

**MINUTES
OF THE BILLINGS CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
February 23, 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

INVOCATION: Councilmember Neese

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 (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
Rich St. John, Police Chief
Wyeth Friday, Planning and Community Services Director
Anna Vickers, Planning Manager
Tina Hoeger, Code Enforcement Manager
Jessica Fust, Building Official

MINUTES: February 9, 2026

Moved by Councilmember Shaw

Seconded by Councilmember Boyett

APPROVED 11-0

COURTESIES:

Councilmember Aguirre invited Susan Jurovich, Chair of the Human Relations Commission, along with Shannon Reiser and Carissa Welch, and volunteer Danny Choriki, to provide information regarding upcoming events.

Ms. Jurovich advised the Commission would be soliciting nominations for the City of Billings Social Impact Award from March 1 through March 31, 2026. The award recognizes individuals or organizations promoting mutual understanding and respect in the community. She also announced a community forum on the Dignity Index to be held March 25, 2026, at 5:00 P.M., at the Billings Public Library.

PROCLAMATIONS:

There were no Proclamations.

COUNCIL REPORTS:

Councilmember Kennedy reported on the Legislative Committee meeting and requested Council feedback to determine legislative priorities for the upcoming session.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS - CHRIS KUKULSKI

Mr. Kukulski advised Council that:

- The next Council Orientation was Tuesday, February 24th at City Hall. It would cover the Building Division, Community Development and Urban Renewal Districts.
- Staff needed Council direction on dates for a Special Work Session. Council had indicated a commitment to March 12th but needed to decide between March 16th at noon or March 17th at 9:00 A.M., too.
- He reviewed the topics for the upcoming Work Session on March 2, 2026.
- 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 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.)

There was no public comment.

Councilmember Nicholson separated Consent Agenda Item 1H to abstain.

Motion: I move to approve the Consent Agenda, with the exception of Item 1H moved for separation.

Moved by Councilmember Shaw
Seconded by Councilmember Pitman

APPROVED 11-0

Councilmember Lindley commented on Item 1D, the annual renewal for Mimecast email security services, and commended staff for their thorough evaluation of the software.

Councilmember Neese requested Police Chief St. John provide information regarding Item 1C, Agreements with Billings Public Schools and Billings Catholic Schools for the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program.

Chief St. John outlined the history and benefits of the SRO program, including enhanced safety, early intervention, diversion efforts, and strengthened relationships between law enforcement and students.

Councilmember Boyett expressed appreciation for donations received for the Library, Parks, Recreation and Public Lands, and the Police Department.

Councilmember Kennedy noted upcoming discussion regarding potential changes to Boards and Commissions.

Motion: I move to approve Item 1H, as recommended by staff.

Moved by Councilmember Lindley
 Seconded by Councilmember Kennedy
APPROVED 10-0, Councilmember Nicholson abstained

1. **CONSENT AGENDA**

A. **Bid Awards:** None

B. **Mayor Nelson recommends that Council confirm the following appointments:**

	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.

- C. **Agreements** with Billings Public Schools and Billings Catholic Schools for School Resource Officer (SRO) Program.
- D. **Annual Renewal** for Mimecast critical protection email security services.
- E. **2026 MET Transit** Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan Update.
- F. **2026 MET Public Transit** Agency Safety Plan Update.
- G. **Donation** to Library from various donors to purchase books and library programming.

- H. **Donation** to Parks, Recreation and Public Lands from Mark Nicholson for the Youth and Senior Scholarship Fund.
- I. **Donation** to Parks, Recreation and Public Lands from Scheels for the Youth and Senior Scholarship Fund.
- J. **Donation** to Police Department from Yellowstone County DUI Task Force for purchase of preliminary breath testers.
- K. **Resolution 26-11314** authorizing the filing and acceptance of Transit grant funds.
- L. **Bills for the Weeks of:**
 - 1. January 20, 2026
 - 2. January 27, 2026
 - 3. February 2, 2026

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS:

ANNUAL REPORT:

- Planning and Community Services

Wyeth Friday, Planning and Community Services Director, presented highlights from the department's 2025 Annual Report.

Mr. Friday reported:

- Continued progress on Billings2045 and neighborhood planning efforts.
- Removal of 91 graffiti cases and proactive cleanup at 30 public locations.
- Annexation of 91 acres and review of over 1,200 building permits.
- Completion of the St. John's property rehabilitation and sale to a family of five.
- Progress on the Mitchell Court affordable housing project (32 units).
- Ongoing transportation initiatives, including the 21st Street Underpass Study and multiple trail and Safe Routes to School feasibility studies.
- Code Enforcement handled 4,400 cases in 2025, and achieved a 93% compliance rate.
- Demolition of the 802 Yellowstone property, including recycling over 21,000 pounds of metal.

Councilmembers expressed appreciation for the department's work, particularly graffiti abatement and community improvements.

REGULAR AGENDA:

2. **PUBLIC HEARING AND RESOLUTION 26-11315** setting Building, Electrical, Plumbing, Mechanical, and Fire System Permit Fees. Staff recommends approval.

Jessica Fust, Building Official, presented the proposed fee adjustments. She explained the current fee schedule was last updated in 2011. Due to increased construction valuations, reserves have grown to approximately 22 months. The proposed reduction of 23–31% would right-size revenues while maintaining 10–12 months of reserves.

The following individuals spoke during the public hearing:

- Kim Welzenbach, Homebuilders Association, Billings, Montana: thanked staff for their efforts.
- Dan Brooks, Billings Chamber of Commerce, Billings, Montana: thanked the City and staff for their efforts.
- Elizabeth Shumaker, Homebuilders Association and Realtor, Billings, Montana: spoke of the positive effects that would occur from the fee adjustments.
- Jeff Ketelsen, Billings, Montana, spoke in opposition of the fee adjustments.

No further public testimony was given.

Motion: Having conducted a public hearing, considered written and spoken public testimony, I move to approve a resolution setting Building, Electrical, Plumbing, Mechanical, and Fire System Permit Fees, as recommended by staff.

Moved by Councilmember Boyett
Seconded by Councilmember Aspenlieder

Council discussion included clarification that building permit fees are restricted for use within the Building Division and cannot fund other City services.

APPROVED 11-0

3. **PUBLIC HEARING AND RESOLUTION 26-11316** approving and adopting FY2026 Budget Amendments. Staff recommends approval.

Andy Zoeller, Finance Director, gave an overview of the FY2026 Budget Amendments. He reviewed the following topics:

- Historic Tax Credit transactions associated with City Hall.
- Incinerator-related expenses in the Public Safety Fund.
- Additional debt payment from historic tax credits.
- Axon software and equipment transition for Police Department.
- Reestablishment of Motorola radio system funds.

There was no public testimony given during the public hearing.

Motion: Having conducted a public hearing, considered written and spoken public testimony, I move to approve a resolution approving and adopting FY2026 budget amendments, as recommended by staff.

Moved by Councilmember Aspenlieder
Seconded by Councilmember Boyett
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 provided public comment:

- Jeff Ketelsen, Billings, Montana, spoke in favor of the 3-minute public comment time limit.
- Tony Parrish, Breakfast Exchange Club, Billings, Montana, spoke of upcoming Field of 1000 Flags events at Par 3 Golf Course during July and at College of Technologies in September. He welcomed Council participation.
- Andreas Storey, Billings Alliance for Immigrant Rights, Billings, Montana, spoke in opposition of ICE.
- Lane Dorsey, Billings Alliance for Immigrant Rights, Billings, Montana, spoke in opposition of ICE.
- Linda Nielsen, Billings, Montana, spoke in opposition of ICE.
- Kevin Nelson, Billings, Montana, spoke in favor of allowing public comment during each Work Session agenda item.

There were no further speakers.

COUNCIL INITIATIVES:

Councilmember Kennedy announced he would propose an initiative at the next meeting regarding streetlight billing for outages in Southside neighborhoods and exploring options to suspend charges when lights were not functioning.

ADJOURN: 6:57 P.M.



CITY OF BILLINGS

BY: 
Mike Nelson, Mayor

ATTEST:

BY: 
Denise R. Bohlman, City Clerk