



# *Helena Civic Center Board*

*PO Box 272, Helena MT 59624*

## **MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING** CIVIC CENTER BOARD April 16, 2019

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Joann Christnacht, Steve Crider, Brad Culver, Riley Johnson, Judy Kline, Kathleen Pace, Rick Schlenker, Glenda Seipp

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Tim Andridge, Mike DaSilva, Bonnie Lorang, Kacey Pilon, Skip Hatveldt

**MEMBERS UNEXCUSED:** Trevor Parrish, Craig Wilkerson

**OTHERS PRESENT:** City Staff: Byron Dike, Bridget Johnston, Troy Sampson, City Manager Ana Cortez

**CALL TO ORDER:** Board President, Judy Kline called the meeting to order at 3:57 PM.

**MEETING MINUTES:** Rick Schlenker moved to approve the minutes as written; Riley Johnson seconded the motion; the minutes were approved as written.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Brad Culver presented the treasurer's report for March. Riley Johnson moved to accept the checks, Steve Crider seconded, motion passed. He also shared a report showing funds raised, mentioning the board raised 1.9 million dollars in 22 years. Joann Christnacht moved to approve the treasurer's report, Riley Johnson seconded, motion passed.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** Judy Kline mentioned that she, Brad, Joann and Gery Carpenter all met with City Manager Cortez last week, and then she turned the floor over to Ana Cortez.

**CITY MANAGER REPORT:** Manager Cortez said she has been in her new role for three months and the Civic Center is at the top of her agenda. She'd like to cover housekeeping issues and strategic issues.

- **Board Bank Account:** Manager Cortez informed the board that as long as they are a City advisory board, they cannot have a separate account. Their account will need to be closed and a new fund can be made within the City's accounts. She stated that an alternative would be for a non-profit be set up for fundraising in which that organization could have their own account and raise funds for the building. Kathleen Pace asked what brought this up and Manager Cortez answered that it was discovered in an innocent conversation and gave her a red flag. She said that it is best practice not to have their own account and for liability and protections, it is best to follow the same checks and balances as the City by using a City account. An ad hoc committee will meet to discuss the best way to move forward with the banking.
- **Advisory Board:** Manager Cortez explained that the Civic Center Board is an Advisory Board to the City Commission. The board advises the Commission, the Commission directs staff. The Board would need to submit the five year plan and their budget to the Commission, the Commission then would give direction to staff. Brad Culver commented that when he came on board the Civic Center was a dump. The board did a lot of fundraising and heavy lifting to get it to what it is today. Manager Cortez said she appreciated what they've done but the structure needs to change. She said let's put a structure to do it properly. She also stated partnerships need to stay in place. Guest Bridget Holland asked "if this is so wrong, how did it go on for decades through several managers, attorneys and Commissioners?" Manager Cortez said it was

easier for them to let it go and not do anything. She has the hard job of facing it. Guest Gery Carpenter asked if the time frame for the ad hoc meeting could give the board time to look into the option of a 501c3 non-profit. Manager Cortez said they could have time but the change needs to happen soon.

- **Board Events:** Manager Cortez said that the board needs to have liability and indemnification documents for events they host at the Civic Center. She asked Byron Dike what is required of clients. He stated they sign a booking agreement and provide insurance. Kathleen asked if they need to purchase liability insurance for their events. Bridget Johnston asked if it is possible for the City to purchase an insurance plan naming the City as a certificate holder. Since the board is not a separate entity it doesn't seem like they would purchase a separate plan. Byron stated that other City departments do not provide separate liability insurance. Manager Cortez said she would need to check with the City Attorney.
- **Civic Center Funding:** Manager Cortez informed the board that the Civic Center is one of five funds being cut in the FY20 budget. Last year the Civic Center received \$486,000 in general fund support and this year she is recommending \$386,000. She has directed staff to find the other \$100,000. She said the City budget has been spending more than it has been bringing in since 2014 and she is facing the problem and not kicking the can down the road. She said the City is eliminating vacant positions, freezing positions, cutting capital and this year the Civic Center will have to use reserves to cover budget. She stated she knows this won't fix the problem but helps her balance this year.
- **Civic Center Operations:** Manager Cortez said that she is thinking about ways to change the business model. She is giving the Civic Center Manager a year to prove his theory and see if his plan works. In the meantime she will be putting out an RFP to seek ideas or proposals for how to operate the business to break even or possibility make a profit. Brad Culver asked what the RFP will tell us that the Cultural Planning Group's study hasn't already told us. He said we spent \$50,000 on that study. Manager Cortez answered that the study looked at the same business model but she is seeking all ideas from running a venue to installing a pool to renting it as office space. She wants to hear the ideas. Manager Cortez asked the board for any concerns or specific language they'd like in the RFP. The things they came up with were: Keep the character of the building/venue; keep the venue affordable and accessible for the residents; should not compete with private business in Helena and it should have a public purpose. Manager Cortez said she would come to the board with a draft before releasing.

**COMMISSION REPORT:** None

**STAFF REPORTS:** Tabled

**FEB FEST:** Tabled

**CIVIC CENTER BOARD BUDGET AND CIVIC CENTER 5YR PROJECTS PLAN:** Tabled

**OLD BUSINESS:** Tabled

**NEW BUSINESS:** Tabled

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Tabled

The meeting was adjourned at 5:08 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 14, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bridget Johnston, Administrative Assistant III