



**VISION STATEMENT:**  
"The Magic City: A diverse,  
welcoming community  
where people prosper and  
business succeeds."

## WORK SESSION SUMMARY

Billings Public Library

January 16, 2024

5:30 P.M.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Cole

Present: Councilmember Kendra Shaw, Ward I  
Councilmember Gulick, Ward I  
Councilmember Neese, Ward II  
Councilmember Denise Joy, Ward III  
Councilmember Bill Kennedy, Ward III  
Councilmember Scott Aspenlieder, Ward IV  
Councilmember Mike Boyett, Ward V  
Councilmember Tom Rupsis, Ward V  
Mayor William Cole

Absent/  
Excused: Councilmember Jennifer Owen, Ward II  
Councilmember Daniel Tidswell, Ward IV

Staff  
Present: Chris Kukulski, City Administrator  
Kevin Iffland, Assistant City Administrator  
Gina Dahl, City Attorney

Mayor Cole made opening comments.

Public Comment:

- Dan Brooks, Chamber of Commerce, offering recommendations on Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED). Upcoming aspirational city visit in June to Grand Rapids to learn more about public safety and homelessness.
- Anna Contreras, 505 Steve Street, Billings, Montana, spoke about issues with Billings Police Department.
- Catherine Card, 2815 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue S., Billings, Montana, spoke of homelessness in Billings.
- Ms. Contreras, no address given, questioned why she is being tracked in her vehicles.

### 1. Public Safety Prevention Roundtable Discussion

Introductions around table by City staff and Council.

The following individuals introduced themselves: Tom Bonard, Love in Christ; Annie Hasiack, Boys and Girls Club of Yellowstone County; Nick Enslow, Boys and Girls Club; Rep. Mike Yakawich; Terri

Todd, Gratitude in Action; Ellis Stanton, AmeriCorp VISTA; Erwin Garcia, SD2 Superintendent; Makayla Weaselboy, Native American Empowerment Project; Karen Sylvester, Mental Health Center; Zack Terakedis, Substance Abuse Connect; Melissa Henderson, Health Department; Eric Owen, Riverstone Health; and Jon Forte, Riverstone Health; Mark Morse, County Commissioner.

Eric Owen gave an overview of why early prevention was important. He discussed how trauma affected children and A.C.E. scoring.

Melissa Henderson gave an overview the following statistics: abuse and household violence, suicide, substance abuse, firearms, injury and safety, homicide, and negative traumas.

Zack Terakedis, gave an overview of coalitions working together to address issues. He spoke of ways to address issues.

Terri Todd, gave an overview of ways to access help in the community, housing project opportunities, and the need for a centralized access point for available beds.

Makayla Weaselboy, gave an overview of the Native American Empowerment Project and how they were helping the Native American community.

Karen Sylvester, gave an overview of ways the Mental Health Center helped kids in the community.

CM Shaw – question for Makayla: where does funding come from? Makayla Weaselboy - Receive 1% of IHS budget divided by the State, Medicaid and grants.

CM Gulick – question for Riverstone Health: seeing a lot of driving aggression, research of results in ACES and alternative transportation. Melissa Henderson and Eric Owen responded.

CM Boyett – does data show Headstart has an impact? Edwin Garcia – brings readiness which has long term affects.

CM Kennedy – question to Terri Todd, coordination of agencies in community. 67 providers met to discuss how to work together. Faith based communities helped various organizations. Spoke about the need for a centralized hub.

CM Rupsis – key metrics for crime prevention - Terri Todd, Erwin Garcia, Zack Terakedis and Eric Owen responded.

Public Comment:

- Amanda Stonerock, infrastructure problem related to resources, issues in coordination of services. Council needs to put pressure on State of MT to reimburse Medicaid.
- Nina Hernandez, Friends of the Children Eastern Montana, spoke about services provided to foster children and partnership opportunities.
- Diane Welhaven, 2726 Woody Drive, Billings, Montana, spoke about challenges with housing in Billings.

The following groups seated at the table spoke:

Tom with Love in Christ, partners with local churches and businesses to teach how to get and maintain employment.

Annie and Nick with Boys and Girls Club, enabling young people to develop strong positive relationships.

Rep. Mike Yakawich, spoke of HB 872, 5 initiatives, investing \$7 million in residential beds, \$7.5M community based court ordered evaluation, \$7M mobile crisis, crisis center, (4 or 5 cities), \$500k crisis work curriculum, \$600k intellectual and developmental disabilities entry level workforce.

Ellie Stanton, spoke of domestic violence, benefits and status of family justice center.

Dr. Erwin Garcia, SD2, spoke of positive changes.

Mark Morse, Yellowstone County Commissioner, explained funding for mental health issues.

CM Kennedy explained mental health services and challenges.

Council discussion continued.

## **2. Highlight Upcoming Agenda Items of Council Interest.**

Chris Kukulski, City Administrator, spoke of the following items: Council retreat dates, March 4 and 5 or March 15 and 16, and the State of MT Veterinary Medicine School coming to Billings.

Council discussed dates and length of time for the retreat.

Public Comment:

- None

### **COUNCIL DISCUSSION:**

- None

**PUBLIC COMMENT on "NON-AGENDA ITEMS". Speaker Sign-in required.** *(Restricted to ONLY items not on this printed agenda. Comments are limited to 3 minutes or as set by the Mayor. Please sign the roster at the cart located at the back of the Council chambers or at the podium.)*

**ADJOURN:** 8:21 pm