

DRAFT FY26 BUDGET GOALS – BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Council Priorities: **Red**

Underlying Budget Goals: **Bold**

Improve the safety of Billings for all citizens

- Increase use of technology to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the police and fire departments.
- Reduce overtime in PD and Fire through better utilization of overall payroll expenses including adding staff where it demonstrates overall savings.
- Examine opportunities within the criminal justice system for additional investments in crime prevention
- Support the expansion of the Yellowstone County Detention Facility through reducing the city tax burden on residents, to create room for the support of a bond question by the County **(split support on specific language regarding reducing tax burden)**.
- Assist in funding the build-out of the Family Justice Center.

Sustain and Upgrade Critical Infrastructure

- Continue airport improvements to expand passenger and freight services.
- Understand facility maintenance charges sufficient to maintain city owned properties and develop a multi-year approach to achieving the required fee structure.
- Pursue funding opportunities for park amenities at west-end water reservoir.
- Continue stormwater, pipe replacement programs, and transportation investments
- Examine the impacts of holding utility rates flat for the year against raising utility rates to meet best practice for maintenance and capital projects. Understand what decisions need to be made to reprioritize projects so that utility rate increases can be delayed for city residents
- Include estimated operational costs associated with proposed additional capital investments

Foster Economic Vibrancy through Quality Designed Neighborhoods and Business Districts

- Develop a plan for implementing development impact fees and put in place the structure to set this up for success (streets, fire, police, and parks)
- Implement neighborhood plans to comply with State legislation and use cost of services study to inform specific recommendations
- Examine the addition of a Housing Director position and program resources dedicated to housing. This program and position would address homelessness issues and all other housing issues in Billings. Similar positions and resources exist in other Montana communities and could be examined for application in Billings

Provide Exceptional Educational, Recreational, and Cultural Services and Amenities

- **Focus PRPL resources on maintenance over expansion to develop longer term financial stability. Inclusive of divesting of underutilized properties**
- **Inventory Park assets to develop an asset management/ERP type program. Identify the proposed funding needed for annual set aside and replacement of Parks assets**
- **Examine opportunities to estimate park users to develop more focused funding of parks maintenance.**
- **Support development of the Amend Park Recreation Campus**

Cultivate a High-Performance Organization

- **Increase the general fund reserve. Funded initially by unspent FY25 funds, supplemented by an additional \$100k in FY26 budget.**
 - Total general fund balance should be \$14.7 million at 33% of annual expenditures, this is an increase of about \$2 million over the current amount.
- **Include information showing how this year's budget moves each department towards their near-term goals (3-5 years). Included with a description of upcoming challenges that may not be included in the current budget. Understand long-term impacts of decisions being made.**
- **Identify the appropriate level of information technology and human resource services to maximize our human capital.**
- **Examine overtime budgets across the City to identify opportunities for efficiency improvements**
- **No additional non-public safety FTE (split support on specific language and direction – discussion included whether this applied to only General Fund FTEs, or all City Departments. Discussed some openness to new FTEs if it was not a net increase to departmental budgets)**
- **Use the budget process to identify long-term impacts of annual budget decisions for future programmatic goals**
- **Continue conversations about budget presentations at more detailed level**