

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT OF MISSOULA

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 18, 2026 | 3:00–5:00 PM | In Person

Present: Charlie Beaton, Chris McClead, Michael Albritton, Luke Jackson, Ellen Buchanan,

Absent: Karen Sippy, Scott Stearns

Guest: Christine Littig

Staff: Linda McCarthy, Jack Hall, Jake Treece

The meeting was called to order at 3:07 pm.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BY CHRISTINE LITTIG, MEP

Littig provided her quarterly report on downtown business development. The board expressed skepticism about the state of businesses in Downtown. Board members are hearing across the board that business has been booming, while Littig has expressed that many are struggling.

Large concerts and festivals were forecasted and reported to receive a huge amount of economic prosperity. However, there have been businesses who have reported to Littig of not feeling the overflow from the concerts and large events this season that we saw last season. Hotels have been reported as very busy.

Littig feels that the community is starting to match national trends; we have a group of people doing well, a group not doing so well, and those in the middle – winners and losers. Littig also noted that many businesses that have been in similar industries, opened at the same time, and are right next to each other are doing wildly different.

Littig shared that Cruz Tacos went back and forth on a new location; they really want to stay downtown. West Broadway is unsurprisingly difficult to operate at. Goldie, a business doing lots of pop-ups, have been trying to find a location downtown. Funk It Coffee received a grant; there is a new taco shop taking over the James Bar space; Green Source has new ownership of its location; a Himalayan restaurant is scoping downtown properties.

McCarthy shared that lots of downtowns are hurting; lots of downtown locations are trying to convert commercial spaces into residential locations. Downtown Missoula is doing better, with steady movement and a 4% vacancy rate and lots of upcoming new developments.

Beaton questioned whether the struggling businesses are trying to refresh or reinvent themselves or not; you have to do marketing and not have handwritten signs in the door. Businesses could just be aging out; lots of consumers expect newer, sooner.

Conversation ensued on how businesses are independent and move how they want to move. MEP is not seeking out businesses to sell, move, or do XYZ with their business; instead, they leave the door open and are happy to help when referred or reached out to.

A Downtown Dialogue topic was proposed for succession planning, trying to keep topics current and relevant.

MEP is having conversations with banking and loan committees that are meeting and working with them; lots of these people don't know about Downtown SAM. TrailWest Bank is looking into a zero-interest loan opportunity to coincide with Downtown SAM.

REVIEW & APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Albritton made a motion to approve; Buchanan seconded; all approved.

FINANCIAL REVIEW: FY2026 YEAR-END AND FY2027

Two sets of financials were reviewed, including year-to-date financials and the FY2026 year-end financials. The FY2026 year ended well, with a higher cash position than the previous year, which was not anticipated. A pro-rated BID policing invoice was received because only one officer was available and there was very little patrolling from the second officer.

Full depreciation has hit on both Tacomas. Year-end liabilities included the June Clean Team payment, which was made in July. Year-end payables are the Clean Team and policing.

Looking at the P&L, FY2026 Tax Assessments were approximately \$475,000, compared to a budget of \$437,000. This is positive and provides additional spending money. Anticipated revenues are in for the year. There were no graffiti or snow removal contracts.

Total income is slightly less than anticipated. Approximately \$10,000 of this was due to giving Parking Commission and Mountain Line a break on policing. Assessment savings are making the biggest difference. On the expense side, less was spent than budgeted, with administrative expenses shifting significantly. \$115,000 was budgeted for policing, while approximately \$67,000 was spent.

For maintenance, spending was mostly in line with the budget. Garbage expenses are expected to be higher; Republic Services has made a few changes that have increased costs. Marketing is about normal, with some additional marketing expenses. The Clean Team contract was slightly less than budgeted. Looking at just July, revenues and expenses were regular with nothing notable.

For the next 5–6 months, a deficit is expected. Net ordinary income is -\$78,467.70.

Conversation ensued on ways to generate more power washing revenue. Conversation then

ensued on graffiti, with significant amounts of graffiti reported, particularly on the bridges. The Missoula Department of Transportation is not doing anything about it.

GRANTS FOR CLEAN TEAM EXPANSION

Carrie Harper landed \$22,500 to support the Clean Team from the Missoula High-Stakes Foundation and Wallace Foundation; the hope is to prop up a team that can water trees.

The board agrees that tree watering could be really positive; planting of trees Downtown will also persist. ORI has been seeing a lot of cuts and they are having challenges in acquiring more clients to do this type of work based on federal regulations.

MDF BUSINESS SUPPORT & RESILIENCY GRANT PROGRAM

\$275,000 has been raised so far; the MDF is still waiting on a couple more donors; funds accrued might hit \$300,000; the Missoula Chamber will be providing \$5,000.

McCarthy made the following clarifications for the board pertaining to this grant program.

- Nonprofits qualify; government entities and agencies do not.
- Property owners qualify if they have a business.
- Why limit to 50 full-time or fewer employees? Businesses with 50 or more employees are office occupants and don't require foot traffic as much.
- About 15 businesses will likely be disqualified from this program.
- MDA membership is not required.
- Street doesn't need to have construction, but businesses need to be in the downtown district.
- Unspent funds – the board will consider the best way to utilize unused funds after the second round.
- Businesses can apply for both cycles, but must be a different grant option per cycle.
- Contributors can't apply.
- Post-grant reports from businesses will need to include metrics like event attendees, click/open rates, sales numbers, pictures.
- The board will assess the potential of expanding this program if needed.

PROGRAM UPDATES: MAINTENANCE, CLEAN TEAM, POLICING, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Clean team is proceeding as normal. The maintenance team has been busy with graffiti removal, power washing, and supporting the DMP with events. Officer Suazo has very little updates. Suazo is continuing to patrol downtown during the busy summer and having to interface a lot with people experiencing homelessness.

PROJECT UPDATES: CARAS, BEARTRACKS, DRAW, ICE, MURALS, ALLEYS, GATEWAYS, OTHER

All Caras Park improvements are done; Beartracks Underbridge is done. The DMP is seeing lots of graffiti in the park. DRAW Project just has the north wall and landscaping remaining.

Averill Hospitality bought Holiday Inn and is interested in a Caras Park management agreement with Parks and Rec and doing the ice rink. There is a new mural starting production tomorrow for the Arts and Culture Impact Grant.

The DMP is trying to work with the Florence and Penny Building to make a mural in the alley. There is some synergy going on for an alley pop-up party by Masonic Temple. North Riverside Parks and Trails meeting is resetting goals for next year.

PARTNER UPDATES FOR MDA & MDF

For the foundation – Past to Plate tours are coming up. The DMP is Gearing up for strategic planning in October; budgeting; etc. Downtown ToNight and Out to Lunch are almost complete. River City Roots Festival is this upcoming weekend. There will be another alley pop-up in October in the alley next to Toiffer.

NEW BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Michael Albritton has started a new job with the Nature Conservancy after 20 years at BLM.

With no other new business or announcements, the meeting was adjourned at 4:54 pm.