

**MINUTES
OF THE BILLINGS CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
February 9, 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: Councilmember Nicholson

ROLL CALL:

Present: Councilmember Kendra Shaw, Ward 1
Councilmember Mark Nicholson, Ward 1
Councilmember Roy Neese, Ward 2
Councilmember Denis Pitman, Ward 2
Councilmember Amy Aguirre, Ward 3
Councilmember Bill Kennedy, Ward 3
Councilmember Scott Aspenlieder, Ward 4
Councilmember Andrew Lindley, Ward 4
Councilmember Mike Boyett, Ward 5
Councilmember Tony O'Donnell, Ward 5
Mayor Mike Nelson

Staff

Present: Chris Kukulski, City Administrator
Kevin Iffland, Assistant City Administrator
Gina Dahl, City Attorney
Denise Bohlman, City Clerk
Jeffry Sprock, Information Technology Director
Tina Hoeger, Code Enforcement Manager
Mac Fogelsong, City Engineer
Jennifer Duray, Deputy Public Works Director
Derick Miller, Street-Traffic Superintendent
Louis Engels, Utility Engineer
Blake Schmidt, Engineer

MINUTES: January 26, 2026
Moved by Councilmember Shaw
Seconded by Councilmember Lindley
APPROVED 11-0

COURTESIES:

Councilmember Aspenlieder commended the Billings Police Department for their coordination with federal law enforcement agencies in a recent human trafficking and child exploitation case.

PROCLAMATIONS:

There were no Proclamations.

COUNCIL REPORTS:

Councilmember Kennedy noted the Legislative and Local Affairs Council Subcommittee would meet on February 18th from 4:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M. and the City's lobbyists would attend via Zoom.

Councilmember Aspenlieder mentioned the Budget and Finance Council Subcommittee would meet Feb. 11th at 9:00 A.M. in the Rimrock Conference Room.

Mayor Nelson noted the Council Operations Subcommittee met on Feb. 5th. Officers were elected with Mayor Nelson as Chair, Councilmember Neese as Vice Chair and Councilmember Boyett as Secretary. The subcommittee will continue working on revisions to Article 2-200, BMCC. The subcommittee meetings have been changed to the first Monday of the month at 11:00 A.M., in the Rimrock Conference Room.

Councilmember O'Donnell mentioned he would introduce an initiative during Council Initiatives at the end of the agenda concerning creating a committee to review existing committees, commissions and boards.

Motion: I move to remove Regular Agenda Item 2 from the agenda to gather more information before approving appointments to the Yellowstone County Behavioral Health Coalition.

Moved by Councilmember Boyett

Seconded by Councilmember Kennedy

Chris Kukulski, City Administrator, advised the vote required a 3/4th vote (or 9 votes) for approval to remove the item. He would provide the coalition's charter concerning its purpose and mission. He mentioned several other coalitions where a seat at the table was offered to councilmembers.

APPROVED 11-0

ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS - CHRIS KUKULSKI

Mr. Kukulski advised Council that:

- The recruitment for a Public Works Director continued. He encouraged Council communicate with him directly and he acknowledged staff members who were stepping up to provide support during this time.
- Northwestern Energy had been responsive to concerns about streetlight outages in the Southside neighborhoods.
- City offices were closed Monday, February 16th in observance of President's Day. The Work Session would be held on Tuesday instead.

- The next Council orientation was Tuesday, the 17th, from 8 A.M.-10 A.M. at the BOC at 4848 Midland Road – Public Works Solid Waste, Fleet, Parks Field Office and Police Department would be present.
- 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 and 2 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:

- Amanda Houser, Billings, Montana, asked how she could review the proposed budget.

There was no further public comment.

Councilmember Pitman separated Consent Agenda Item 1A1 for discussion.

Motion: I move to approve all items on the Consent Agenda, except for Item 1A1 moved for separation.

Moved by Councilmember Neese
 Seconded by Councilmember Pitman

APPROVED 11-0

CONSENT AGENDA:

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

1.

	Name	Board/Commission	Term	
1	No Applications	Animal Control Board*	02/09/26	12/31/28
2	Lindsay Stilwell	Animal Control Board	02/09/26	12/31/29
3	No Applications	Animal Control Board	02/09/26	12/31/29
4	Chuck Tooley	Aviation & Transit Board*	02/09/26	12/31/28
5	No Applications	Billings Parking Board*	02/09/26	12/31/26
6	Mitchell Bohn	Billings Parking Board	02/09/26	12/31/29
7	Denise Joy	Board of Adjustments	02/09/26	12/31/29
8	No Applications	Board of Adjustments	02/09/26	12/31/29
9	No Applications	Board of Appeals	02/09/26	12/31/29
10	No Applications	Community Development - Low Mode	02/09/26	12/31/29
11	Tally Monteau	Public Art Committee — NADC Rep.	02/09/26	TBA*

- *1 Unexpired term of John Scheuering
- *4 Unexpired term of Denis Pitman
- *5 Unexpired term of Jarod Greenwood

TBA* - Three of the founding members of this committee will be assigned three-year terms; the other four will be assigned four-year terms.

Motion: I move to place the item on the Feb. 23rd Regular Business meeting.
Moved by Councilmember Pitman
Seconded by Councilmember Neese

Councilmember Lindley asked for an explanation for the delay and expressed concerns about filling vacancies on some of the boards and commissions. Councilmember Pitman indicated he wanted to review all the applications and hear Councilmember O'Donnell's initiative before approving appointments. Councilmember Shaw expressed concern about understaffing boards and commissions. Councilmember Neese asked that the application period remain open for the following 2 weeks to collect additional applications since there were so many without applications. Mr. Kukulski explained there needed to be a 30-day window for the public to apply, but it may be possible to leave application periods open until filled. Councilmember Aspenlieder was concerned about filling any vacancies for the Board of Adjustments due to quorum needs for decisions to be made that affected private industry. Councilmember Lindley indicated he would support delaying 2 weeks but was clear he would not agree to delay any longer than that. He spoke of courtesies to applicants wishing to voluntarily serve on a board or commission being acknowledged.

Council and staff discussed the past process for considering applicants and the finalization of the agenda packet for the next Regular Business Meeting was in 4 days. Further discussions were about how many boards and commissions were statutorily required, etc.; staff time concerns; and procedures to dissolve unnecessary boards.

Mayor Nelson supported confirming the appointments as recommended to reduce risk of doing something wrong and then determining later which boards and commissions may be dissolved. It was not necessary to delay appointments for Council to make that decision in the future.

Councilmember Pitman called the question. **APPROVED 11-0**

A voice vote was taken on the motion.

APPROVED 9-2, Councilmember Nicholson and Mayor Nelson opposed

- B. Bid Awards:** None
- C. Professional Engineering Services Contract** for W.O. 26-19: Landfill Cell 6 Expansion, Great West Engineering, Inc.
- D. Service Agreement** for a microwave radio communication system for new and existing water treatment plants; Red Tail Communications.
- E. Purchase** of One (1) 2027 Single Axle Truck and Chassis for Public Works Street and Traffic Division; I-State Truck Center.

F. **Recommendation of Approval** on the proposed amendment to the 2023 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Planning Boundary to the Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC).

G. **Donation** from Rimrock Federal Credit Union for the anti-graffiti fund.

Councilmember Boyett thanked Rimrock Federal Credit Union for the donation.

H. **Bills for the Weeks of:**

1. December 15, 2025
2. January 5, 2026
3. January 12, 2026

REGULAR AGENDA:

~~2. **COUNCIL APPOINTMENT TO YELLOWSTONE COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COALITION.** Staff recommends City County determine which Councilmember will fill the vacancy and serve on this coalition.~~

By a vote of approval 11-0 earlier in the evening, this item was removed from the agenda.

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:

- **Sonia Davis, Billings, Montana**, noted local politics was important and urged Council to not participate in Appar tide operations. She continued that the geo-fencing program used by the Parks Department was owned by an Israeli company and a replacement program should be sought immediately. She disagreed with ICE agents masking their faces during protests as it was not a behavior of transparency and eroded public trust.
- **Lane Dorsey, Billings, Montana**, spoke about being a member of the Billings Alliance for American Rights and the presence of ICE in Montana. He urged Councilmembers to take a stand against ICE and pass a resolution limiting local police involvement similar to what Helena recently do.
- **Jennifer Strong, Billings, Montana**, noted her appreciation for Council's service.
- **Anne Clancy, Billings, Montana**, advised she was an organizational change consultant and had reviewed the vision and mission statements for the City, Council and police department. She discouraged the City from collaborating with ICE officials, Homeland Security, etc. as they were not organizations interested in collaboration but domination and exclusion.
- **Andreas Storey, Billings Alliance for Immigrants Rights**, encouraged Council to pass a resolution restricting the police department from entering into an agreement to cooperate with ICE.
- **Cheryl Messina, Billings, Montana**, spoke about profiling and blanket persecution and trusting local law enforcement.
- **Izabella Franklin, Billings, Montana**, spoke against ICE and urged Council to choose empathy.
- **Jeff Kettleison, Billings, Montana**, spoke of the loss of the SBURA consultant, Dick Zier and his contributions to the community.

There were no further speakers.

COUNCIL INITIATIVES:

Councilmember Boyett spoke about possible cost savings by consolidating the three Tax Increment Finance District (TIF) administrative consultants to one.

Motion: I move to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to consolidate the administration of the three Tax Incremental Finance (TIF) Districts to one consultant.

Moved by Councilmember Boyett

Seconded by Councilmember O'Donnell

Councilmember Shaw clarified whether this would be brought to a future work session wherein the consultants from the TIFs would participate in exploring the option of three consultants being reduced to one. She would not support the motion without the topic first going to a Work Session.

Councilmembers Neese, Kennedy and Lindley voiced support to review whether consolidation would afford cost savings to the TIFs.

Councilmember Aguirre was concerned about affecting the livelihoods of the consultants without direct discussions with them. She would not support the motion as presented.

Councilmember Nicholson advised he did not have enough information to vote for approval of the motion.

Mayor Nelson stated the motion did not offer an opportunity for conversation but rather directed the RFP process happen. Councilmember Boyett clarified his intent was to place the topic on a Work Session to discuss with the present TIF consultants their district's program. Council could then determine whether to move forward with an RFP for consolidation of the consultants or make other changes. With that clarification, the Motion was amended.

Councilmember Shaw acknowledged that with the clarification she would support the motion to place the conversation on a future Work Session.

APPROVED 10-1, Councilmember Nicholson opposed

Councilmember Lindley spoke about his initiative to create a Technology Advisory Commission as a temporary, two-year advisory body to provide expert, non-binding guidance to City Council. He outlined its focus would be to establish a technology and cybersecurity baseline; improve resident-facing digital services; develop a responsible framework for the use of artificial intelligence and data; strengthen technology governance and decision-making; and identify opportunities to leverage local technology talent and partnerships.

Motion: I move to place on a future Work Session the creation of a Technology Advisory Commission as a temporary, two-year advisory body to provide expert, non-binding guidance to City Council.

Moved by Councilmember Lindley

Seconded by Councilmember O'Donnell

Councilmember Boyett inquired whether the current technology staff was inadequate and why this was needed. Councilmember Lindley indicated Billings was blessed to have so many experts in the

industry that could offer their expertise and create partnerships.

Council discussions continued concerning transparency, locating information on the current website and potential obstacles.

APPROVED 11-0

Councilmember O'Donnell spoke about creating a Council Subcommittee to review whether existing boards, committees and commissions are worthwhile; could be consolidated with others; or are no longer relevant and should be dissolved.

Motion: I move to place the creation of the Boards and Commissions Review Council Subcommittee on a future Work Session for discussion about scope.

Moved by Councilmember O'Donnell

Seconded by Councilmember Kennedy

Councilmember Boyett suggested Council Operations Subcommittee review the list of boards, committees and commissions and offer recommendations.

Councilmember Kennedy and Neese voiced support of the motion.

APPROVED 11-0

ADJOURN: 6:45 P.M.



CITY OF BILLINGS

BY: _____


Mike Nelson, Mayor

ATTEST:

BY: _____


Denise R. Bohlman, City Clerk