



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

COUNCIL CHAMBERS
316 N. 26th Street

WORK SESSION SUMMARY
MAY 5, 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 Kennedy, Ward III
Councilmember Tidswell, Ward IV
Councilmember Aspenlieder, Ward IV
Councilmember Boyett, Ward V
Councilmember Rupsis, Ward V
Mayor William Cole

Absent/
Excused:

Staff: Chris Kukulski, City Administrator
Kevin Iffland, Assistant City Administrator
Gina Dahl, City Attorney
Daniela Pavuk, Assistant City Attorney
Toni Keehner, Deputy City Clerk
John Caterino, Facilities Manager
Jessica Fust, Facilities Specialist
Karla Stanton, Human Resources Director
Andy Zoeller, Finance Director
Jeff Roach, Aviation and Transit Director
Rusty Logan, Transit Manager
Wyeth Friday, Planning Director
Rich St. John, Police Chief

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ALL ITEMS. This is the time to comment on any matter (Agenda or Non-Agenda) falling within the scope of the Billings City Council. There will also be time in conjunction with each agenda item for public comment relating to that item. You may only speak once for each item during the meeting.

Please note, the City Council cannot take action on any item of significant interest to the public that does not appear on the agenda. Comments are limited to three (3) minutes during each public comment period or as set by the Mayor. **Speaker sign-in required.** Please sign the roster at the cart located at the back of the Council chambers or at the podium.

- Kevin Nelson, 4235 Bruce Avenue, Billings, MT – spoke of parking issues at Amend Park.
- Ryan Stark, 2225 Prospectors Lane, Billings, MT – spoke of the custodial positions and the negotiating process.

- Tom Iverson, Pride of Montana, Billings, MT – spoke of his custodial team and their role and responsibilities in cleaning City Hall and encouraged Council to support the outsourcing of custodial services.
- Ben Halvorson, no address given, spoke of the negative effects the recently approved tax decisions made by Legislature.

1. **Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID).**

George Maragos, TBID Chairman, gave an overview of TBID.

Aly Eggart, Visit Billings Executive Director, gave an overview of Visit Billings, their FY26 strategic priorities, and goals and tactics. She reviewed their FY26 budget and how the dollars would be spent.

General Council questions and discussion.

-Public Comment

None

2. **Facilities FY26 Budget and Custodial Discussion.**

John Caterino, Facilities Manager, gave an overview of Facilities Administrative and Building services, locations served, methodology for charges, Capital projects through FY30, proposed budget options, and recent accomplishments. He listed pros and cons of outsourcing custodial services, and cost analysis.

General Council questions and discussion: tenant build outs, current costs of custodial services and facilities, and losing Teamsters positions.

Kevin Iffland indicated the City did not currently have funding to build out retail space.

CM Kennedy – want to see a Request for Proposals (RFP) for outsourcing custodial services and maintenance department. He spoke of the potential cost savings of eliminating middle management and hiring an outside company.

Kevin – looked at outsourcing maintenance and did not seem like there would be a cost savings.

Council continued discussion.

Chris Kukuslski indicated Teamsters that provided custodial services had been offered positions at other locations.

-Public Comment

- Don Cape, 1106 Patriot Street, Billings, MT, encouraged Council to proceed with an RFP.
- Pat Kittson, 3923 2nd Ave. S., Billings, MT, spoke against outsourcing the custodial staff.
- Tom Iverson, Pride of Montana, spoke of the background checks his employees went through.

Karla Stanton indicated HR had spoken with the Teamster's representatives and custodial staff had been offered positions at other locations with various shifts.

Motion: direct staff to place outsourcing of custodial services agreement on the next Business meeting agenda and move forward with preparing an RFP for outsourcing the Facilities and Maintenance Division.

Moved by CM Neese

Seconded by CM Boyett

Amended Motion: split vote to separate the two issues.

Moved by CM Shaw

Seconded by Mayor Cole

FAILED 3-8, no voice or hand vote taken

Amended Motion: direct staff to bring back a scope of work with 1 month and an RFP within 90 days.

Moved by CM Kennedy

Seconded by CM Rogers

Failed 8-3, Shaw, Gulick and Rupsis opposed

Vote on Original Motion: APPROVED 9-2, Shaw and Gulick opposed

Recess at 7:22 P.M. Reconvene at 7:30 P.M.

3. Property Tax Legislation and Budget Impact.

Andy Zoeller, Finance Director, gave an overview of HB 231 and SB 542 and how the recently passed legislation would affect the City. He reviewed the tax tiers, reduction in tax revenue, long term fiscal affects and the impact on Billings. He gave an overview of a mill levy timeline budget calendar and Budget and Finance Committee's recommendations.

Gina Dahl, City Attorney, gave an overview of the City's authority to supersede HB 231 and SB 542, She reviewed the terminology, civil risks being assumed by Legislation and indicated she thought there would be too much risk to not follow the State's mandate.

General Council questions and discussion: special election timing, budget reductions for both the 203 and 240 mill amounts, repercussions of not following mandate, effects of the reduction in property taxes to homeowners, and allowable ballot questions.

Kevin Iffland indicated staff had been asked to reduce budget by 11-18%.

-Public Comment

Tony O'Donnell, no audio available.

George Richards, 1824 Bannack, Billings, MT, Firefighters Association, spoke of his participation in the Legislation to protect the firefighters in the City.

Jeff Chartier, Police Officers Labor Union President, spoke of how cuts to the Police Department would negatively impact the community.

Jake Williams, Fire Fighters Union President, encouraged Council to support the 240 mill option and move forward concisely.

Motion: direct staff to develop a budget that maintains FY25 property tax revenue in FY26 and begin planning for a mill levy question during FY27.

Moved by CM Boyett
Seconded by CM Shaw

Council continued discussion.

CM Rupsis – won't vote for a budget over 203 mills, go to voters this fall.

APPROVED 9-2, Tidswell and Rupsis opposed

HIGHLIGHT UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS OF COUNCIL INTEREST:

None

COUNCIL DISCUSSION:

None

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.)*

Amy Aguirre, 1504 Lewis Ave., Billings, MT – spoke of the importance of Council decorum and creating public trust.

ADJOURN: 9:30 P.M.