

**MINUTES  
OF THE BILLINGS CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING  
March 9, 2026**

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 5:30 P.M.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Nelson

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** 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 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

Absent/  
Excused: Councilmember Bill Kennedy, Ward 3

Staff  
Present: Chris Kukulski, City Administrator  
Kevin Iffland, Assistant City Administrator  
Gina Dahl, City Attorney  
Toni Keehner, Deputy City Clerk  
Carly Collins, Community Development Coordinator  
Mac Fogelson, City Engineer  
Andy Zoeller, Finance Director  
Tina Hoeger, Code Enforcement Manager  
Matt Hoppel, Fire Chief  
Jason Banfield, Assistant Fire Chief  
Shawn Mayo, Assistant Police Chief

**MINUTES:**

- February 23, 2026

Moved by Councilmember Boyett

Seconded by Councilmember Neese

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Kennedy absent/excused

## **COURTESIES:**

Councilmember Aspenlieder recognized recent accomplishments of Montana State University Billings athletics, including the women's basketball team winning the Great Northeast Athletic Conference (GNAC) tournament and the Yellowjackets baseball team's recent series sweep.

Mayor Nelson recognized members of the AmeriCorps VISTA program. Carly Collins, Community Development Coordinator, thanked the VISTA members for their efforts and the AmeriCorps VISTA's introduced themselves and described their work supporting nonprofit organizations and community initiatives in Billings. They were: Clark Thomas, Alternatives, Inc.; Jenasea Hott, Eagle Mount Billings, Kamlack Tesfa, Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountain; Jonah Casale, Native American Development Corporation; and Melanie Phelps, MSU Billings College of Education. A photograph with Council was taken.

## **PROCLAMATIONS:**

Mayor Nelson issued Proclamations for:

- **AmeriCorps Week (March 8–14, 2026)** recognizing the contributions of AmeriCorps VISTA members serving in Billings.
- **National Child and Adult Care Food Program Week (March 15–21, 2026)** highlighting the importance of nutrition programs for children and adults.
- **Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month (March 2026)** encouraging residents to pursue screening and early detection.

## **COUNCIL REPORTS:**

Mayor Nelson reported on a recent Council Operations Committee meeting, noting discussions about Section 200 of the City Code and establishing a schedule for continued review. He added the committee would begin reviewing boards and commissions.

## **ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS - CHRIS KUKULSKI**

Mr. Kukulski reported:

- A correction to the staff memo regarding a non-compliant bid for Consent Agenda Item 1B1.
- Upcoming Special Work Sessions related to the Billings 2045 planning process were scheduled for March 12<sup>th</sup> and March 16<sup>th</sup>.
- The following Police Department awards: Detective Hunter Cook, Alex Mavity Award; Jesus Ocha, Deb Unruh Memorial Civilian Employee of the Year; David Woody, Officer of the Year; Stephen Mierke, Sean Finnegan Memorial Dedicated Service Award; and Sergeant Garrett Peterson, Supervisor of the Year.
- 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 4 ONLY. Speaker sign-in required.** (Comments are limited to three (3) minutes or as set by the Mayor. Please sign the roster 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.

**Motion:** I move to approve the Consent Agenda, as recommended by staff.

Moved by Councilmember Neese

Seconded by Councilmember Boyett

Councilmember Boyett recognized and thanked donors supporting City programs, including contributions to the Police Department and grant funding for AmeriCorps VISTA.

Discussion also occurred regarding bid pricing variance for the CCTV storm drain project, Consent Agenda Item 1B3. Mac Fogelson, City Engineer, explained the higher bids were submitted by out of state firms but the accepted bid had been a local firm.

**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Kennedy absent/excused

1. **CONSENT AGENDA**

A. Mayor Nelson recommends that the City Council confirm the appointment to the following boards and commissions that are vacant.

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Board/Commission</b>	<b>Term</b>	
1	Levi Wenner	Board of Adjustments*	02/09/26 (Extended)	12/31/29

\*Mayor Nelson extended deadline for applications.

B. **Bid Awards:**

1. **Household Hazardous Waste Services.** (Opened 2/3/26) Recommend Clean Earth Environmental Solutions.
2. **W.O. 26-12: Water Treatment Plant Sediment Hauling.** (Opened 2/17/26) Recommend 7F Services.
3. **W.O. 26-32: CCTV City Storm Drain.** (Opened 2/17/26) Recommend Pace Infrastructure Systems Specialists.

C. **Contract** with KnowBe4 for Cybersecurity Training.

D. **Agreement** with SHI International Corp. for Safe Software FME Local Government Subscription.

E. **Commercial Aviation Building and Ground Lease** with Billings Clinic.

F. **Donation** to Police Department from Mason Moore Foundation for a thermal pole camera attachment.

- G. **2025 Homeland Security Grant** for Police Department.
- H. **2026 High Intensity Drug Traffic Area (HIDTA)** Award to Police Department.
- I. **Grant Application Submittal** for AmericaCorps VISTA Project.
- J. **Preliminary Plat** for Homestead Acres Subdivision. \*Quasi-Judicial
- K. **Final Plat** of Hunter's Pointe Subdivision.
- L. **Bills for the Weeks of:**
  - 1. February 9, 2026
  - 2. February 17, 2026

**REGULAR AGENDA:**

- 2. **PUBLIC HEARING AND RESOLUTION 26-11317** assessing Weed Abatements. Staff recommends approval.

Andy Zoller, Finance Director, gave an overview of 7 properties to be assessed for weed abatement. 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 assessing weed abatements, as recommended by staff.

Moved by Councilmember Neese  
 Seconded by Councilmember Lindley  
**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Kennedy absent/excused

- 3. **PUBLIC HEARING AND RESOLUTION 26-11318** assessing Nuisance Property Abatements. Staff recommends approval.

Andy Zoller, Finance Director, gave an overview of the 2 properties to be assessed and referenced a correction needed on the resolution. Gina Dahl, City Attorney, indicated page 2, paragraph 3 of the resolution incorrectly referenced Section 18-305(6)k, and should be changed to 18-305(7). Andy indicated staff was recommending the approval of the resolution with the revision.

There was no public testimony given during the public hearing.

Council requested clarification on the abatement process. Tina Hoeger, Code Enforcement Manager, explained that nuisance abatements typically involved open storage or property conditions requiring enforcement action.

**Motion:** Having conducted a public hearing, considered written and spoken public testimony, I move to approve a resolution assessing nuisance property abatements, as recommended by staff.

Moved by Councilmember Shaw  
 Seconded by Councilmember Neese  
**APPROVED 10-0**, Councilmember Kennedy absent/excused

4. **ANNUAL REPORTS:** Police and Fire Departments. No action necessary.

**Fire Department Report**

Fire Chief Matt Hoppel presented highlights from the department's annual report, including:

- Decreased overall call volume in recent years.
- Implementation of a new national fire records management system improving data tracking.
- Increased use of drones and specialized response programs.
- Ongoing facility improvements, including upgrades at Station 5 and planning for future station placement.
- Continued collaboration with regional partners and specialized response teams.

Councilmembers expressed their appreciation and discussed the Crisis Response Unit (CRU) program.

**Police Department Report**

Assistant Chief Shawn Mayo presented highlights from the Police Department's annual report, including:

- Decreased property crimes and crimes against society.
- Continued focus on violent crime investigations and drug enforcement.
- Significant seizures of fentanyl and firearms through specialized units.
- Ongoing work in domestic violence response and victim support.
- Continued community engagement through outreach, training, and volunteer programs.

Councilmembers expressed appreciation for the work of the Police Department and discussed topics including domestic violence response, crime trends, and community partnerships.

No action was required or taken.

**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 located at the back of the Council chambers or at the podium.)

The following individuals gave public comment:

- **Laie Dorsey, Billings, Montana**, spoke against ICE.
- **Just Humphrey, APEX Properties**, spoke of the offer his company had made to purchase the Colonial to restore the building for housing.
- **Ken Ard, Billings, Montana**, spoke of issues with a refuge island on State Avenue and Jackson Street.
- **Paul Clark, Billings, Montana**, spoke of railroad crossing safety and water concerns.
- **Ann Clancy, Billings, Montana**, spoke against ICE.
- **Jeff Ketelsen, Billings, Montana**, spoke of the importance of audits to hold boards accountable.

- **Melinda Nielson, Billings, Montana**, spoke against ICE.
- **Kevin Nelson, Billings, Montana**, indicated Work Session meetings were being turned into Regular Business meetings.

There were no further speakers.


**COUNCIL INITIATIVES:**

There were no Council initiatives.

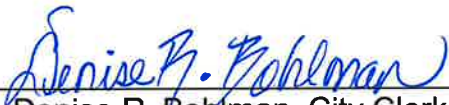
**ADJOURN: 7:36 P.M.**



CITY OF BILLINGS

BY:   
Mike Nelson, Mayor

ATTEST:

BY:   
Denise R. Bohman, City Clerk