



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

## WORK SESSION SUMMARY

**Council Chambers**  
316 N. 26<sup>th</sup> St.

**February 3, 2025**

**5:30 P.M.**

### **CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Cole**

**Present:** Councilmember Shaw, Ward I  
Councilmember Gulick, Ward I  
Councilmember Neese, Ward II  
Councilmember Owen, Ward II  
Councilmember Rogers, Ward III  
Councilmember Aspenlieder, Ward IV  
Councilmember Boyett, Ward V  
Councilmember Rupsis, Ward V  
Mayor William Cole

**Absent/  
Excused:** Councilmember Kennedy, Ward III  
Councilmember Tidswell, Ward IV

**Staff:** Chris Kukulski, City Administrator  
Kevin Iffland, Assistant City Administrator  
Gina Dahl, City Attorney  
Debi Meling, Public Works Director  
Wyeth Friday, Planning Director  
Lora Mattox, Transportation Planning Coordinator

### **Oath of Office – Swearing In Ceremony**

Judge Kolar swore in Councilmember TJ Rogers for Ward III.

### **Public Comment:**

Danny Choriki, former Councilmember, Billings, MT, spoke of the importance of Beartooth RC&D and how they helped local businesses and surrounding counties.

Sullivan Huebner, Ward II, Billings, MT, spoke of concerns with US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and how the City planned on handling Federal government mandates.

Warren Ussery, 4145 Jansma, Billings, MT, spoke of concerns with response times to Police calls.

Kristi Drake, TrailNet, Billings, MT, spoke of 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. Corridor and Yellowjacket trails were important to residents and requested Council support from Council and the Transportation Alternatives Program.

### **1. Utility Billings Conversion Audit**

Chris Kukulski gave an introduction of presenters and what issues had been found from the audit.

Dave Allen, SL Serco, gave an overview of: meter accuracy, utility billing, billing accuracy, and communications. He reviewed meter accuracy, test results, billings accuracy, utility billing Bottom line: meters are accurate, system is calculating correctly, exception overload and project staff was too lean. He explained the process on go live day, key observations, and path forward.

Chris indicated the City should have: had 1 IT employee in Public Works, contracted a 3<sup>rd</sup> party software conversion expert to represent the City throughout the project, improved communication with public and executive staff, moved implementation to October once April had been missed, and requested a delay in rate adjustment to triage exceptions. He indicated these would become action items going forward:

Council questions and discussion.

**Public Comment:**

Thomas Staycheff, 4168 Bruce Avenue, Billings, MT, City should have sent out 2 separate bills instead of combining 2 months. Formatting of older bills was easier to read.

Holly Harvest, representing 3 manufactured home communities, spoke of billings issues and unauthorized ACH payments. No resolution after multiple calls and emails.

Anthony Rowey, 2115 Vista Way, Billings, MT, spoke of a lack of trust in the new utility billing system.

Council continued discussion.

Debi Meling, indicated there would be a call center set up, staffed by temporary employees, and staff had created a FAQ sheet to help answer questions. Phone number: 657-8315, email [audit@billingsmt.gov](mailto:audit@billingsmt.gov), [www.billingsmt.gov/auditresults](http://www.billingsmt.gov/auditresults).

**2. Billings MPO Transportation Alternatives Program**

Lora Mattox, Transportation Planner, gave an overview of the federal non-motorized grant, infrastructure laws, funding. She reviewed eligible and non-eligible projects, potential projects and the local TA program timeline.

Council questions and discussion.

Wyeth Friday, Planning Director, spoke of opportunities for trails with multiple connections, maintenance requirements, and various projects receiving grant funding.

**Public Comment:**

None

**HIGHLIGHT UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS OF COUNCIL INTEREST.**

None

**COUNCIL DISCUSSION**

CM Owen – bringing forward a draft initiative. Resolution to create a reporting function with performance metrics.

**ADJOURN: 8:29 P.M.**

