

**Mayor's Downtown Advisory Commission Minutes**  
**June 17, 2016**

**Commission Members in Attendance:** Ginny Merriam (City of Missoula), Eran Fowler Pehan (Poverello Center), Michael Moore (Reaching Home: Missoula's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness), Dan Cederberg (Downtown Attorney), Nicole Rowley (County Commissioner), Elizabeth Marshall (Palace Apartments), Melinda Mason (Children's Mental Health Bureau), Laurie Johnson (Downtown Ambassador), Jon Wilkins (City Council), Judge Kathleen Jenks (Municipal Court Judge), Rob Scheben (Citizen), Margaret Borg (Retired Attorney) and Bryan von Lossberg (City Council)

**Commission Members Absent:** Andrea Marcoccio, Keithi Worthington (Deputy City Attorney), Susan Hay Patrick (United Way), Loreen Hamilton (Salvation Army), Travis Mateer (Homeless Outreach Volunteer), Sue Wilkins (Missoula Correctional Services) and Lt. Jake Rosling (Police Department)

**Others in Attendance:** Sindie Kennedy (Grants), Jade Beatty and Heidi Bakula (Mayor's Office)

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of February 2, 2016, March 1, 2016, April 5, 2016 and May 3, 2016 will be reviewed at a later date.

1. Special Presentation – Jail Diversion Draft Plan – Cynthia Wolken, TJ McDermott, Emily Bentley

Eran Fowler Pehan set the tone for the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to talk about jail diversion and how it impacts MDAC. (The plan document can be accessed by going to Missoula County's site – [missoulacounty.us](http://missoulacounty.us), and searching for Jail Diversion).

TJ McDermott, Missoula County Sheriff, and Senator Cynthia Wolken gave an overview of the plan.

Cola Rowley discussed its impact on Missoula County.

- Jail Diversion only pertains to non-violent, pre-trial offenders.
- One day in the Missoula County Jail costs \$108 and the Missoula County jail only holds 224 people.
- MDAC may be most interested in coordinating behavioral health services.

There was discussion on the main issue, which is where to house people that require assistance or those needing housing after commitment. There was more discussion about emergency housing and what is available. Dakota House can take 6 voluntary intakes and 2 involuntary intakes right now for emergency detention purposes. The other issue at St. Pats and the Western Montana Mental Health Center is capacity, only 2 beds are available.

Emily Bentley mentioned that St. Pats hospital is taking Medicaid patients which is very helpful to those low income people needing care.

Cynthia stated that another hurdle is that most facilities that have bed space do not offer ambulatory detox, it would need to be a skilled nursing facility. Also needed are emergency detention beds for major psychiatric issues. This would be voluntary only.

Eran asked about the 1115 Medicaid Waiver and if it would cover ambulatory detox. Cynthia said it was not a blanket waiver, but currently she is working on a wrap-around housing waiver at the legislative level.

Michael Moore stated that recently he went to a state healthcare and housing meeting. At that meeting permanent, supportive housing was discussed and two local organizations want to talk about building ownership in Missoula. Housing is the most essential issue in order for a person to not walk right into the same situation after ambulatory detox, etc. Michael asked and the city and county are not able to financially support this endeavor. The hospitals are tentatively listening to the conversation, but they need to be on board as a financial partner first.

Judge Jenks said that the aggressive inebriants are causing the most problems in the community. If they were in wet housing at least it would keep them out of jail.

Eran asked if there would be efforts to consolidate the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness and Jail Diversion. Cynthia said she would leave that up to the city and county policy makers to decide. The group noted that Eran and Michael should definitely be in the conversation regarding coordination of housing.

There was further discussion on the timing of the payoff of the Jail Bond. TJ said that it would be paid off in 2018 and it is a great idea to apply those funds to this project when those funds become available.

Cola discussed the plan and that there were 40 different pieces to implement. So far they've been able to implement some cultural programs, mental health programs, and there are people reporting on the current changes in the jail population.

Jon Wilkins asked why the Department of Corrections cannot hire more people in order to implement this plan. Cynthia explained that it was a funding issue. The non-violent, pre-trial offenders waiting for sentencing are getting stuck within the system. The problem with funding and the over-population issue could be greatly improved if non-violent, pre-trial offenders were released with monitoring devices before their sentencing hearing.

Over population is a major issue. The Department of Corrections uses 20% of Missoula's beds and inmates are constantly shuffled. Recently beds were purchased in Shelby, Montana for inmates from Missoula.

Eran asked how MDAC could support the jail diversion efforts. Emily Bentley said that the draft plan would be going to city council in July. Eran asked if they could all discuss implementation. Emily thought prioritization would be a good place to start.

Cola suggested a written statement from MDAC on prioritization. TJ thought it would be helpful to show that MDAC is a partner in the process. He felt that the mental health component was extremely important and the more partners involved the better.

Judge Jenks mentioned moving the juveniles out of the facility they are in and using that space for detox. TJ said that would be 24 beds but they would need skilled medical staff. Community Medical Center is willing to provide the staff if the city comes up with a facility. Cynthia explained that Community has an endowment that the city/county can apply for. The jail diversion board is getting together and developing an application now.

Eran stated that MDAC would submit comments to the jail diversion team by June 22<sup>nd</sup>.

## 2. Comments from Board Members

MDAC agreed not to meet in July and will reconvene in August.

Respectfully Submitted, Heidi J. Bakula, Executive Assistant, **Next Meeting will be August 2, 2016**