— DESTINATION —
FORT BENTON

June 23, 2025 Minutes

Attendees: Shannon Walden, Karyn Giles, Joellyn Clark, Katie Richter, Jessie Salazar, Lanny Walker, Austin McGrann (Chouteau County Fair manager), Katie Flynn (Dedman Foundation manager)

1. Approve minutes
   Minutes have been emailed to the Steering Committee and posted on the website. A lot is happening at each meeting so please read the minutes to stay informed!

2. Treasurer's report
   A treasurer's report was provided by Joellyn Clark (attached at the end of this page). This format will provide a complete picture of our grant balances and operating funds more adequately than just providing a bank balance. Karyn made the suggestion to add Reimagining Rural and other grant funds to this report also (because they will be reflected in the bank balance. This report is missing the bank check expense. We discussed purchasing authority. As President, Shannon can make the call of spending up to $200 without approval of the board for time sensitive projects (such as the parade and flower pots. We are setting up an account at Fort Benton Hardware and the bank signers/officers will be listed on the account. Please bring your volunteer hours to report at the meeting so we can record for future grant writing purposes.

3. Flower pots
   Jessie Salazer bought 4 pots back from Missoula. DFB Steering Committee members have personally donated money to purchase these pots. There are 6 more pots to bring back. Joellyn is going to Missoula and might be able to get at least 4 more. Jessie was able to get leftover flowers donated from Flower Farm in Great Falls, and we are working with Fort Benton Hardware for dirt and paint. Jessie is getting all the pots cleaned and painted a cohesive color. We discussed where to place them and it was decided to try to offer them to Front Street businesses to adopt for free. They will take over the maintenance and watering and are responsible for replanting. DFB will try again next spring to work with Flower Farm or other greenhouses for flower donations.

4. Parade / banners

   Jessie had the idea of displaying the pots for a Destination Fort Benton float in the Summer Celebration parade. Joellyn is going to try to find a trailer we can use. We had some banners made for the float and will make some signs to stick in the pots. It will be a nice way to bring some attention and credibility to our organization. There is room for a few to ride the float and room for people to walk alongside if anyone is interested in handing out candy on our behalf. We are not allowed to throw candy. The float needs to be registered and there might be a $20 fee.

5. Insurance update

   We were not able to get Church Mutual to come through with a quote so we had to go with the only other option we were provided with. We signed insurance papers last week. The cost will be $3145.00 for the year which is steep but our only option. Non profit insurance is difficult to obtain in Montana right now. We will try again next year for a Church mutual quote.

6. Office space: signing lease, cleaning and moving in

   The City has to publicly post their intent to offer DFB a lease contract, so that begins this week and they will have the lease on the agenda to vote on in the July 7th Council Meeting. We had some discussion about which rooms we would be able to use and the possibility of eventually removing the half walls in the large center room. A smaller room is available for smaller meetings. We will need a table and chairs for that space, and a filing cabinet. The suggestion was made to talk to Russ Axtman at the school about obsolete property in storage. Joellyn can check into this.

7. Project Committee Updates
   a. Photo and Video Assets

      This committee (Joellyn, Karyn, Ani) will meet soon to talk about assets needed and how to do a photo contest. We are contracting with Jared's Detours and Matt Ehnes Photography for $2000 to provide photos for web imagery and some blog post marketing coverage.

   b. Branding

      A Request for Proposal (RFP) has been reviewed and sent out to 5 branding agencies. Proposals are due by July 15th and then the committee will interview the top candidates.

   c. Master planning

      Katie Richter is going to be the project lead for this effort. We are working on an RFP and will send it out for committee review in the coming days. Our goal is to release the RFP by July 15. Katie has inquired about putting the RFP on the Montana Plans Exchange where it can be viewed by the appropriate engineering firms. We will also send the RFP directly

to top potential candidates. We will ask for proposals to be returned by September 1st, when we can interview top candidates. We will post in the River Press for 2 weeks about the RFP release, to follow the City's practice.

d. Sub-grant
We've received one sub-grant application so far, and know of several organizations around town working on applications. Applications are due July 15th.

e. Data
Now that insurance is in place, we will move forward with signing the contract with Placer.ai. The data committee has been activated for this project; Jenice Fugere, Ani Gonzalez, Joanna Gould, and Emily Wicks.. Shannon Walden is the lead. She will add Austin McGrann to the group also. Jessie Salazar suggested Amity Honeycut as someone with knowledge in this area.

8. Reimagining Rural update
Karyn provided an update—things are on hold a bit until after Summer Celebration but the group is working on 3 projects—providing supplies for the Arts Council, bringing the HS greenhouse up to operational status, and helping create a Youth Center in the Methodist Church basement.

9. Old Business
Shannon provided an update about the online interactive map that Virginia City uses. The project was developed for the Montana Heritage Commission within the Montana Department of Commerce. Shannon was directed to Dave Ritts who was involved in the project. Dave suggested we look into developing our own web-based platform. "Its not hard to do" They did not sound interested in expanding the project to another community. Austin McGrann said he worked with this department in the past and has the skill set to build something like this. He is working on a similar project for the fairgrounds.

Karyn provided an update about the Women's Club project to improve handicap sidewalk access around downtown. They received the Christopher Reeves Foundation grant they were working on, so they are moving forward with identifying the best locations to add crosswalks and ramps. Access on 16th street from the trail to the grocery store is a priority.

Karyn also provided an update on the kitchen addition at the Ag Museum. Construction for the expansion likely won't begin until next year now, so the facility may be available for use longer than expected this year.

We discussed potential Harvest Host sites. The RV parks often fill during harvest time so having options for this would be good. Katie from Dedman thinks they could take advantage of this and benefit from resulting donations, but wants to talk to the nearby RV park about it. Shannon tried to set one up to test the process, but hosts cannot be personal residences. They must be businesses. There is another site called Boondockers that allows personal residences to offer space.

Minutes recorded by Joellyn Clark.

Next meeting: Monday, July 14, 7 p.m. at the Grand Union

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TREASURY REPORT

YEAR 1 = $250,000

	PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	PCTGP BUDGET	BUDGET EXPENDED	BUDGET REMAINING	UPCOMING EXPENSES
1	Engineering/Master Planning	$75,000.00		$75,000.00	
2	Brand and Style Guide Development	$10,000.00		$10,000.00	
3	Photo and Video Asset Library	$10,000.00		$10,000.00	$2,000.00
4	Redesign fortbenton.com website	$10,000.00		$10,000.00	
5	Tourism Asset Survey	$28,000.00	$24,731.60	$3,268.40	
6	Placer.ai tourism data service	$13,200.00		$13,200.00	
7	Wayfinding Signage	$28,800.00		$28,800.00	
8	Grant within a Grant program	$20,000.00		$20,000.00	
9	Grant Administration	$50,000.00	$433.50	$49,566.50	
10	Steering Committee travel and training expenses	$1,000.00	$1,075.40	-$75.40	
11	Steering Committee meeting & planning space rental	$3,600.00		$3,600.00	
12	Steering Committee Meeting & Printing expenses	$400.00		$400.00	
	TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET	**$250,000.00**	**$26,240.50**	**$223,759.50**	

NON-GRANT

	DONATIONS	INCOME	EXPENSE	COST
1	Anonymous	$10,000.00	Post Office Box	$82.00
2			Stamps	$7.30
3			501c3 application fee	$319.00
4			Insurance	$3,145.00
5			Parade banners	$112.43
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
		$10,000.00		**$3,665.73**
			REMAINING BALANCE	**$6,334.27**