From:	Matts Larson
To:	Ginny Merriam
Cc:	Grp. City Council and City Web Site
Subject:	Urgent - Formal complaint - limitation of public comment features re: budget fy 2021
Date:	Wednesday, August 12, 2020 1:51:39 PM

To whom it may concern,

I would like to formally file a complaint to the communications department of the city of Missoula and all bodies with oversight of this department.

Please immediately forward this email to all appropriate steering committees and individuals involved or who have oversight.

The issue at hand is the topic of the “fy 2021 budget” currently posted to engagemissoula.com

This topic is very much unlike the other topics on the engagemissoula website in that there is no archive to all relevant public comment. The comments have also switched specifically on this topic to a “survey form” and are not compiled in complete form or live published. This is a contrast to many other topics on engageMissoula.com. It has been decided by the powers (mayor engan, city council majority and other related officials) that be that any commentary be forwarded on a weekly basis to open meetings regarding this topic.

Why?

Why don’t you explain to the public theyre better off commenting to the agenda directly?

Why isn’t the process and sluggish time line of updating clearly explained on the engage Missoula website?

this chosen action by communications department and all city departments with oversight resulting in a convoluted and slow process. For example this means if I comment on the “budget fy 2021” topic thru engage Missoula website then I must wait up to a entire week for my public comments to be viewable to assigned city officials and other interested members of the public.

This among other actions taken by city officials have the effect (Either intended or unintended) of limiting the openness of these meeting and discussions

It is imperative that the appropriate body’s act ASAP as there are meetings on the horizon and public commentary will be closed in roughly 10 days!

Turn On live comments for this and all discussions that the city is truly wanting to solicit public commentary on!

This action and or inaction is among a list many others that is in direct violation of Montana state code relating to “meetings that are to be open to the public”

Specifically we should be addressing where it’s written in the law in no uncertain terms that the entire related state cod is to be “liberally construed in favor of openness.”

If action is not taken swiftly it will continue to be very detrimental to the “meaningful public commentary” you as city government officials are required to facilitate.

Thank you!

Regards,

-Matts Larson

Sent from my iPhone