

**MINUTES
OF THE BILLINGS CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
August 11, 2025**

The Billings City Council met in regular session in the City Council Chambers, located at 316 N. 26th Street, 5th Floor, Billings, Montana, at 5:30 P.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mayor Cole

INVOCATION: Councilmember Neese

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
Mayor William Cole

Absent/
Excused: Councilmember Kendra Shaw, Ward I
Councilmember Tom Rupsis, Ward V

Staff
Present: Chris Kukulski, City Administrator
Kevin Iffland, Assistant City Administrator
Gina Dahl, City Attorney
Toni Keehner, Deputy City Clerk
Matt Hoppel, Fire Chief

MINUTES:

- July 28, 2025

Moved by Councilmember Gulick

Seconded by Councilmember Neese

APPROVED 9-0, Councilmembers Shaw and Rupsis absent/excused

COURTESIES:

- Councilmember Aspenlieder thanked the Fire Department for their quick response to a recent medical emergency. He asked the community to keep Sean Ryan and his family in their thoughts and prayers.
- Councilmember Kennedy invited the community to a carnival sponsored by the Family Tree Nurturing Center and South Side Task Force on Saturday, August 16, 2025.
- Councilmember Rogers spoke of the Veteran’s Navigation Appreciation concert on August 15, 2025, at the Red Oxx Events Lawn.
- Councilmember Neese reminded constituents of the upcoming Montana property tax rebate.

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.
- Consent Agenda Item 1D, Billings Police Officer’s Collective Bargaining Agreement needed to be removed from the agenda.
- The Chamber of Commerce would be hosting a luncheon with the Commissions of Security and Insurance on Tuesday, August 19, from 11:45 AM – 1:00 PM at City Hall.

PUBLIC COMMENT on "NON-PUBLIC HEARING" Agenda Items: 1 and 3 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.)

No public comment was provided.

1. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Motion: I move to remove Consent Agenda Item 1D from tonight’s agenda.

Moved by Councilmember Neese

Seconded by Councilmember Rogers

APPROVED 9-0, Councilmembers Shaw and Rupsis absent/excused

Councilmember Aspenlieder requested Item 1H(1) – Bills for the Week of July 14, 2025, be separated in order to abstain from the vote due to his employer’s involvement.

Motion: I move to approve all items on the Consent Agenda as submitted, excluding Items 1D and 1H(1).

Moved by Councilmember Kennedy

Seconded by Councilmember Neese

APPROVED 9-0, Councilmembers Shaw and Rupsis absent/excused

Motion: I move to approve Item 1H(1).

Moved by Councilmember Neese

Seconded by Councilmember Rogers

APPROVED 8-0, Councilmembers Shaw and Rupsis absent/excused, Councilmember Aspenlieder abstained

A. Mayor Cole recommends that Council confirm the following appointments:

1.

	Name	Board/Commission	Term	
			Begins	Ends
1	Ashley Kavanagh	Billings Parking Board*	08/11/25	12/31/25
2	Zach Audet	Housing Authority*	08/11/25	12/31/25

*1 Unexpired term of Mark Kary

*2 Unexpired term of Tom Boos

B. **Bid Awards:**

W.O. 25-07: Landfill Gas Collection System Lift Two. (Opened 7/15/25) Recommend Olympus Technical Services.

C. **Amendment No. 1**, to Public Safety Software Systems agreement with Tyler Technologies.

D. ~~**Billings Police Officers' Unit Collective Bargaining Agreement.**~~ **REMOVED FROM AGENDA**

E. **Professional Engineering Services Contract** with HDR Engineering, Inc. for W.O. 26-08: WRF Digester Gas Piping.

F. **Purchase** (6) Police Patrol Utility Vehicles and (1) Police Responder Patrol Truck; Duval Ford.

G. **Donation** to Parks Department from Partners for Parks for two (2) timber-framed shade structures on Skyline Trail.

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

1. July 14, 2025

2. July 21, 2025

REGULAR AGENDA:

1. **PUBLIC HEARING AND RESOLUTION 25-11282** creating Downtown Business Improvement District (BID 0001). Staff recommends approval.

Chris Kukulski, City Administrator, reviewed the statutory re-creation process, noting the petition exceeded the 60% requirement with signatures representing 71.88% of property within the proposed district; Council adopted a Resolution of Intent on July 28, 2025, setting this public hearing. He summarized the BID work plan focus on public safety, beautification (flower baskets/graffiti abatement), garbage removal, and sidewalk maintenance.

The following individuals provided public testimony:

- **Leonard Llewellyn, (hospital corridor resident)**, requested continued exemption for owner-occupied residential properties, citing past exemptions and fixed-income concerns.
- **Dan Brooks (Billings Chamber of Commerce)**, supported re-authorization, highlighting public safety and “Clean” services’ value.
- **Mike Mathew, (Downtown condo owner)**, supported the BID but raised equity concerns with condo assessments due to per-parcel admin fees; provided examples of disparate totals for identical floor areas.
- **Jessica Ogdin, (Yellowstone Art Museum)**, supported BID safety resources describing useful responses for incidents not requiring police.
- **Sherry Daly, (Downtown business owner)**, spoke in support of the Downtown Improvement District.

No further testimony was given.

Council Questions / Staff Responses:

- **Owner-occupied residential exemptions:** Katie Schreiner, Downtown Business Association Chief Executive Officer, confirmed owner-occupied, non-commercial residences within the BID remain exempt via a simple affidavit; once filed, the exemption continues unless ownership changes.
- **Condominium assessments:** Katie explained a \$50 per-parcel admin fee (approved by the BID Board) drives much of the condo discrepancy; the Board can examine potential adjustments in future budgeting.
- **Service tiers / geography:** Properties south of the railroad tracks are in the Safe Zone (assessed at 20% for safety services only). Properties may opt in to Clean & Safe services by contract; any boundary expansion would require petition thresholds.
- **Chamber building location:** Katie confirmed the Chamber property lies outside the BID boundary.
- **Visibility of services:** Mayor suggested PR/visibility ideas (e.g., distinct vehicle markings) so businesses recognize BID-funded services.

Motion: Having conducted a public hearing and considered written and spoken testimony, I move to approve a resolution creating Downtown Business Improvement District (BID 0001), as recommended by staff.

Moved by Councilmember Ed Gulick
Seconded by Councilmember Neese

Councilmember Owen supported the motion but emphasized the need for City leadership to address ongoing downtown safety issues in partnership with the BID. Councilmember Kennedy stated he would vote no, citing unresolved concerns affecting outlying properties.

APPROVED 8-1, Councilmembers Shaw and Rupsis absent/excused, Councilmember Kennedy opposed

2. RESOLUTION 25-11283 creating the Board of Trustees for the Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) No. 0001. Staff recommends approval.

City Administrator Chris Kukulski summarized that, following creation of the BID, Council's action was to establish the BID Board of Trustees; staff recommended appointing the same individuals who were previously identified, consistent with the agenda packet.

City Attorney Gina Dahl explained a revised resolution issued before the meeting clarified that each trustee seat is held by the property owner entity (with corrected legal names in Section 2); the individual representative names were unchanged.

Motion: I move to approve a resolution creating the Board of Trustees for Downtown BID No. 0001, as recommended by staff.

Moved by Councilmember Gulick

Seconded by Councilmember Boyett

Councilmember Aspenlieder stated he would vote no, expressing concern with board composition (3 nonprofit organizations among 7 seats) and preference for more business-owner representation.

Councilmember Gulick noted nonprofits within the BID also pay assessments and are stakeholders.

Councilmember Neese asked about Big Sky Economic Development's eligibility; the Mayor and City Attorney confirmed eligibility is based on owning property within the district.

APPROVED 7-2, Councilmembers Shaw and Rupsis absent/excused, Councilmembers Kennedy and Aspenlieder opposed.

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.)*

The following individuals provided public comment:

- **Kristi Drake, Executive Director, Billings TrailNet**, reported that crack sealing on the Black Otter Trail began today. She noted 271 cracks along the Swords Park rim segment, with 250+ daily users. Funding includes a Montana FWP Trail Stewardship grant (approx. \$40,000 estimate from Wharton Asphalt) with no direct City funds, plus matching from Phillips 66; after sealing cracks, the plan is to seal-coat the trail and continue pursuing grants. She added the City has sought repairs at Riverfront Park. The Mayor thanked TrailNet and acknowledged the handouts.

With the Mayor's permission for a brief second comment, Ms. Drake congratulated the City on the new two-way downtown cycle track, emphasizing improved safety for less-confident riders and anticipating increased walking/biking activity and downtown vitality.

There was no further public comment.

COUNCIL INITIATIVES:

There were no Council initiatives.

ADJOURN: 6:28 P.M.



CITY OF BILLINGS

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

ATTEST:

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