

**MINUTES
OF THE BILLINGS CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
January 12, 2026**

The Billings City Council met in regular session in the City Council Chambers, located at 316 N. 26th Street, 5th Floor, Billings, Montana, at 5:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Nelson

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mayor Nelson

INVOCATION: Mayor Nelson

ROLL CALL:

Present: Councilmember Kendra Shaw, Ward I
Councilmember Mark Nicholson, Ward I
Councilmember Roy Neese, Ward II
Councilmember Denis Pitman, Ward II
Councilmember Amy Aguirre, Ward III
Councilmember Bill Kennedy, Ward III
Councilmember Scott Aspenlieder, Ward IV
Councilmember Andrew Lindley, Ward IV
Councilmember Mike Boyett, Ward V
Councilmember Tony O'Donnell, Ward V (Via Zoom)
Mayor Mike Nelson

Staff

Present: Chris Kukulski, City Administrator
Kevin Iffland, Assistant City Administrator
Gina Dahl, City Attorney
Toni Keehner, Deputy City Clerk
Louis Engels, Water Quality Superintendent
Debi Meling, Public Works Director
Rich St. John, Police Chief
Karla Stanton, Human Resources Director
Wyeth Friday, Planning and Community Development Director

MINUTES:

- November 24, 2025 - Pending
 - December 8, 2025
- Moved by Councilmember Boyett
Seconded by Councilmember Neese

APPROVED 11-0

- December 15, 2025
Moved by Councilmember Boyett
Seconded by Councilmember Neese
APPROVED 11-0

COURTESIES:

There were no courtesies.

PROCLAMATIONS:

There were no Proclamations.

COUNCIL REPORTS:

There were no Council reports.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS - CHRIS KUKULSKI

Mr. Kukulski advised Council that:

- Utility shut offs for unpaid water bills had begun. He gave an update on the numbers and ways the City was working closely with the public.
- Consent Agenda Item 1A1, Boards and Commissions, had been revised earlier to revise term dates.
- Monday, January 19th City offices would be closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and the Work Session would be held on Tuesday, January 20th.
- Regular Agenda Item 2, Lockwood Water and Sewer Amendment, was revised on Friday to add 2 attachments and revise the staff memo.
- There were no exparte communications to Mayor and Council received after 3 P.M. concerning items on the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT on "NON-PUBLIC HEARING" Agenda Items: 1, 3 and 4 ONLY. Speaker sign-in required. (Comments are limited to three (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. 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:

- **Paul Clark** spoke in support of Consent Agenda Item 1E, Billings Police Officers Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- **Jack Hanson** indicated support of Consent Agenda Item 1E and spoke in opposition of ICE policies.

There was no further public comment.

Councilmember Kennedy separated Consent Agenda Item 1E for discussion.

Councilmember Aspenlieder separated Consent Agenda Item 1I to abstain due to business involvement.

Motion: I move to approve all items on the Consent Agenda, except for items moved for separation.
 Moved by Councilmember Neese
 Seconded by Councilmember Pitman

Councilmember Aspenlieder, in reference to Consent Agenda Item 1C, spoke against the amount of money being spent on project specific websites and public outreach for various Public Works projects.

Councilmember Boyett, in reference to Consent Agenda Item 1H, thanked Rimrock Credit Union for their donation to Camp Blue.

APPROVED 11-0

1. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Mayor Nelson recommends that Council confirm the following appointments:

1.

| | Name | Board/Commission | Term | | REVISED TERM |
|----|-------------------|---|----------|----------|--------------|
| | | | Begins | Ends | Ends |
| 1 | John Scheuering | Animal Control Board | 01/01/25 | 12/31/29 | 12/31/2028 |
| 2 | Frans Andersson | Animal Control Board | 01/01/25 | 12/31/29 | 12/31/2028 |
| 3 | Steve Tostenrud | Aviation and Transit Board | 01/01/25 | 12/31/29 | 12/31/2028 |
| 4 | Ron Spence | Aviation and Transit Board | 01/01/25 | 12/31/29 | 12/31/2028 |
| 5 | James Mariska | Aviation and Transit Board | 01/01/25 | 12/31/29 | 12/31/2028 |
| 6 | Stephanie Donovan | Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee | 01/01/25 | 12/31/28 | 12/31/2027 |
| 7 | Kristy Halderman | Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee | 01/01/25 | 12/31/28 | 12/31/2027 |
| 8 | George Maragos | Billings BID | 01/01/25 | 12/31/29 | 12/31/2028 |
| 9 | Shawna Bonini | Billings BID | 01/01/25 | 12/31/29 | 12/31/2028 |
| 10 | Erin Lambert | Board of Health | 01/01/25 | 12/31/28 | 12/31/2027 |
| 11 | No applications | Community Development Board | 01/01/25 | 12/31/29 | 12/31/2028 |
| 12 | Rebecca Noell | Community Development Board | 09/22/25 | 12/31/29 | 12/31/2028 |
| 13 | Lynn Blevins | Exchange City Golf Board | 01/01/25 | 12/31/29 | 12/31/2028 |
| 14 | Tafuna Tusi | Housing Authority | 01/01/25 | 12/31/30 | 12/31/2029 |
| 15 | Phyllis Crawford | Housing Authority (Elderly) | 01/01/25 | 12/31/27 | 12/31/2026 |
| 16 | Tammy Schwabe | Human Relations Commission | 01/01/25 | 12/31/29 | 12/31/2028 |

| | | | | | |
|----|-------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|----------|------------|
| 17 | Maia Dickerson | Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Board | 01/01/25 | 12/31/29 | 12/31/2028 |
| 18 | Jami Clark | Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Board | 01/01/25 | 12/31/29 | 12/31/2028 |
| 19 | Melissa Henderson | Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Board | 01/01/25 | 12/31/29 | 12/31/2028 |
| 20 | Eugenia Waller | Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Board | 01/01/25 | 12/31/29 | 12/31/2028 |
| 21 | Stephen Eliason | Police Board | 01/01/25 | 12/31/28 | 12/31/2027 |
| 22 | Rich McFadden | Police Board | 01/01/25 | 12/31/28 | 12/31/2027 |
| 23 | Jim Ronquillo | Yellowstone Planning Board - Ward 1 | 01/01/25 | 12/31/27 | 12/31/2026 |
| 24 | Dennie Stephenson | Yellowstone Planning Board - Ward 3 | 01/01/25 | 12/31/27 | 12/31/2026 |
| 25 | John Staley | Yellowstone Planning Board - Ward 4 | 01/01/25 | 12/31/27 | 12/31/2026 |
| 26 | David Nordel | Yellowstone Planning Board - Ward 5 | 01/01/25 | 12/31/27 | 12/31/2026 |

12* - Unexpired term of Valerie Courtney

B. Bid Awards:

1. **W.O. 26-08: WRF Digester Gas Piping, Buried Pipe Replacement.** (Opened 12/16/25)
Recommend COP Construction.

C. Contract with DOWL for W.O. 25-01: Contract 1, 2025 Water Main Replacement.

D. Amendment No. 32, Airport Taxilane; Morrison-Maierle.

E. Billings Police Officers Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Councilmember Kennedy spoke in opposition to the contract and indicated the pay increase was insufficient.

Motion: I move to approve Consent Agenda Item 1E, as recommended by staff.

Moved by Councilmember Boyett

Seconded by Councilmember Nicholson

APPROVED 10-1, Councilmember Kennedy opposed

F. Purchase of one (1) 2026 Vactor for Public Works; Joe Johnson Equipment.

G. Purchase of two (2) 2026 Elgin Broom Bear Sweepers for Public Works; Joe Johnson Equipment.

H. Donation to Police Department from Rimrock Credit Union for Camp Blue.

I. Preliminary Plat Clearwater Estates Subdivision, 3rd Filing. *Quasi-Judicial

Motion: I move to approve Consent Agenda Item 11, as recommended by staff.

Moved by Councilmember Neese

Seconded by Councilmember Kennedy

APPROVED 10-0, Councilmember Aspenlieder abstained

J. Preliminary Plat Extension for Fifty-Four West Subdivision. *Quasi-Judicial

K. Bills for the Weeks of:

1. November 25, 2025
2. December 1, 2025
3. December 9, 2025

REGULAR AGENDA:

2. PUBLIC HEARING AND AMENDMENT with Lockwood Water and Sewer. Staff recommends approval.

Louis Engels, Water Quality Superintendent, gave an overview of the agreement with Lockwood Water and Sewer District and the amendment. He reviewed the parcel and the proposed development of a commercial truck wash, the “waiver of right to protest annexation” and the legal review of City Code and Montana Code Annotated. He reviewed the 3 options available, and indicated staff recommended approval of the waiver.

Councilmember Aspenlieder recused himself from Regular Agenda Item 2 due to business involvement.

Council discussed the amendment and the Targeted Economic Development District (TEDD).

Councilmember Shaw asked for clarification on the City’s ability to annex the parcel in the future if a waiver was signed.

Gina Dahl, City Attorney, indicated if there were a legal annexation process, the parcel would not be able to protest the annexation.

The following individuals provided public testimony:

- **Jeff Kittleson, Billings, Montana**, spoke of City residents not receiving a benefit from County business’s and spoke in opposition of the waiver.
- **Mike Ariztia, Lockwood Water and Sewer District Manager**, spoke of the agreement with the City and the costs involved. He spoke of the partnership between Lockwood Water and Sewer District and the City over the past years and encouraged Council’s support.
- **Craig Dalton, Performance Engineering**, requested clarification on the boundary and indicated the parcel was an island and seemed like an oversight. He requested approval of the amendment without the waiver of right to protest.
- **Don Boos, Blue Beacon**, spoke of plans for the truck wash and its role in the community.
- **Paul Clark, Billings, Montana**, spoke in opposition of the truck wash.

No further testimony was provided.

Council continued discussion.

Motion: Having conducted a public hearing, considered written and spoken public testimony, I move to waive the requirements of BMCC, Sections 26-203 and 26-204 without annexation and require a waiver of right to protest annexation from the property owner and approve an amendment with Lockwood Water and Sewer District, as recommended by staff.

Moved by Councilmember Boyett

Seconded by Councilmember Neese

APPROVED 9-1, Councilmember Nicholson opposed, Councilmember Aspenlieder abstained

3. **NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR PRO TEMPORE.** Staff recommends Council nominate and elect a Deputy Mayor Pro Tempore.

Gina Dahl, City Attorney, suggested Council receive nominations from the floor for the position of Deputy Mayor Pro Tempore. She indicated there was no need for a second for nominations.

Motion: I move to nominate and elect, Councilmember Neese as Deputy Mayor Pro Tempore.

Moved by Councilmember Kennedy

Motion: I move to nominate and elect, Councilmember Shaw as Deputy Mayor Pro Tempore.

Moved by Councilmember Aguirre

On a voice vote the motion to nominate Councilmember Neese was **APPROVED 6-5**, Councilmembers Neese, Pitman, Kennedy, Aspenlieder, Boyett and O'Donnell voted in support.

4. **COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS TO COMMUNITY BOARDS AND/OR COMMITTEES AND COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEES.** Staff recommends City Council determine which Councilmembers will fill vacancies and serve on various community boards and/or committees and Council subcommittees.

Community Boards and Committees:

- **Babcock Theater Board** – Councilmember Lindley
- **Big Sky Economic Development Board** – Councilmember Pitman
- **Beartooth Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D)** – Councilmember Nicholson
- **Bright N Beautiful** – Councilmember O'Donnell
- **Community Development Board** – Councilmember Kennedy
- **Downtown Billings Partnership** – Councilmember Aguirre
- **Health Services - Local Governing Authority** – Mayor Nelson and Deputy Mayor Boyett
- **Policy Coordinating Committee** – Mayor Nelson
- **Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee** – Councilmember Boyett
- **Alternatives** – Councilmember O'Donnell

Council Subcommittees:

- **Legislative and Local Affairs** – Councilmembers Shaw, Pitman, Kennedy, O'Donnell, and Lindley
- **Budget and Finance** – Councilmember Nicholson, Neese, Kennedy, Aspenlieder and Boyett
- **Council Operations** – Mayor Nelson, Deputy Mayor Boyett, and Deputy Mayor Pro Tempore Neese

Urban Renewal Committees:

- **SBURD** – Councilmember Shaw
- **EBURD** – Councilmember Nicholson
- **Downtown Billings Urban Renewal District** - Councilmember Aguirre

Motion: I move to approve the appointments as recommended by Mayor Nelson.

Moved by Councilmember Kennedy
Seconded by Councilmember Pitman

APPROVED 11-0

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.)*

The following individuals gave public comment:

- **Jonathan Angel, Billings, Montana**, spoke of frustration with the Police Department and their lack of response to sexual assault complaints.
- **Paul Clark, Billings, Montana**, spoke of a recent Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) protest.
- **Patricia Harn, Billings, Montana**, spoke of an upcoming presentation against data centers and the negative effects of AI technology.
- **Sonja Davis, Billings, Montana**, spoke of the Minneapolis ICE incident and how the City could refuse to cooperate.

There were no further speakers.

COUNCIL INITIATIVES:

There were no Council initiatives.


ADJOURN: 7:03 P.M.



CITY OF BILLINGS

BY: 
Mike Nelson, Mayor

ATTEST:

BY: 
Denise R. Bohman, City Clerk