

**MINUTES  
OF THE BILLINGS CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING  
July 28, 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, at 5:30 P.M.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Cole

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Mayor Cole

**INVOCATION:** Councilmember Gulick

**ROLL CALL:**

Present: 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  
Councilmember Tom Rupsis, Ward V  
Mayor William Cole

Absent/

Excused: Councilmember Kendra Shaw, Ward I

Staff

Present: Chris Kukulski, City Administrator  
Kevin Iffland, Assistant City Administrator  
Gina Dahl, City Attorney  
Denise Bohlman, City Clerk  
Gavin Woltjer, Interim Parks, Recreation and Public Lands Director  
Debi Meling, Public Works Director  
Rich St. John, Police Chief

**MINUTES:**

- July 14, 2025

Moved by Councilmember Gulick

Seconded by Councilmember Boyett

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Shaw absent/excused

## COURTESIES:

- Citizens Hero Awards (2)

Police Chief Rich St. John presented **Citizens Hero Awards** to two Billings citizens: Zach Simenson, a convenience store clerk who interrupted a \$35,000 scam targeting an elderly customer, and Theresa Butcher, who aided in locating a missing elderly man suffering from Alzheimer's disease. The Chief read the citation for each award, honoring their concern for fellow citizens and quick action that saved lives. Both recipients thanked the Council and noted that many volunteers contributed to each rescue.

- School Resource Officers - Camp Blue

School Resource Officers Tim Doll, Jeremy Beckel, and Jeff Richter then described **Camp Blue**, a youth leadership camp they hosted ("Building Leadership, Unity, and Ethics"). They reported that 25 local students participated in the first camp (fully privately funded) and praised its success. The officers thanked the Council and Mayor Cole for support and noted plans to expand to two weeks and more participants with additional agency partners.

**PROCLAMATIONS:** There were no proclamations.

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

## ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS - CHRIS KUKULSKI

Mr. Kukulski provided Council with information that:

There were no exparte communications received after 3 PM addressed to the Mayor and Council concerning items on the agenda. He announced that item 1B (W.O. 26-03, City Overlay project) was being postponed to a future meeting, and a motion was needed to remove it from the agenda. He highlighted the City's quarterly goals report and mentioned that a committee of staff involved with the High Performance Organization (HPO) were conducting an internal review of departmental core values which would be shared with Council for review. He also noted recent senior citizen scams at Bitcoin ATMs and suggested exploring partnerships with local businesses (such as gas stations) to help protect seniors from fraud.

**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:

- **Dan Brooks, Billings Chamber of Commerce**, spoke in support of Consent Agenda Item 1E (the proposed Downtown Business Improvement District) and Regular Agenda Item 2 (the Montana Tire TIF project), emphasizing their public safety and economic benefits.

There was no further public comment.

**Motion:** I move to remove Consent Agenda Item 1B from the agenda to be rescheduled on a future agenda, as recommended by staff.

Moved by Councilmember Aspenlieder  
Seconded by Councilmember Kennedy  
**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Shaw absent/excused

Councilmember Aspenlieder separated Consent Agenda Item 1, in order to abstain as his company was involved in the project.

Councilmember Kennedy separated Consent Agenda Item 1E for discussion.

**Motion:** I move to approve all items on the Consent Agenda, except for items moved for separation.

Moved by Councilmember Boyett  
Seconded by Councilmember Rupsis  
**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Shaw absent/excused

1. **CONSENT AGENDA**

A. **Bid Awards:**

1. **Big Ditch Extension Trail.** (Opened 7/15/25) Recommend Knife River Billings.

Moved by Councilmember Boyett  
Seconded by Councilmember Rupsis  
**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Shaw absent/excused

2. **W.O. 26-03: Contract 1, City Overlay.** (Opened 7/1/25) Recommend Knife River Billings.

Moved by Councilmember Boyett  
Seconded by Councilmember Rupsis  
**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Shaw absent/excused

B. ~~**Professional Engineering Services Contract with Sanbell for W.O. 25-24: Safe Streets for All 2023.**~~

C. **Purchase** of John Deere Excavator from RDO Equipment Co. for Public Works Distribution and Collection.

Moved by Councilmember Boyett  
Seconded by Councilmember Rupsis  
**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Shaw absent/excused

D. **Final Plat** for Nalkuk Subdivision. **\*Quasi-Judicial**

Moved by Councilmember Boyett  
Seconded by Councilmember Neese  
**APPROVED 9-0**, Councilmember Shaw absent/excused, Councilmember Aspenlieder abstained

- E. **Resolution of Intent to Create 25-11281** Downtown Business Improvement District 1 (BID 0001) and setting public hearing for August 11, 2025.

Katy Schreiner, CEO of Downtown Billings Association (DBA) answered Council's questions about security concerns and services provided by the BID to the southside portion of the district. Councilmember Kennedy asked that Ms. Schreiner attend some future Southside Task Force meetings.

Moved by Councilmember Gulick

Seconded by Councilmember Neese

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Shaw absent/excused

- F. **Second/Final Reading Ordinance 25-5917** amending Section 22-408, BMCC, right-of-way obstructions.

Moved by Councilmember Boyett

Seconded by Councilmember Rupsis

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Shaw absent/excused

- G. **Second/Final Reading Ordinance 25-5918** amending Section 24-601, BMCC, parking of bicycle.

Moved by Councilmember Boyett

Seconded by Councilmember Rupsis

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Shaw absent/excused

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

1. July 1, 2025

Moved by Councilmember Boyett

Seconded by Councilmember Rupsis

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Shaw absent/excused

2. July 7, 2025

Moved by Councilmember Boyett

Seconded by Councilmember Rupsis

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Shaw absent/excused

**REGULAR AGENDA:**

2. **TAX INCREMENT FINANCING ASSISTANCE** from the East Billings Urban Renewal District (EBURD) to Montana Tire (MBA Properties, LLC) for construction of a new automotive tire shop along the north side of 1st Avenue North between 16th Street and 17th Street, up to a maximum reimbursement of \$634,185, as recommended by the Billings Industrial Revitalization District (BIRD) Board.

Heather Doty (BIRD staff) and Ryan Anderson (Montana Tire owner) presented the project scope and community benefits (new jobs, infrastructure improvements, economic revitalization). The project was estimated to be approximately \$6 million and was the largest investment in the area since the TIF began and included the entire block. Montana Tire has been in the area for the past 20 years and was seeking to expand its business.

Council asked questions about job creation, reuse of the old facility, and fiscal impacts. The owner confirmed the project will create 11–15 new jobs (increasing from 8 current positions). City

Administrator, Chris Kukulski, noted the TIF funds cash flow could accommodate the award. Councilmember Aspenlieder voiced concern about using a large share of EBURD funds on one project, cautioning that future infill projects might face financial constraints. Councilmember Neese noted minor errors in the application but supported the project, which he said will catalyze further development without additional TIF incentives. Mayor Cole expressed confidence that the project's visible redevelopment will spur more investment in the EBURD.

**3. Motion:** I move to approve Tax Increment Financing Assistance from the East Billings Urban Renewal District (EBURD) to Montana Tire (MBA Properties, LLC) for construction of a new automotive tire shop along the north side of 1st Avenue North between 16th Street and 17th Street, up to a maximum reimbursement of \$634,185, as recommended by the Billings Industrial Revitalization District (BIRD) Board.

Moved by Councilmember Kennedy  
Seconded by Councilmember Gulick

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Shaw absent/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 provided.

#### **COUNCIL INITIATIVES:**

There were no Council initiatives.

Councilmember Kennedy discussed a meeting with the State addressing a swampy area near 6th Avenue. The State indicated there were no funds to remedy it and Councilmember Kennedy suggested that the Conservation District consider landscaping the area to catch the water runoff. Ongoing maintenance could be done by the Southside Task Force.

Councilmember Aspenlieder announced there would be a Parks Board meeting in the Rimrock conference room in City Hall on July 30<sup>th</sup>. On another note, he mentioned that since Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad had acquired Montana Rail Link property along the railroad tracks, businesses on the north side of the track were having difficulties moving development projects forward. He asked that Council consider taking some kind of action. Mayor Cole indicated he received information that other communities were also experiencing difficulties with BNSF and he would share what others were doing to address their issues. Councilmember Kennedy noted other areas in the City where BNSF owned properties, needing to be cleaned.

Councilmember Aspenlieder spoke of the recent tour of properties with the Board of Investments concerning a new State-owned mental health facility in Billings. He suggested there be a joint letter sent to the Governor from the City and Yellowstone County asking for a face-to-face meeting in Billings asking for details about its operation and management. The subject would be placed on a future Work Session agenda.

Councilmember Rupsis spoke of Council meeting efficiencies and rules to be placed on an upcoming Work Session agenda. On another note, he spoke of developing a housing committee and asked for one other Councilmember to volunteer to be on that committee. Mayor Cole noted that the Council Operations Subcommittee was working on revisions to the City's Code concerning rules of procedure and a red-lined version would be forthcoming to the Council for consideration.

**ADJOURN:** 6:33 P.M.



CITY OF BILLINGS

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

ATTEST:

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