

NW Montana

Council diary

A summary of city council actions on Monday night:

WHITEFISH

Approved a conditional use permit for The Mix on Baker Avenue to allow for the construction of multiple buildings on one property.

Approved an ordinance amending subdivision regulations to change parkland dedication requirements.

Approved a request by 2nd Street Lofts for a conditional use permit to develop a mixed-use multi-family project with 15 dwelling units on East Second Street.

Approved a request by Whitefish West Ltd. Partnership for an amendment to a preliminary plat to develop five duplex lots into 10 townhouse lots on Haugen Heights Road.

OK'd a request from Sparrow's Nest of Northwest Montana for a conditional use permit for a teen homeless shelter to operate in a home on Colorado Avenue.

Approved an ordinance reaffirming the prior approval of the City Hall and parking structure project and designating the projects as urban renewal projects and approving the financing of the projects.

OK'd a resolution establishing rates charged to purchase the space for a nameplate on a memory wall in the Whitefish Cemetery.

Approved an interlocal agreement with the Whitefish Fire Service Area for a new five-year contract for fire protection services.

Approved an amendment to the construction contract with Martel Construction for the City Hall and parking structure in the amount of \$10.2 million.

OK'd a resolution for a \$120,000 water system revenue bond from the state Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Program.

OK'd a resolution for a \$960,000 sewer system revenue bond from the state Water Pollution Control State Revolving Loan Program.

KALISPELL

Set a public hearing for Jan. 19, 2016, on the city's plan to be a conduit for bonds valued around \$35 million for Immanuel Lutheran Corporation.

Approved the first reading of an ordinance to match the City's Motor Vehicles and Traffic codes with the signs already put in place by the Kalispell Parking Commission.

Approved a request by Stillwater Corporation to extend the Glacier Town Center planned unit development plan for one year.

Approved the purchase of a Ford F-450 Type I Ambulance from Sawtooth Emergency Vehicles for \$165,061. The city budgeted \$170,000 for a new ambulance this year.

Approved a construction agreement with the Montana Department of Transportation for a federal aid project that will improve the visibility of four traffic lights.

COLUMBIA FALLS

Discussed changes to Columbia Falls' sign code as a result of a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that municipal sign codes need to be content-neutral. Signs can't be regulated by the text on the sign, but only by time, place or manner, the court ruled in a case out of Arizona.

Council member Dave Petersen questioned if the changes would make all signs equal.

The city will still make a size distinction between temporary and permanent signs, city planner Eric Mulcahy said. The size of political signs was increased to 20 square feet.

Another change is that political signs no longer have a limit to how long they can be up. Mulcahy said signs still have to be well-maintained and not falling apart. If a temporary sign has been up for one year, it's no longer temporary and the owner will have to get a permanent sign permit.

Learned that the city is in the process of signing its first agreement with Three Rivers EMS to provide ambulance services and backup services by the Columbia Falls Fire Department. This is to prevent what happened in the past when a police officer had to drive an ambulance and another time there weren't any EMS personnel available to drive the third ambulance, City Manager Susan Nicosia said.

Reappointed Justin Breck and his law office as city attorney for another two-year term for \$59,370 plus \$300 per month for additional criminal duties and \$333.33 per month for union labor duties.

Learned that the developer of an industrial park off Railroad Street is paying \$4,700 to BNSF Railway to be able to install a sewer main extension under the tracks. Installing the sewer costs \$155,000, Nicosia said. The city is working with the developer to obtain the BNSF easement.

Unanimously approved a new cluster zoning to allow property owners to create smaller lots in exchange for open space or agriculture easements.

Judge won't dismiss compact suit

By **SAM WILSON**
Daily Inter Lake

A Lake County district judge has ruled against the state of Montana's motion to dismiss a lawsuit challenging the implementation of the water rights compact for

the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

The suit was launched by the Flathead Joint Board of Control shortly after the Legislature in April passed Senate Bill 262, which ratified the controversial agreement at the state level.

The suit alleges that the bill effectively granted new legal immunities to the state, which would require approval by two-thirds of the Legislature's two houses rather than the simple majority that voted in favor of the compact in April. Gov. Steve

Bullock signed the compact into law on April 24.

In his Dec. 2 order, Judge James Manley wrote that a provision in the law appears to create immunities for state employees or appointees and

See **COMPACT, A5**



ADMINISTRATIVE staffers and volunteers at Immanuel Lutheran Communities gather for a photo in front of their new bus on Thursday morning. From left, row one: Hannah Brown, Joy Mahlum, Jason Cronk, Kim Schildt, Bob Moore. Row two: Deb Walton, Bill McClusky, Marlene McClusky, Ronalee Skees, Delores Lynch, Susan Simonsic, Donna Trippett and Carla Wilton.

(Brenda Ahearn/
Daily Inter Lake)

Immanuel Lutheran gets bus donation

By **SEABORN LARSON**
Daily Inter Lake

Residents of Immanuel Lutheran Communities in Kalispell on Thursday got a little more mobile with the donation of a new senior citizen transportation bus.

"Thanks to our volunteers, this new bus will help our residents to be engaged in the community," said Immanuel

Lutheran Chief Executive Officer Jason Cronk. "We're so humbled to have such a gift for Immanuel Lutheran."

More than \$50,000 donated by the auxiliary gift shop and coffee bar inside the assisted living facility plus a large private donation by Ivan O'Neill paid for the bus. The new Ford F-450 bus features better lights, more seating, more wheelchair and walker

storage and a microphone to assist tours of Kalispell.

Six of the 15 seats can easily be converted into wheelchair positions.

Cronk said the bus will be used to transport residents around the Flathead Valley to community luncheons, eaters, dinners and more.

The first outing will be the Christmas lights tour this weekend with Recreation and

Wellness Manager Hannah Brown.

"It's such a gift for the residents," Brown said. "It will be great to have the extra space for wheelchairs and walkers."

Immanuel Lutheran's former bus, which had been in use for 20 years, will be donated to another group. Cronk said Immanuel Lutheran would decide on the beneficiary in the coming weeks.

Christmas at Our House

The 26th annual Christmas at Our House dinner is from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday at the Montana Army National Guard Armory, 2989 U.S. 93 north of Kalispell.

Everyone is invited to this free traditional holiday meal.

A food drive for the Northwest Veterans Food Pantry will take place. Guests are asked to bring a donation of canned food.

Santa will also pay a visit during the event.

Eagle Transit will offer a free shuttle service from Kalispell, Whitefish and Columbia Falls to the armory. The buses will stop at senior apartments, grocery stores, libraries and other public buildings. For the complete bus schedule, go to www.flathead.mt.gov/eagle and click on the "Christmas at Our House" link, or call 758-5728.

Cash donations may be addressed to Christmas At Our House, P.O. Box 10644, 30 N. Meridian Drive, Kalispell MT 59904. Call 406-261-1398 for more information.

Blood drive

The Daily Inter Lake is hosting a blood drive in recognition of an employee recently diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. today at the Inter Lake's offices at 727 E. Idaho in Kalispell. To make an appointment to donate blood, call Dorothy at 758-4450.

Youth Home event

The Flathead Youth Home is hosting a holiday open house from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. today.

The home is located at 825 E. Oregon St., Kalispell.

The public is welcome to come and enjoy hot cocoa, soup and treats.

Those who would like may bring a gift to place under the tree or some stocking stuffers. Gift ideas include socks, gloves, earrings, CD alarm clocks, gift cards, movie passes and toiletries.

Mansion tours

The Conrad Mansion in Kalispell offers Christmas tours at 11 a.m. and 1 and 3 p.m. today and Saturday.

Learn about Conrad Christmas traditions and see the two-story decorated Christmas tree.

The tours cost \$12 for adults, \$11 for seniors, \$8 for students or \$6 for children. Reservations are required. Weekend tours continue through Dec. 26. From Dec. 27 to 30, tours are available by appointment only.

Call 755-2166 for reservations. For more information, visit www.conradmansion.com

Lake House

Lake County, in partnership with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal

Weekend update

A preview of public events around the valley this weekend

Health Services, Providence Health and Services and the Western Montana Mental Health Center, is having a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening of the Lake House at 11 a.m. today. The public is invited.

Special guest will be Gov. Steve Bullock. Lake House will serve adult residents of Lake County and neighboring counties. It is located at 7 13th Ave. E., directly below Providence St. Joseph Hospital in Polson. For more information, contact Patty Kent at 406-360-8912

Vet Center

The Kalispell Vet Center hosts its fifth annual holiday open house from 1 to 4 p.m. today at 690 N. Meridian Road in Kalispell. The public is invited.

The colors will be presented by the local Civil Air Patrol and refreshments will be served.

Nonperishable food items will be collected and donated to the Northwest Montana Veterans Food Pantry.

Christmas Stroll

The Whitefish Christmas Stroll is from 5:30 to 9 p.m. today.

There will be wagon rides, craft vendors, face painting, chestnuts roasting, a shoppers drawing, live music and more.

The Alpine Bell Ringers Handbell Choir performs at 6 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church.

The tree-lighting ceremony is at 6:15 p.m. outside the O'Shaughnessy Center.

Wolverines

The Whitefish Wolverines play the Idaho Steelheads at 7:05 p.m. today and Saturday and at 1:35 p.m. Sunday.

This weekend's games benefit Toys for Tots. Tonight is Kid's Night. There will be face painting, a Teddy bear mascot and games. Saturday night the Glacier Skate Figure Skating Academy will perform, and Sunday is Family Day.

If you bring an unwrapped present for Toys for Tots to any of the games, admission will be \$5 for adults; if a child brings one his or her admission will be free. There will also be donation buckets to benefit Toys for Tots.

Kila bazaar

Kila School is having a holiday bazaar from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday featuring

more than 20 vendors. There will be live music, food, children's activities and photos with Santa.

Cookie Carousel

St. Matthew's School is having its fourth annual Cookie Carousel from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday in the school gym at 602 S. Main St., in Kalispell.

Homemade Christmas cookies and candies will be for sale. There will also be a free family photo shoot offered with the purchase of two pounds of goodies.

A 50/50 raffle will be held and St. Nick will offer treats to children from 1 to 4 p.m. For more details, call 752-6303.

Big Arm Christmas

The Big Arm Association hosts a children's Christmas event from 2 to 4 p.m. Saturday.

Bring your children to the Big Arm Historic School for an afternoon of food, crafts, games and fun. This year's theme is "Minions."

For more information, contact Nancy Foster at 849-5064.

Breakfast with Santa

Whitefish Moose Lodge has its annual Breakfast with Santa from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday. Children 12 and under eat free. Each child will also receive a gift. Everyone is welcome.

The lodge is located at 240 W. 10 St.

Wreaths Across America

Two Wreaths Across America ceremonies honoring veterans are planned in the Flathead Valley on Saturday. Both events start at 10 a.m. and the public is invited.

Kalispell — Members of the Montana Wing of the Civil Air Patrol will conduct a ceremony at the Veterans Memorial at Depot Park.

The squadron is placing 1,000 wreaths on veterans' graves at Glacier Memorial Gardens north of Kalispell on U.S. 93 North in Kalispell starting at 8 a.m. today. Volunteers are welcome.

Columbia Falls — The Glacier Chapter — Sons of the American Revolution will place ceremonial wreaths recognizing the six branches of the military and POW/MIAs inside the Montana Veterans Home. Keynote speaker is Brig. Gen. Robert Sparing of the adjacent general's office in Helena. The national anthem will be performed by members of the Columbia Falls High School Choir.

A reception for Veterans Home residents and attendees will take place afterward. The public is then invited to car caravans to the Montana Veterans Home Cemetery to help place wreaths on veterans' graves at about 10:45 a.m.