

**MINUTES  
OF THE BILLINGS CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING  
February 10, 2025**

The Billings City Council met in regular session in the City Council Chambers, located at 316 N. 26<sup>th</sup> Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Billings, Montana, due to technical difficulties the meeting started at 5:40 P.M.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Cole

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Mayor Cole

**INVOCATION:** Councilmember Gulick

**ROLL CALL:**

Present: Councilmember Kendra Shaw, Ward I  
Councilmember Ed Gulick, Ward I  
Councilmember Roy Neese, Ward II  
Councilmember Jennifer Owen, Ward II  
Councilmember TJ Rogers, Ward III  
Councilmember Bill Kennedy, Ward III  
Councilmember Scott Aspenlieder, Ward IV  
Councilmember Daniel Tidswell, Ward IV  
Councilmember Mike Boyett, Ward V (*Via Zoom, however he was unable to hear or participate in the discussions and was not included in the votes. Considered excused*)  
Councilmember Tom Rupsis, Ward V  
Mayor William Cole

Staff Present: Chris Kukulski, City Administrator  
Kevin Iffland, Assistant City Administrator  
Gina Dahl, City Attorney  
Denise Bohlman, City Clerk  
Andy Zoeller, Finance Director  
Wyeth Friday, Planning Director  
Anna Vickers, Planning Manager  
Dave Green, Planner  
Debi Meling, Public Works Director  
David Watterson, IT Director

**MINUTES:**

- January 27, 2025

Councilmember Neese noted the following revisions: On Page 7, change the notation concerning Councilmember Boyett returning to the meeting as Councilmember Aspenlieder returned to the meeting. Councilmember Neese asked that the following be added to Page 6 of the minutes:

“Councilmember Shaw asked for clarification on Councilmembers Kennedy and Aspenlieder voting, since they had not been present for the presentation. Councilmembers Owen and Boyett indicated they could not vote.”

Moved by Councilmember Neese  
Seconded by Councilmember Rogers  
**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Boyett excused

## **COURTESIES:**

Councilmember Owen reminded everyone that the Northern Lights Family Justice Center was having a public open house on February 11, beginning at 3:00 P.M., at 909 Wyoming Avenue.

Councilmember Owen recognized the Montana Lego League Robotics Programming qualifiers (Billings Central, Teams 1 and 2; Ben Steele Knights; Ben Steele Sharks; and Wise Wonders Know-It-Alls). She noted that the State competition in Bozeman had been cancelled due to bad weather conditions and dangerous roads, but she congratulated the teams for all their hard work.

Councilmember Gulick commended the Code Enforcement Division on the success of the anti-graffiti pilot project as reported in the Administrator’s Weekly Report.

Councilmember Aspenlieder thanked the Public Works Department’s staff and their families for all their efforts with snow removal.

**PROCLAMATIONS:** There were no proclamations.

**COUNCIL REPORTS:** There were no Council reports.

## **ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS - CHRIS KUKULSKI**

Mr. Kukulski provided Council with information that:

1. The next week’s Work Session would be on Tuesday, February 18<sup>th</sup> as City Offices were closed Monday, the 17<sup>th</sup>, due to the President’s Day Holiday.
2. There were 3 exparte communications to the Mayor and Council received after 3 P.M. concerning Consent Agenda Item 1E.
3. The monies collected for snow plowing and removal amounted to approximately 3 residential snow removal cycles per year. If the monies are not used from a previous year, additional monies were not collected again until the fund had been depleted. This year was requiring more snow removal and the fund would be depleted. Each plowing event cost between \$270,000 and \$300,000. He encouraged citizens to remove their vehicles from the streets so plows could effectively and efficiently do their job.

**PUBLIC COMMENT on "NON-PUBLIC HEARING" Agenda Items: 1 and 2 ONLY. Speaker sign-in required.** (Comments are limited to three (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. Comments on items listed as public hearing items will be heard ONLY during the designated public hearing time for each respective item. For items not on this agenda, public comment will be taken at the end of the agenda.)

The following individual provided public comment:

- **Kristi Drake, Executive Director, TrailNet, 2950 Walden Place, Billings, Montana**, in reference to Consent Agenda 1E, provided a check in the amount of \$58,000 to Council to be used toward the construction costs of the Big Ditch Trail extension.

No further public comment was given.

1. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Councilmember Aspenlieder separated Item 1P2 to abstain as his employer received payment.

**Motion:** I move to approve all items on the Consent Agenda, with the exception of Item 1P2.

Moved by Councilmember Gulick

Seconded by Councilmember Shaw

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Boyett excused

A.

**Bid Awards:**

1. **Billings Operations Center - Rooftop Unit Replacement.** (Opened 1/21/25)  
Recommend Air Controls.

Moved by Councilmember Gulick

Seconded by Councilmember Shaw

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Boyett excused

2. **CCTV Storm Inspection Camera.** (Opened 1/21/25) Recommend CUES.

Moved by Councilmember Gulick

Seconded by Councilmember Shaw

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Boyett excused

- B. **Amendment No. 4**, to the Purchase and Sale Agreement (PSA) for City Hall building at 210 N. 27th Street; Honaker Realty, LLC and JWT Capital, LLC.

Moved by Councilmember Gulick

Seconded by Councilmember Shaw

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Boyett excused

- C. **Contract** with DOWL for W.O. 25-18: Grand Avenue Trunk Main Extension and Arnold Drain Detention.

Moved by Councilmember Gulick

Seconded by Councilmember Shaw

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Boyett excused

- D. **Purchase** new playground equipment for Sacajawea Park; Grondahl Recreation.

Moved by Councilmember Gulick

Seconded by Councilmember Shaw

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Boyett excused

- E. **Acceptance** of Fish, Wildlife and Parks Recreational Trails Program Grant and Billings Trail Net donation and authorization to construct the Big Ditch Trail extension.

Moved by Councilmember Gulick

Seconded by Councilmember Shaw

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Boyett excused

- F. **FY25-26 Annual Certified Local Government (CLG) Grant Program** for historic preservation projects.

Moved by Councilmember Gulick

Seconded by Councilmember Shaw

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Boyett excused

- G. **Donation** to Code Enforcement from Rimrock Credit Union for Anti-Graffiti Fund.

Mayor Cole thanked Rimrock Credit Union for their support and donation.

Moved by Councilmember Gulick

Seconded by Councilmember Shaw

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Boyett excused

- H. **Donations** to Police Department from Empire Roofing and an anonymous donor for Camp Blue and other departmental needs.

Mayor Cole thanked Empire Roofing and the anonymous donor for their support and donation to the Police Department.

Moved by Councilmember Gulick

Seconded by Councilmember Shaw

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Boyett excused

- I. **Resolution 25-11253 of Intent** to create SID 1428 Annafeld Subdivision, 5th Filing Streetlights and set a public hearing for March 10, 2025.

Moved by Councilmember Gulick

Seconded by Councilmember Shaw

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Boyett excused

- J. **Resolution 25-11254** amending Resolution 24-11193 to allow for expedited graffiti fund reward payments.

Moved by Councilmember Gulick

Seconded by Councilmember Shaw

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Boyett excused

- K. **Second/Final Reading Ordinance 25-5899** amending Section 6-1300, BMCC - Display of Address Numbers.

Moved by Councilmember Gulick

Seconded by Councilmember Shaw

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Boyett excused

L. **Second/Final Reading Ordinance 25-5900** amending Section 13-400, BMCC - Division 3 Business, Occupation and Profession Tax.

Moved by Councilmember Gulick

Seconded by Councilmember Shaw

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Boyett excused

M. **Second/Final Reading Ordinance 25-5901** amending Section 18-1100, BMCC - Graffiti.

Moved by Councilmember Gulick

Seconded by Councilmember Shaw

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Boyett excused

N. **Second/Final Reading Ordinance 25-5902** amending Section 18-1302, BMCC - Civil Citations Service and Requirements.

Moved by Councilmember Gulick

Seconded by Councilmember Shaw

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Boyett excused

O. **Second/Final Reading Ordinance 25-5903** amending Section 24-411, BMCC - Parking for Camping Purposes.

Moved by Councilmember Gulick

Seconded by Councilmember Shaw

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Boyett excused

P. **Bills for the Weeks of:**

1. January 7, 2025

Moved by Councilmember Gulick

Seconded by Councilmember Shaw

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Boyett excused

2. January 14, 2025

Moved by Councilmember Gulick

Seconded by Councilmember Shaw

**APPROVED 9-0**, Councilmember Boyett excused and Councilmember Aspelieder abstained

## **REGULAR AGENDA:**

2. **RESOLUTION** adopting FY2026 City Council Budget Goals. Council Budget and Finance Committee recommends approval.

Andy Zoeller, Finance Director, provided a brief overview of the budget goals that staff and members of the Council Budget and Finance Committee had prepared.

**Motion:** I move to approve and adopt the FY2026 City Council Budget Goals, as recommended by the Council Budget and Finance Committee.

Moved by Councilmember Gulick

Seconded by Councilmember Rupsis

Councilmember Kennedy sought line-item budgeting for Council to view, freezing some budget items to last year's amounts and consider a 5 percent budget reduction in every department.

Councilmember Aspenlieder expressed his dissatisfaction with the proposed resolution indicating it caused more consternation than consensus. He encouraged the Budget and Finance Committee to work with actual numbers and data with the City Administrator and staff to make the process more efficient and effective. He was not supportive of theoreticals and preferred hard data.

**Substitute Motion:** I move to table this item indefinitely.

Moved by Councilmember Aspenlieder  
Seconded by Councilmember Kennedy

Councilmember Rupsis voiced his support for the substitute motion. However not for the reasons mentioned by Councilmember Aspenlieder. He continued that Council was frustrated during the former budget cycle because they wished to be involved earlier in the process. The proposed resolution missed the mark. Council should review their goals and priorities and compare the budget items as to how they further the Council's goals and strategies. Council should be leading that effort, not staff. He encouraged the Committee drafting the document next year.

Councilmember Neese indicated support of the substitute motion.

Councilmember Owen referenced the MSU Local Government Center's recommendation that a budget goal structure be adopted. She agreed the proposed resolution did not hit the mark. She agreed with Councilmember Aspenlieder that hypotheticals were not helpful and she too preferred hard data. She was not certain how to develop guiding principles if they were necessary. She supported the substitute motion.

Councilmember Gulick voiced confusion and frustration by not moving the process forward. He stated Councilmembers had input in the document and it had not been drafted by staff alone. He asked the City Administrator if staff had enough without the resolution to provide a budget that met Council goals. Chris Kukulski, City Administrator, stated he had balanced budgets over the past 25 years and stated staff's focus was on the Council's goals and strategies adopted last November.

Councilmember Shaw spoke of the proposed resolution being too vague and broad in some cases and too specific in others. She supported using the Council's goals and objectives document. She supported the substitute motion.

Councilmember Owen inquired what concerns the Finance Director had with budget amendments. Andy Zoeller, Finance Director, responded that sometimes there were competing budget amendments to be considered or they may be very robust. He encouraged Council to continue writing the budget amendments as they had in the recent past. Councilmember Owen followed by proposing budget amendments be considered during the first business meeting in June and the final adoption of the budget during the last business meeting in June. Mr. Zoeller was not opposed to the suggestion but noted that traditionally the budget was adopted during the first regular business meeting in June. Typically, budget amendments were worked on the same night as budget adoption.

Councilmember Kennedy preferred a line-item budget over the current structure. He stated it would be easier to identify items that Council may not wish to approve. He noted there would be significant changes to property taxes during this year's legislature and it was unknown how that would affect the City's budget. He encouraged staff to not increase their budgets but hold to the amounts from the previous year's budget.

Mayor Cole supported the process and noted the document was helpful to him. He also noted that all the Councilmembers involved in the Budget and Finance Committee were supportive of tabling the proposed resolution with the exception of the Chair of the Committee,

Councilmember Gulick. He would not support the substitute motion.

A voice vote was taken on the Substitute Motion to table the proposed resolution indefinitely.

**APPROVED 8-2**, Councilmember Gulick and Mayor Cole opposed; Councilmember Boyett excused

**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.)*

No public comment was given.

**COUNCIL INITIATIVES:** There were no Council Initiatives.

**ADJOURN:** 6:41 P.M.



CITY OF BILLINGS

BY: William A. Cole  
William A. Cole, Mayor

ATTEST:

BY: Denise R. Bohlman  
Denise R. Bohlman, City Clerk