

**MINUTES  
OF THE BILLINGS CITY COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING  
June 16, 2025**

The Billings City Council met in regular session in the City Council Chambers, located at 316 N. 26<sup>th</sup> Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Billings, Montana, at 4:02 P.M.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Deputy Mayor Boyett

**ROLL CALL:**

Present: Councilmember Kendra Shaw, Ward I  
Councilmember Ed Gulick, Ward I  
Councilmember Roy Neese, Ward II  
Councilmember Jennifer Owen, Ward II (arrived at 4:02 P.M.)  
Councilmember TJ Rogers, Ward III  
Councilmember Bill Kennedy, Ward III (arrived at 4:02 P.M.)  
Councilmember Scott Aspenlieder, Ward IV  
Councilmember Daniel Tidswell, Ward IV  
Councilmember Mike Boyett, Ward V  
Councilmember Tom Rupsis, Ward V

Absent/

Excused: Mayor William Cole

Staff Present: Chris Kukulski, City Administrator  
Kevin Iffland, Assistant City Administrator  
Gina Dahl, City Attorney  
Denise Bohlman, City Clerk  
Gavin Woltjer, Parks, Recreation and Public Lands Interim Director  
Andy Zoeller, Finance Director  
Debi Meling, Public Works Director

**ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS - CHRIS KUKULSKI**

Mr. Kukulski provided Council with information that:

- The special meeting was called by Councilmembers Gulick, Aspenlieder and Kennedy after a letter from the Election Administrator was received determining that due to a lack of candidates, the municipal primary election on September 9, 2025 was cancelled for the offices of Mayor, and Councilmembers for Wards 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, and the Billings Municipal Court Judge. If Council chooses to request a primary, however, a resolution will need to be approved tonight.
- A closed executive session immediately followed the special meeting to discuss litigation updates. The Work Session would begin at 5:30 P.M.
- There were no exparte communications to Mayor and Council received after 3 PM concerning items on the agenda.

**PUBLIC COMMENT on "NON-PUBLIC HEARING" Agenda Item: 1 ONLY. Speaker sign-in required.** (Comments are limited to three 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.)

The following individuals provided public comment:

- **Clementine Lindley**, Billings, Montana, supported having a general election only. She supported having more choices.
- **Max Arvanetes**, Billings, Montana, wanted to avoid the costs of a primary election.

No further public comment was given.

## **SPECIAL AGENDA**

### **1. RESOLUTION** requiring or canceling a Municipal Primary Election on September 9, 2025.

Deputy Mayor Boyett asked City Attorney Gina Dahl to provide an opinion about whether councilmembers running for an office should recuse or abstain from the vote. Ms. Dahl stated that after researching the topic it was her opinion that it was the Council's duty to vote on all agenda items and did not meet the criteria for recusal.

Each Councilmember was given an opportunity to share their opinion about requiring a primary election. The majority of the Councilmembers did not wish to pursue a primary election, stating fiscal responsibilities to the taxpayers. Councilmember Aspenlieder and Rupsis supported requiring a primary election to narrow the race from 4 to 2 candidates; stating it was important to have more than 50% of the vote for the mayor position. Councilmember Rupsis argued the point that the 3 candidates who were running for office could personally benefit from the outcome of the election and should recuse themselves from the vote if not because it was illegal, simply because of how it could be perceived.

**Motion:** I move that Council agree to the cancellation of the Municipal Primary Election for all offices as determined by the Yellowstone County Election Administrator.

Moved by Councilmember Neese

Seconded by Councilmember Rogers

**APPROVED 8-2**, Councilmembers Aspenlieder and Rupsis, Mayor Cole absent/excused

**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.*)

No public comment was provided.

ADJOURN: 4:19 P.M.



CITY OF BILLINGS

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

ATTEST:

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

