



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

WORK SESSION SUMMARY

Council Chambers
316 N. 26th St.

June 2, 2025

5:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Cole

Present: Councilmember Shaw, Ward I
Councilmember Gulick, Ward I
Councilmember Owen, Ward II
Councilmember Neese, 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
Andy Zoeller, Finance Director
Debi Meling, Public Works Director
Jessica Fust, Building Official
Rich St. John, Police Chief
Wyeth Friday, Planning and Community Services Director

Public Comment:

- Kevin Nelson, 4235 Bruce Avenue, Billings, MT – spoke of traffic issues and the lack of patrols.
- Matt Varady, 7030 Shepherd Road, Shepherd, MT – spoke of the way he was treated by the Sheriff's Department.

1. FY2026 Departmental Budget Presentations.

- **City Administration**

Chris Kukulski, City Administrator, gave an overview of the FY26 budget. He indicated the Public Information Officer (PIO) position would not be filled. He spoke of the Public Safety Crime Prevention fund, local option marijuana tax, opioid settlement funding and grant funding.

General Council questions and discussion: Thorn Run partnership, funding for the Crisis Response Units (CRU) and the facilities department.

Mr. Kukulski gave an overview of the new proposed utility billing document.

General Council questions and discussion: formatting, delinquent accounts, and communication efforts.

Debi Meling, Public Works Director, explained the billing process and how staff was handling communication efforts.

- **Building**

Jessica Fust, Building Official, gave an overview of the Building department, Code Enforcement, and the State Code adoption process. She reviewed the division personnel, certification requirements, opportunities and challenges, permitting software, new programs, funding, revenues, expenses, and the 5-year outlook.

General Council questions and discussion: management of reserves, fee reduction, how building fees affected development costs, and communication efforts for permitting changes.

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

- **Police**

Rich St. John, Police Chief, gave an overview of the departments focus, Council and department strategic priorities, a breakdown of the Public Safety Fund numbers, personal services numbers and Operation and Maintenance increases. He reviewed FY26 staffing, cost saving measures, overtime numbers and future considerations.

General Council questions and discussion: hiring and training issues, contract negotiations, addressing overtime, family violence goals, CPSM study, turnover, supervising overtime, traffic safety,

- **Planning, Community Development, and Code Enforcement**

Wyeth Friday, Planning and Community Services Director (PCSD), gave an overview of PCSD's staff, goals and upcoming plans. He reviewed the FY26 revenue by class and division, expenditures, and challenges and opportunities.

General Council questions and discussion: short term rental properties, funding for the code enforcement position, Inner Belt Loop planning

-Public Comment

None

HIGHLIGHT UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS OF COUNCIL INTEREST.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION:

CM Gulick – budget amendments need to be submitted by June 10.

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.)*

None

ADJOURN: 9:20 P.M.