

CITY OF BILLINGS
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES
August 4, 2025 – 5:30 P.M.
Council Chambers – City Hall, 316 N. 26th Street

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Bill Cole called the Work Session to order at 5:30 P.M.

Councilmembers present: Gulick, Neese, Owen, Kennedy, Rogers, Aspenlieder, Tidswell, Boyett, Rupsis, and Mayor Cole.

Councilmembers absent: Shaw

Staff present: Kevin Iffland, Assistant City Administrator; Debi Meling, Public Works Director; Jennifer Duray, Deputy Public Works Director

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ryan Starks expressed support for Solid Waste Division staff amid online criticism, describing public misuse of containers, missed pickups, and overfilled bins. He encouraged stronger enforcement of existing rules to reduce litter and improve efficiency.

No additional public comment was received at this time.

Wyeth Friday, Planning Director, introduced the Land Use Planning Team

AGENDA ITEM #1 – Allies in Aging

Presenters: Erika Purington, CEO, and Tyler Amundson, Director of Mission and Development.

Summary: Harrington and Amundson described the recent merger between Big Sky Senior Services and the Adult Resource Alliance, forming Allies in Aging, a unified nonprofit for senior care and advocacy in Yellowstone County. The merger was finalized July 1, 2025, combining boards, staff, and programs under one roof. The organization partners with the City through senior meal sites, transportation coordination with MET Transit, and exercise programs at the Billings Community Center. Approximately \$100,000 in senior mill levy funds flow back to the City each year through this partnership.

Current services include Meals on Wheels, in-home care, Medicare navigation, transportation, caregiver support, dementia education, volunteer programs, and fraud

prevention. Council commended the merger as a model for nonprofit collaboration. Challenges identified include growing senior population, caregiver shortages, and long-term sustainability.

Public Comment:

Kevin Nelson expressed concern over TIF districts reducing county revenue and affecting funding available for senior programs.

AGENDA ITEM #2 – Disaster and Emergency Services (DES) Update

Presenter: Derek Yeager, Yellowstone County DES Coordinator.

Summary: Provided update on Everbridge public alert system, which replaced the former CodeRED sirens. Everbridge is a joint City–County emergency communication platform integrated with the federal IPAWS system. Approximately 15,000 subscribers currently. Efforts are underway to validate data and migrate records. Plans include expanding access via QR codes, utility bill inserts, and public sign-up drives once technical refinements are completed.

Council emphasized improving usability and marketing, coordination with Public Works, and outreach to seniors. Mayor Cole noted the need for a public information officer to support emergency messaging.

AGENDA ITEM #3 – Litter in Billings

Presenters: Debi Meling, Public Works Director; Jennifer Duray, Deputy Director Public Works

Summary: Discussion of persistent litter concerns, particularly along South Billings Boulevard, Blue Creek Road, and freeway corridors. Causes identified include overfilled or uncovered garbage trucks, unsecured loads from private haulers or citizens, and windblown debris. Public Works committed to enhanced driver training, enforcement of proper truck coverage, and reinstated unsecured load fees effective August 1. A community education campaign is planned on bagging garbage and proper recycling.

Council discussion: 6th Street Underpass litter issues, unsecured loads, and enforcement options.

Additional topic:

Staff reported that the landfill currently accepts limited out-of-county waste without required agreements under City Code. Approximately 600 tons of residential waste per year are affected (very small percentage). Council directed staff to amend the ordinance to align with current practice and maintain appropriate fee rates.

Public Comment:

Kevin Nelson suggested restoring 300-gallon containers and offering community drop-offs.

Amy Aguirre encouraged stronger recycling education.

Laurie Nelson highlighted safety concerns and the large amount of pigeon droppings at the 6th Street underpass.

Council directed staff to return with a revised fee schedule, South Billings property map, and education plan.

UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS

City Administrator noted that Police Labor Union contract, Business Improvement District creation, and board appointments were scheduled for the August 11 meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT (Non-Agenda Items)

Kevin Nelson raised concerns regarding noise enforcement, citing lack of tickets issued under the City's existing ordinance. He urged the Police Department to improve enforcement.

ADJOURNMENT

8:12 P.M.