of burden" philosophy which is opposed by both the County and City.

Representative Schreiner commented he believes this refers to HB 111. It was tabled in Judiciary, became part of larger budget negotiations, and now has been referred to Appropriations.

#### **4. Questions from Legislators**

Representative Jacobson advised that he recently received bill draft LC 9235 at the request of Airport Director John Faulkner. It excludes the Airport from the cap on the ability to levy mills. The provisions of subsection (1) do not prevent or restrict a governmental entity from levying mills for support of an Airport Authority in existence prior to the effective date of this act, regardless of the amount of the levy imposed for the support of the Airport Authority in the past. The levy under this subsection is limited to the amount in the resolution creating the Authority as provided in Mont. Code Ann. § 67-11-301.

Representative Schreiner referred to MACo's list of resolutions supporting certain legislation to pay for specific things. He reminded everyone that there may be multiple ideas on raising the same exact taxes to pay for different things. There are only a finite amount of dollars. Legislators still need to figure out how to fund Medicaid expansion or any other services that may require revenue increases in the future.

#### **5. Conclusion and invitation to meet again mid-legislative session**

Mayor Kelly and Commissioner Weber encouraged the legislators to reach out to the City and County when they hear of bills that may affect local government, as well as on bills they care deeply about so that appropriate City and County representatives can be utilized to provide supporting testimony.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further discussion, Mayor Kelly adjourned the informal special joint work session of March 5, 2019 at 4:23 p.m.