

## Billings City Administrator Weekly Report

August 1, 2025

- 1. Northern Lights Family Justice Center (FJC)** – We participated in two significant meetings this week. The first was a focused discussion between the city and the YWCA regarding governance and our ongoing partnership to support a successful and sustainable FJC. The second was the FJC's annual planning session, which concentrated on four key areas:
  - Shared vision and community messaging
  - Coordination of services and resources
  - Accountability and measurable outcomes
  - Long-term sustainability and funding
- 2. Police Department Hiring Update (2020-2025)** – see attached Executive Summary Report.
- 3. Employee Appreciation Night** – Last night, more than 550 employees and their families enjoyed a doubleheader at Dehler Park. The Mustangs won the first game in dramatic fashion with a home run derby finish, though they came up short in game two. A big thank you to Mayor Cole and Ann Cole for their generous contribution, covering half the cost of this great evening.
- 4. EPA Press Release** - Monday, July 28th, EPA published a press release announcing that the Agency would be seeking public review and comments on its Proposed Plan for the Billings PCE Superfund Site. This Proposed Plan only addresses risks associated with vapors in indoor air. Other risks associated with the Site will be addressed in the future. See the full press release link below.

<https://www.epa.gov/mt/public-notice-proposed-plan-vapor-intrusion-ou1-billings-pce-superfund-site>
- 5. Semi-Annual Reports** – Please find attached and semi-annual reports for the BIRD, Downtown Billings Partnership, and SBURA.
- 6. Public Works News** - Plan for naming the west end reservoirs: We want to encourage our community to participate in the naming of the water reservoirs. We know everyone is tired of calling it the west end project, so we want to move forward with getting a name for it. The draft process and social media post are attached. We are talking about incentives for submissions and/or the winning submission and we'll share that when we get it more defined. We are thinking along the lines of a free community education class or a Rose Park pool pass. Please let us know if you have any ideas about the process or want to submit an entry!

New Event in Downtown Billings - The City approved a permit for Rodeo Billings to have a Mounted Rider Brigade through downtown on Wednesday, August 13. The brigade will travel from just east of Division to the Metra via 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue N. There will be a horse drawn wagon

and about 20 riders on horseback. The procession will start at 10 am and take about 15 minutes so if you want to see it, you will need to look quickly! The riders will ride with traffic so no roads will be closed for the event. A description of the event is attached.

Public Works Construction Updates:

- Downtown 2-Way Restoration Project—2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North are open to two-way traffic. The remaining north-south streets will be open by end-of-day August 1. Traffic operations are being monitored and adjusted as required. Staff continues to update businesses and the public with emails, Gazette ads, social media posts, and on-line information. Final striping of parking and the two-way cycle tracks will begin the third week of August after the fog seal has cured.
- Pavement milling and overlay begins Monday, August 4, on Broadwater Avenue between 11<sup>th</sup> Street West and 16<sup>th</sup> Street West and is daytime work. Pavement milling and overlay starts toward the end of August on King Avenue West from 24<sup>th</sup> Street to the BBWA canal and will mostly be performed at night. Traffic will be maintained with some lane reductions on each street.

**7. Library News** – Summer Reading Success, the Library's Summer Reading Program wrapped up this week, and it was a record-breaking year. A total of 1,523 participants logged their reading across all age groups – 372 more than last summer! This program is a vital part of helping kids maintain their skills and preventing the summer slide. This year, 376 pre-readers read 21,300 books, 635 kids logged 816,645 minutes, 147 teens read for 336,728 minutes and 365 adults finished 2,832 books – averaging 57 books per pre-reader, 21.4 hours per child, 38 hours per teen and 8 books per adult. In addition to reading milestones, the library hosted 265 programs this summer, drawing 6,986 attendees. Thank you to our staff, volunteers, and community partners who helped make this summer such a success.

Property Tax Rebate Assistance – On August 15<sup>th</sup>, Library staff will be available by appointment to assist homeowners with applying for the Montana Property Tax Rebate. Watch the Library's social media and website for additional details as the date approaches.

**8. 2025 Council Meeting Schedule** – Please review the attached draft agendas and provide any feedback regarding the order of business, modification of agenda items, or other changes to the consent or regular agendas. City code requires a specific order of business as it relates to certain items on meeting agendas, e.g., placement of public hearings first on the regular agenda, so your feedback will be incorporated with those code requirements in mind. ([BMCC 2-214](#)) Work session agendas are more flexible and can also easily be modified by the mayor with the consensus of Council during those informal meetings.

**9. Next Week's Meetings/Task Forces**

- a. North Park Task Force, Wednesday, August 6<sup>th</sup> 7:00 PM, North Park Community Center, 807 N. 25<sup>th</sup> Street.

- b. Council Operation Committee, Thursday, August 7<sup>th</sup> 4:00 PM, Rimrock Conference Room, 316 N. 26<sup>th</sup> Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor.



July 21, 2025

Re: Executive Summary: Billings Police Department Hiring Update (2020-2025, Q2)

Honorable Mayor and City Council:

Recruiting new police officers has become a nationwide challenge, and the reasons behind the trend are complex. Law enforcement agencies, large and small, are feeling the strain as all struggle to fill vacancies and maintain adequate staffing levels. The Billings Police Department is no different and we have actively been addressing challenges in recruitment and retention from 2020 to date.

Recruitment and hiring challenges include:

- Changing public perception of law enforcement. The increased criticism and scrutiny have made the profession less appealing.
- The nature of the job is demanding – physically, mentally, and emotionally. Officers are asked to make split-second decisions in high-stress situations, often with great personal risk. Younger generations increasingly prioritize work-life balance.
- Competitive job market. Many careers offer similar or better pay, benefits, and stability without the dangers and intense scrutiny.
- Rigorous hiring standards. Strict hiring requirements that ensure applicants are qualified and ethical also narrows the applicant pool. Background checks, physical fitness exams, psychological testing, and extensive training can discourage or disqualify many who might otherwise apply.
- Generational values. Younger generations entering the workforce may seek jobs that focus on social impact. Law enforcement can be seen at odds with those values.

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**Rich St. John**  
Police Chief

**Shawn Mayo**  
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Challenges encountered by the BPD include candidate drop-offs, testing failures, and competition from other agencies, have us maintaining steady hiring efforts through strategic practices and community engagement initiatives. Programs like "Shop With a Cop," youth camps, and "Coffee with a Cop" have strengthened public trust and helped attract diverse, high-quality candidates.

Currently, the department has 177 authorized sworn positions, with 160 filled and 17 vacancies. 7 have received conditional offers of employment and are awaiting a start date. Projections suggest that approximately 14 officers will be eligible for retirement by 2026, emphasizing the need for proactive hiring strategies. Data related to attrition shows that most BPD departures stem mainly from retirements and resignations.

Consistent with national standards, our hiring process is rigorous, involving physical tests, interviews, background checks, and psychological evaluations. All are critical for assessing candidate suitability and reducing liability.

Recruitment efforts have included increased presence at job fairs, social media campaigns, and partnerships with local organizations. We are exploring incentives like referral bonuses and signing bonuses to attract candidates. However, challenges persist, including high drop-off rates during the hiring process, lengthy background investigations, and competition from other agencies offering better pay and benefits.

Looking ahead, we plan to streamline hiring processes, expand community outreach, and enhance recruitment pipelines through college and military internships. Digital marketing strategies are also being implemented to improve visibility and attract applicants. By maintaining high standards and leveraging innovative strategies, the Billings Police Department aims to meet staffing goals while ensuring public safety and community trust.

The following report was prepared by Lt. Samantha Puckett and provides and detailed look at our process and the challenges faced as we work to attain our authorized strength. I hope you recognize the complexity of the issue and the outstanding work performed by all assigned to recruitment and hiring. Thank you for your continued support.

Respectfully,

*Rich St. John*

Rich St. John  
Chief of Police

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## Executive Summary: Hiring Update (2020-Mid-2025)

The Billings Police Department continues to maintain steady hiring efforts despite common challenges faced in law enforcement recruitment, including candidate drop-offs, testing and interview failures, and difficulty finding qualified applicants. Through consistent outreach, improved communication, and strategic hiring practices, the department will continue to work on current staffing levels while anticipating future vacancies due to retirement. Community engagement activities such as Shop With a Cop, Citizens Police Academy, and educational partnerships help strengthen public trust and attract quality applicants. Although barriers like competition from other agencies and public perception persist, proactive steps are being taken to streamline processes and enhance recruitment strategies. Moving forward, continued focus on retention, engagement, and strategic recruitment will be key to meeting the department's staffing goals and maintaining public safety service levels.

### CURRENT STAFFING

- Authorized Sworn Positions: 177
- Currently Filled: 160
- Vacancies: 17
- Eligible for Retirement by 2026: ~14
- Lateral Hires from 2020-2025 (YTD): 19

|                    |    |
|--------------------|----|
| FTO/Academy        | 11 |
| FMLA               | 4  |
| Military           | 1  |
| Pending start date | 7  |

**\*See Attachment A for current assignments and hiring numbers.**

***Insight:*** Staffing levels remain stable, but projected retirements and current vacancies highlight the need for continued, proactive hiring and retention strategies.

## Hiring & Staffing Comparisons by City

|                  | <b>Helena</b> | <b>Bozeman</b> | <b>Great Falls</b> | <b>Missoula</b> | <b>Rapid City, SD</b> | <b>Meridan, ID</b> |
|------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Authorized sworn | 54            | 73             | 93                 | 118             | 176                   | 151                |
| Vacancies        | 5             | 2              | 6                  | 7               | 2                     | 18                 |
| Pay per hour     | \$32.91       | \$36.79        | \$32.56            | \$35.23         | \$31.95               | \$31.75            |

-Difficulties other Cities are facing

- Struggle to find qualified applicants
- Loss of applicants during each phase of their hiring processes

-Steps taken by other agencies to positively affect staffing levels

- Hired a career recruiter as full-time staff
- Changed advertising (Website, social media, LinkedIn)
- Offer lateral pay increase up to 10 years of experience (currently up to 8 years prior experience)

## ATTRITION

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Retirements</b> | <b>Resignations</b> | <b>Terminations</b> | <b>Total Departures</b> |
|-------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 2020        | 5                  | 3                   | 0                   | 8                       |
| 2021        | 2                  | 6                   | 0                   | 8                       |
| 2022        | 8                  | 5                   | 0                   | 13                      |
| 2023        | 3                  | 9                   | 1                   | 13                      |
| 2024        | 9                  | 3                   | 2                   | 14                      |
| 2025 (YTD)  | 5                  | 5                   | 1                   | 11                      |

**Insight:** Most attrition stems from retirements and voluntary resignations. Terminations remain low but are an important measure of accountability. Total departures help guide future hiring targets and succession planning.

## Demographics on Department Drop-Offs

- Average years of service when officers resign-6.07 years
- Average age of officers resigning: 36.58 years old
- Average years of service when officers retire: 21.75 years of service
- Average Retirement Age: 57.47 years old
- 39% of officers leaving the department from 2020-2025 are due to retirement

## **Hiring Process (New Hire-no prior experience)**

- Electronic application submitted through Governmentjobs.com
- If applications are complete, applicants are invited to testing, if not complete we request required documentation or clarification
- Testing Day-Montana Physical Abilities Test (MPAT) then written test (need to pass MPAT to proceed to the written test)
- Written test results back approximately 4 days later and applicants who pass are invited to interview.
- Interviews scheduled approximately 1 1/2 weeks later-applicants who pass receive a Conditional Offer of Employment and are moved to the Background Investigation phase.
- Applicants receive one week to complete Personal History Statement in background program.
- Background Investigators receive approx. 2 months to complete background investigation (collateral duty and often requires travel)
- Psychological Evaluation is completed towards the end of two months
- Blind summaries are presented to the hiring panel by Administrative Lieutenant (applicants A, B, etc.)
- Hiring panel selects officers to offer Final Offer Letters to and how panel ranks applicants determines their seniority
- Applicants are contacted and offered position as Probationary Police Officer-given approximately 6 weeks to give notice at current employment and move if necessary.
- 2-3 weeks later applicants meet with Police Commission (final approval in the hiring process)
- Applicants approved by Police Commission then complete a medical assessment and drug test
- Applicants are sworn in 1 week before Montana Law Enforcement Academy start

## **Hiring Process (Lateral Officer-prior experience)**

- Electronic application submitted through Governmentjobs.com
- If applications are complete, applicants are invited to interview, if they are not complete, we request required documentation or clarification
- Applicants that pass an interview take the MPAT that afternoon
- Applicants that pass the MPAT receive a Conditional Offer of Employment and are moved to the Background Investigations phase.
- The rest of the process is the same except Background Investigators get 1 month to complete the background investigation.

## APPLICATION METRICS

| Year       | Applications Received | Male | Female |
|------------|-----------------------|------|--------|
| 2020       | 180                   | ~158 | ~22    |
| 2021       | 128                   | ~109 | ~19    |
| 2022       | 123                   | ~104 | ~19    |
| 2023       | 202                   | ~179 | ~23    |
| 2024       | 207                   | ~187 | ~20    |
| 2025 (YTD) | 102                   | ~91  | ~11    |

Insight: Application volume has varied year-over-year; 2025 is on track to match prior years with additional hiring processes ahead.

*\*Note: We do not collect demographics for race, ethnicity, and gender. The data provided in this presentation is based on applicants' names.*

## CANDIDATE DROP-OFFS (Total Yearly Withdrawals, Rejections, No-Shows - Combined)

| Year | Withdrawn | Rejected | No-Show | Total Drop-Offs |
|------|-----------|----------|---------|-----------------|
| 2020 | 19        | 64       | 9       | 92              |
| 2021 | 7         | 56       | 11      | 74              |
| 2022 | 31        | 9        | 17      | 57              |
| 2023 | 66        | 23       | 50      | 139             |
| 2024 | 64        | 24       | 51      | 139             |

Insight: High attrition early in the pipeline-primarily due to voluntary withdrawal or failure to appear for scheduled steps.

*\*Note: The City switched to online application process at the end of 2022 which allows for continual hiring and incomplete applications are not just rejected from the hiring process. This is represented in the decrease in rejected applications.*

## INTERVIEWS & BACKGROUND CHECKS

| Year | Interviews Conducted | Backgrounds Completed |
|------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 2020 | 69                   | <b>25</b>             |
| 2021 | 46                   | <b>16</b>             |
| 2022 | 54                   | <b>23</b>             |
| 2023 | 114                  | <b>58</b>             |
| 2024 | 120                  | <b>65</b>             |

***Insight:*** Roughly 50% of interviewees proceed to background checks-this is a pivotal filter in the hiring process.

**\*See Attachment B for further information on the importance of Background Investigations and the hiring process from Dr. Elizabeth Christiaens.**

"I take very seriously my role in providing an objective evaluation in which strengths and concerns are weighed in a manner consistent with the totality of available research and guidelines for best practice. I work collaboratively with other aspects of the hiring process, namely the process of background investigation, from which I am often able to clarify or gather more information about poignant concerns within an applicant's history. However, every process within the hiring process offers different perspective, and it is not uncommon that the pre-employment psychological evaluation reveals concerns that were not otherwise evident or poignant. This means that further inquiry into a person's behavior and psychology can elicit aspects of a person that is unlikely to come up in any other context. That said, I do not make final hiring decisions, and all decision-making authority in this regard is deferred to the hiring agency. If I opine a candidate unsuitable, an agency may still choose to hire the individual, though they would assume any subsequent risk and liability be responsible for responding to any scrutiny as it pertains to this decision.

The issue of public safety hiring and retention is by no means unique to Billings Police Department, and it has become a poignant and widespread concern throughout the last several years. This trend has become a critical topic of discussion amongst leading public safety personnel, and examination of this issue has consistently shown that departments across the country have faced similar challenges. Inwald and Thompson (2021) reflected widespread perception by psychologists of recent erosion to the qualified applicant pool. In addition, the Police Executive Research Forum<sup>5</sup> issued a report in 2023 that reflected an overall increase in retirements and resignations between 2020 and 2022, alongside a drop in applications for open, full-time law enforcement positions. It was also noted that officer staffing levels dropped by 4.8% between January 2020 and January 2023.

The same report highlighted an increasingly number of nationwide public safety organizations endorsing challenges related to hiring; in 2020, 25% of surveyed agencies reported difficulty in hiring and filling police positions, followed by a significant jump to 64% in 2021 and 78% in 2022."

-Dr. Christiaens

## HIRING OUTCOMES

| Year       | Officers Hired | Male | Female |
|------------|----------------|------|--------|
| 2020       | 13             | 11   | 2      |
| 2021       | 14             | 10   | 4      |
| 2022       | 16             | 15   | 1      |
| 2023       | 13             | 11   | 2      |
| 2024       | 18             | 17   | 1      |
| 2025 (YTD) | 11             | 11   | -      |

***Insight:*** Two to three more 2025 hiring cycles are planned-final hires expected to rise.

*\*Note: We do not collect demographics for race, ethnicity, and gender. The data provided in this presentation is based on applicants' names.*

## RECRUITING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### -Ongoing Recruitment Strategies

- Increased presence at job fairs, community events, and local colleges to attract diverse candidates.
- Social Media Campaigns: Leveraging platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn to raise awareness and promote the department as an employer of choice.
- Community Partnerships: Collaborating with local organizations, veterans' groups, and minority associations to broaden recruitment reach.
- Recruitment Incentives: Exploring referral bonuses, signing bonuses, and lateral pay increase after completing probationary year.

### -Community Engagement Activities

#### -Youth & Family Engagement

- Shop With a Cop: Twice a year (August & December)
- Kids Camp: Two sessions offered once during Summer
- Summer Kids Camp MPAT Demo: Offered during Kids Camp
- Kids Bible Camp Presentation: June 2024
- YMCA Healthy Kids Presentation: April 2025
- Elementary School Reading: February 2024, May 2024
- SD2 Safety Squad (25 Schools): Every year from November-April

#### -Community Partnerships

- Coffee With a Cop: scheduled several times a year at community locations
- Neighborhood Watch Presentations
- Retail Crime Meeting: quarterly meetings
- Five-O-Forum Podcast Episodes

#### -Special Events

- Guns and Hoses/Heros at Bat
- Shield 616 Vest Presentations
- Gold Scramble for Child Abuse (Downtown Billings Exchange)
- Strawberry Festival
- National Night Out
- Station 1 Open House
- Elder Grove Amazing Shake Judging
- Elevations Church School Kids Daycare Presentation

**Insight:** Strengthening community ties and enhancing recruitment visibility are critical to attracting high-quality, diverse candidates and improving retention.

## **BARRIERS**

- Interview Requirements: Interview failure rates remain a significant barrier for many candidates.
- Candidate Drop-Offs: High voluntary withdrawal and no-show rates reduce the effective applicant pool.
- Background Investigations: Lengthy or complex background checks can delay hiring and discourage some candidates.
  - Background Investigators are officers, detectives, and commanders that have other primary responsibilities and may affect the shift calendars.
- Competition: Other agencies and private sector jobs compete aggressively for qualified candidates.
- Candidate Drop-Offs (Withdrawals/No-Shows) due to second thoughts about career, moving, or competing offers from other agencies.
- Compensation & Benefits: higher-paid private sector jobs or other jurisdictions offering more attractive pay, benefits, or signing bonuses.
- Limited Qualified Applicant Pool: fewer people meet the minimum qualifications and difficulty recruiting from diverse backgrounds to reflect community demographics.

## CURRENT AND FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS FOR HIRING SUCCESS

- Improve Candidate Engagement
  - Enhance communication and support to reduce no-shows and withdrawals.
  - Hold more hiring processes to reduce application to testing time.
- MPAT Preparation Support
  - Offer physical readiness workshops or guidance to improve pass rates.
- Streamline Background Checks
  - Moved to new Background program in 2025, more user friendly and syncs with hiring portal.
  - Refine processes to reduce hiring timeline delays.
- Strategic Workforce Planning
  - Use retirement projections and attrition data to forecast hiring needs and maintain staffing levels.
- Expand Community Outreach
  - Continue building diverse recruitment pipelines through partnerships and public engagement.
- Improve Recruitment: Continue College/University and Military Internships
  - In the planning phase with MSUB to start a Law Enforcement Academy certificate program
  - Determining cost effectiveness but will not replace sending officers to 3 academy classes each year.
- Created a new line item in the budget for Recruitment: will start using funds to utilize digital marketing (social media ads, job boards, search engines)

# Attachment A

## Billings PD Personnel Order

| SWORN                       |           |           |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| NON-BARGAINING              | BUDGETED  | ACTUAL    |
| ADMINISTRATION              |           |           |
| CHIEF OF POLICE             | 1         | 1         |
| ASSISTANT CHIEF             | 1         | 1         |
| OPERATIONS                  |           |           |
| CAPTAIN                     | 1         | 1         |
| LIEUTENANT                  | 3         | 3         |
| SERGEANT                    | 14        | 14        |
| INVESTIGATIONS              |           |           |
| CAPTAIN                     | 1         | 1         |
| LIEUTENANT                  | 2         | 2         |
| SERGEANT                    | 4         | 4         |
| PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS      |           |           |
| CAPTAIN                     | 1         | 1         |
| LIEUTENANT                  | 1         | 1         |
| SERGEANT                    | 2         | 2         |
| <b>Total Non-Bargaining</b> | <b>31</b> | <b>31</b> |

| CIVILIAN                     |               |               |
|------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| NON-BARGAINING               | BUDGETED      | ACTUAL        |
| ADMINISTRATION               |               |               |
| ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT III   | 1             | 1             |
| ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT II    | 1             | 1             |
| PUBLIC SAFETY TECH           | 0.334         | 0.334         |
| OPERATIONS                   |               |               |
| INTERNAL SERVICES SPECIALIST | 1             | 1             |
| RECORDS SUPERVISOR           | 1             | 1             |
| INVESTIGATIONS               |               |               |
| ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT II    | 1             | 1             |
| INVESTIGATIVE ANALYST        | 2             | 2             |
| ID SUPERVISOR                | 1             | 1             |
| PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS       |               |               |
| VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR        | 1             | 1             |
| ANIMAL CONTROL               |               |               |
| ANIMAL CONTROL SUPERVISOR    | 1             | 1             |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>10.334</b> | <b>10.334</b> |

| BARGAINING                         |            |            |
|------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| BUDGETED                           | ACTUAL     |            |
| OPERATIONS                         |            |            |
| PATROL                             | 90         | 83         |
| <i>Special Duty</i>                |            |            |
| SRO                                | 8          | 6          |
| STEP                               | 3          | 2          |
| STEP - DUI                         | 1          | 1          |
| STEP - CRASH                       | 1          | 0          |
| K-9                                | 3          | 3          |
| COURT OFFICER                      | 2          | 2          |
| BILLINGS CLINIC                    | 2          | 2          |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>110</b> | <b>99</b>  |
| INVESTIGATIONS                     |            |            |
| DETECTIVE / GENERAL                | 16         | 13         |
| DETECTIVE / SCU                    | 1          | 1          |
| DETECTIVE CCSIU                    | 2          | 1          |
| DETECTIVE EXPLOITATION/TRAFFICKING | 1          | 1          |
| DETECTIVE FBI COMPUTER FORENSIC    | 1          | 1          |
| DETECTIVE PAWN                     | 1          | 1          |
| <i>Special Duty</i>                |            |            |
| CCSIU                              | 1          | 1          |
| USMS MVOTF                         | 1          | 1          |
| SCU                                | 3          | 3          |
| SCU ATF TFO                        | 1          | 1          |
| DVI                                | 2          | 2          |
| FORMER DEA                         | 1          | 1          |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>31</b>  | <b>27</b>  |
| PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS             |            |            |
| COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICER        | 1          | 1          |
| PARKS OFFICER                      | 1          | 1          |
| DOWNTOWN DBA                       | 3          | 1          |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>5</b>   | <b>3</b>   |
| <b>Total Bargaining</b>            | <b>146</b> | <b>129</b> |

| BARGAINING                | BUDGETED  | ACTUAL    |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| OPERATIONS                |           |           |
| CRIME ANALYST II          | 1         | 1         |
| POLICE SUPPORT SPECIALIST | 12        | 8         |
| INVESTIGATIONS            |           |           |
| POLICE SUPPORT SPECIALIST | 3         | 2         |
| EVIDENCE TECH I           | 1         | 1         |
| EVIDENCE TECH II          | 7         | 7         |
| PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS    |           |           |
| COMMUNITY SERVICE OFFICER | 10        | 9         |
| ANIMAL CONTROL            |           |           |
| SR ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER | 1         | 1         |
| ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER    | 4         | 3         |
| ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT I  | 1         | 1         |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>40</b> | <b>33</b> |

**TOTAL CIVIL** **IAN** **BUDGETED** **ACTUAL**  
**DEPARTMENT TOTAL** **227.334** **203.334**

| ***Contracted Positions Accounted for in Totals |             |
|---|-------------|
| Position  | FTE         |
| SD2 - School Resource Officer                   | 4.6         |
| DBA - Downtown Officer                          | 3           |
| Billings Clinic - Officer                       | 2           |
| Parks Dept - Officer                            | 1           |
| DUI Grant - STEP DUI Officer                    | 1           |
| <b>Total</b>                                    | <b>11.6</b> |

**BUDGETED** **ACTUAL**  
**TOTAL SWORN** **177** **160**



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City of Billings Police Department  
Police Chief Rich St. John  
316 N. 26<sup>th</sup> St.  
Billings, Montana 59101

07/16/2025

Chief St. John:

Please consider this letter as an informational summary related to the pre-employment psychological evaluation process and its place in the overarching hiring process. The information below is considered both brief and summative in nature, and the process of evaluation is far more nuanced and multifaceted.

The use of pre-employment psychological evaluations (PEPE) is a crucial aspect of the hiring process for public safety personnel. These evaluations provide an opinion about an individual's suitability for the position for which they have applied. Specifically, it is intended to identify any psychological traits, both normal and abnormal, or behavioral patterns likely to interfere with a person's ability to perform essential job functions. The process of personnel selection is the first step in organizational wellness and resilience, and it offers a spectrum of benefits, including:

- Enhance public safety
- Improve team dynamics and organizational wellness
- Reduce risk liability
- Long-term cost-savings
- Decrease turnover
- Promoting a culture of resilience
- Increase community trust and confidence

These are specialized evaluations that can have important and widespread implications for an agency. The judiciary has consistently ruled that law enforcement agencies have both the right and the duty to evaluate candidate suitability via pre-employment psychological evaluation during the process of hiring. Relevant case law reflects that a failure to do so can result in findings of negligence and liability, both

organizationally and individually (Hild v. Bruner, 1980<sup>1</sup>; Bonsignore v. City of New York, 1982<sup>2</sup>; Lewis v. Goodie, 1992<sup>3</sup>; Woods v. Town of Danville, 2010<sup>4</sup>). In addition to the potential liability and monetary damages of poor hiring decisions, those unsuited for a position in public safety can have significant and lasting effects on staff morale and can place additional strain on agency operations and supervisory/management resources. It can also be increasingly more challenging to separate a potentially problematic employee from the agency as they move beyond the hiring and probationary periods. The California POST Peace Officer Psychological Screening Manual (2022) also highlights the cost-savings of pre-hire screening, as follows:

A law enforcement agency may spend well over \$200,000 to recruit, select and train one police officer in the first year (Brooks, 2018). As daunting as this figure is, it pales in comparison to legal costs when a law enforcement agency is found liable for hiring psychologically unfit officers... A survey in 1998 found that judgments in these types of cases generally ranged from \$125,000 to \$2,569,638 (Anderson, 1998). In FY 2018-19, one agency alone paid out over \$20 million to plaintiffs as a result of negligent lawsuits, with individual settlements ranging from \$2.5 million to \$4.6 million (County of Los Angeles, 2020). There can be no doubt that the greatest costs of employing an unfit police officer are borne by the communities they are sworn to serve, other officers, and the reputations of their agencies. A carefully conducted psychological screening evaluation can provide both strong probative evidence that the hiring agency has met its duty to investigate a candidate's psychological suitability (Shaffer & Schmidt, 1999) and help spare the more formidable human and societal costs (p. 5-6).

The process of vetting and evaluating potential applicants is also a critical aspect of public safety and community relations. Police officers are granted implicit trust and power – to include the powers of lethal force - that extends far beyond that of most other professions; with that power comes the potential for misuse and a host of other detrimental outcomes. This can have considerable implications for community trust, which is predicated, at least in part, on the efforts an agency takes to ensure they are utilizing fair and appropriately rigorous measures for personnel selection. There is also evidence that community trust and relations can affect officer hiring and retention. The Police Executive Research Forum issued a report in 2023 that aptly stated:

An agency's operations and its relations with the local community affect — and are affected by — its success in recruiting candidates and retaining current officers. For example, agencies cannot operate the same ways when they are understaffed as when they are fully staffed. How they modify their operations to cope with understaffing can further strain already tenuous community relations if the department cannot provide the types and levels of services the community expects, especially if it already faces elevated public criticism and scrutiny. Operational decisions in response to understaffing can also reduce job satisfaction among current officers. These factors can feed on each other to further erode community relations, make the department less attractive to new recruits, and drive even more officers to leave the department — creating a downward cycle as agencies must then make further operational changes to account for further reductions in staff levels (p. 16).

The current standards of practice dictate that pre-employment psychological evaluations be conducted by a doctorate-level provider who has received specialized education, training, and supervision specific to

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<sup>1</sup> Hild v. Bruner, 496 F.Supp. 93 (D.N.J. 1980).

<sup>2</sup> Bonsignore v. City of New York, 521 F.Supp. 394, aff'd 683 F.2d 635 (2nd Cir. 1982).

<sup>3</sup> Lewis v. Goodie, 798 F.Supp. 382 (W.D.La. 1992).

<sup>4</sup> Woods v. Town of Danville, WV, #2:09-cv-0036, 2010 U.S. Dist. Lexis 47666 (S.D.W.Va.).

the provision of a PEPE. These evaluations are guided by case law and statutes at both the state and federal levels, as well as several important governing bodies that set forth standards of practice and provide evidence-based research underpinning these practices. It is crucial that any provider conducting these evaluations have a deep and comprehensive understanding of these resources, and any work they produce must be able to stand up against judicial and quasi-judicial scrutiny. It is also important the provider be culturally competent in working with public safety populations, which includes a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of various positions within public safety and the differences between them.

I trained under the supervision of a public safety psychologist in the Denver metro area, beginning in 2018. This training included rigorous didactic instruction on all essential components noted above, including case law, statutes, standards of practice, ethics, research, and testing. I went on to serve as the director of evaluative services within this practice, which serviced numerous agencies across both Colorado and Wyoming. These agencies included dispatch, fire, police, corrections, and armed security, and they ranged from large metropolitan departments to small rural departments. I have independently conducted between 2,000 to 3,000 pre-employment evaluations and supervised roughly the same amount, if not more. In addition, I have trained and supervised numerous other practitioners in the practice of public safety evaluations, ranging from master's to doctoral-level providers. I have also worked closely with a multitude of agencies and provided ongoing education and training on public safety evaluations for both command and administrative staff, as well as background investigators and members of commissions and civil services. Since my return to Montana in 2022, I have worked with a range of departments across the state, providing education, consultation, training, and evaluations as it pertains to the issues of personnel selection and psychological fitness-for-duty, among other related topics. I have been formally trained as a forensic psychologist and routinely conduct forensic evaluations in both civil and criminal matters. I also have a breadth of experience testifying and come prepared to do so as it pertains to any public safety evaluation I conduct.

I have been completing the pre-employment psychological evaluations for Billings Police Department since 2022. I conduct an individualized evaluation on each candidate that is specific to the position and agency for which they have applied. My conclusions are based on convergent data obtained from several sources, to include a semi-structured interview, results of psychological testing, mental health records (where applicable), and collateral information gathered throughout other aspects of the hiring process (i.e., panel interview, background investigation, personal history statement, etc.). I render one of three opinions with regard to an individual's suitability: suitable, marginally suitable, or unsuitable. These categories are defined as follows:

- **SUITABLE**: The applicant's psychological traits are not expected to interfere with the performance of essential job functions and in some cases, the applicant's traits may lend them to being well suited for the position. Although there may be areas of concern, they are not reflective of an overarching pattern, do not align with negative indicators in psychological testing and/or collateral data, and are not serious or disqualifying.
- **MARGINALLY SUITABLE**: There are serious concerns about psychological traits and behavioral patterns that could interfere with the performance of essential job functions, though given what we have reviewed at the time of this evaluation, the applicant would be considered suitable. Concerns may stem from one particular area of one's history or testing or could be reflective of a pattern of behavior, which is noted in the assessment. Concerns, whether stemming from one particular area or those reflective of a pattern of behavior should be further investigated.

The hiring agency should determine whether other data supports these concerns prior to making a final hiring decision.

- **UNSUITABLE**: Psychological traits and behavioral patterns have been identified that are expected to significantly interfere with performance of essential job functions. Specifically, the individual's history is reflective of clear and critically concerning behavior that is contraindicated in a public safety position.

I take very seriously my role in providing an objective evaluation in which strengths and concerns are weighed in a manner consistent with the totality of available research and guidelines for best practice. I work collaboratively with other aspects of the hiring process, namely the process of background investigation, from which I am often able to clarify or gather more information about poignant concerns within an applicant's history. However, every process within the hiring process offers different perspective, and it is not uncommon that the pre-employment psychological evaluation reveals concerns that were not otherwise evident or poignant. This means that further inquiry into a person's behavior and psychology can elicit aspects of a person that is unlikely to come up in any other context. That said, I do not make final hiring decisions, and all decision-making authority in this regard is deferred to the hiring agency. If I opine a candidate unsuitable, an agency may still choose to hire the individual, though they would assume any subsequent risk and liability in doing so. They would also be responsible for responding to any scrutiny as it pertains to this decision.

The issue of public safety hiring and retention is by no means unique to Billings Police Department, and it has become a poignant and widespread concern throughout the last several years. This trend has become a critical topic of discussion amongst leading public safety personnel, and examination of this issue has consistently shown that departments across the country have faced similar challenges. Inwald and Thompson (2021) reflected widespread perception by psychologists of recent erosion to the qualified applicant pool. In addition, the Police Executive Research Forum<sup>5</sup> issued a report in 2023 that reflected an overall increase in retirements and resignations between 2020 and 2022, alongside a drop in applications for open, full-time law enforcement positions. It was also noted that officer staffing levels dropped by 4.8% between January 2020 and January 2023. The same report highlighted an increasingly number of nationwide public safety organizations endorsing challenges related to hiring; in 2020, 25% of surveyed agencies reported difficulty in hiring and filling police positions, followed by a significant jump to 64% in 2021 and 78% in 2022.

Given the totality of the above-noted information, it remains of upmost importance to preserve the integrity of the hiring standards and processes while simultaneously implementing measures known to improve recruitment and retention of qualified staff. The burgeoning body of research offers different strategies within the current standards of practice to improve the hiring process, and it is likely the Billings Police Department could see benefit in these regards. This would be part of organizational consultation I routinely offer to agencies, should that be of interest. However, I would strongly encourage continued adherence to best practices for personnel selection as it pertains not only to the pre-employment psychological evaluation, but to the hiring process as a whole.

I remain incredibly appreciative for the opportunity to work with the Billings Police Department, and I am dedicated to supporting the hiring process in whatever ways are most helpful. Please do not hesitate

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<sup>5</sup> Police Executive Research Forum. (2023). Responding to the staffing crisis: innovations in recruitment and retention. Critical Issues in Policing Series. <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/RecruitmentRetention.pdf>

to reach out with any further questions or concerns, or if it would be helpful to have further information and training in any of the above-noted regards.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Christiaens, Psy.D." followed by a stylized initials "E.C." and "Psy.D." stacked vertically.

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Elizabeth Christiaens, Psy.D.  
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Licensed Psychologist in Colorado, Montana, & Wyoming  
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Phone: (406) 868-2895

### **Crime Reduction**

- The BIRD launched a pilot safety program in collaboration with Sundown Security, funded through a \$30,000 TIF allocation approved by City Council in late 2024. While there was some interest, most businesses chose not to sign up at this time. The pilot helped illuminate key safety trends and will inform future targeted outreach and recommendations.
- Project Green Light remains available and continues to be promoted as a low-barrier safety enhancement.
- Plans are underway to further activate underutilized spaces through community events, art, and beautification.

### **TIF Projects and Development Activity:**

Completed / Paid Out:

- Air Controls TIF approved by council and in motion
- The Food Truck Stop approved by council and moving forward

Newly Submitted TIF Application:

- Montana Tire Distributors submitted a TIF application for the redevelopment of an entire block along 1st Avenue North. This is the largest TIF request received in the EBURD since 2009 and represents a major opportunity to transform a long underutilized site into a high impact commercial property. The project will go to City Council for consideration in July 2025.

### **TIF Inquiries & Early-Stage Projects:**

- Held 15 conversations about potential TIF projects, ranging from signage and façade improvements to larger redevelopment concepts. At least two applications are expected in the near future, including one for new construction and another for building upgrades.
- Continued efforts are underway to identify properties well-suited for housing and infill development, in line with the broader goals of the EBURD Urban Renewal Plan.

### **new development:**

- Archie's Repair Shop on 1<sup>st</sup> has officially broken ground on the redevelopment of the old Thomas Printing building. This is a major visible project at a key point in the district.
- Billings Animal Family Vet Clinic broke ground on their new facility. They are on track to bring long term commercial stability and additional services to the area.
- Club Lux opened, bringing new energy and activity to the EBURD's entertainment and commercial mix.

### **Additional District Growth:**

- A1 Distributors was officially annexed from the county into the city, expanding the EBURD's tax base and bringing a well established business into the urban renewal area.

### **Infrastructure Improvements:**

- Completed a stretch of sidewalk in front of one of the last remaining residential properties in the district without pedestrian access. This improved safety and walkability and supports both residential quality of life and overall district functionality.
- Helped address flooding on a public lot, resolving long-standing drainage issues that impacted nearby properties.
- Began coordination with Public Works to evaluate and plan for alley regrading in areas with frequent flooding. Targeted improvements are being considered for the first half of 2026 to reduce stormwater issues and improve long-term access and usability.



## Semi-Annual Report to Billings City Council

January 1 - June 30, 2025

Tuesday, July 15, 2025

- Status of the Expanded North 27th Street Tax Increment Fund for FY 25 - see attached spreadsheet with fund line items
- DBP Highlights and other work in the Expanded North 27th Street Urban Renewal District
  - Maintain meetings with current & new businesses in the downtown area
  - Maintain providing education on TIF & RLF via phone calls, 1-on-1, & groups presentations
  - Facilitate processing CPTED grants
  - Facilitate surveying properties for CPTED reports
  - Facilitate processing Signage grants
  - Facilitate processing large TIF grants
  - Maintain regular communication with Government and news outlets
  - Maintain meetings with current & new property owners
  - Maintain meetings with current new investors & developers
  - Collaborate with the City's Parking Board & Department as needed
  - Collaborate with the DBA & BID to promote & market downtown as a destination
  - Maintain touring vacancies with prospective tenants
  - Maintain scoping & exploring properties for future developments
  - Maintain the distribution of education about the 2-way restoration efforts
  - Train on using Placer.ai to leverage data for downtown
  - New Businesses
    - Seth Royal Kroft opened at 207 N Broadway | Q1
    - Earthbound Cafe opened at 207 N Broadway | Q1
    - Billings Refill Shoppe opened at 2713 1st Ave N | Q1
    - Michelle's Pantry opened at 2123 1st Ave N | Q1
    - Magic City: Bell Book & Candle opened at 14 & ½ N 27th St | Q1
    - Tup Tim Thai opened at 2916 1st Ave N | Q1
    - Wicked Bull Trading Post opened at 112 STE B N Broadway | Q1
    - Frae Collective opened at 116 N 29th St | Q2
    - Captain Scurvy's Black Dragon Pub opened at 2601 Minnesota Ave | Q2
    - Bearded Bean Coffee Co. opened at 3024 2nd Ave N | Q2
    - The Good Wolf opened at 209 N 29th St | Q3
    - Ebon Coffee Collective
- General Downtown Billings operations
  - Ongoing photography of downtown scenery, architecture, & activities during all four seasons & signature downtown events
  - Host a sold out 5th Mug Crawl
  - Begin the 22nd Alive After 5 concert series
  - Launch a revamped membership program

- Host a successful 5th Mini Golf tournament
- Secure 60%+ buy-in to renew the BID for a 3rd ten-year period
- Promote First Fridays
- Development Project Incentives (TIF grant projects)
  - Completed
    - Montana Rescue Mission
    - Old Town Flats
    - Seth Royal Kroft Photography Signage
    - Tup Tim Thai Signage
    - Bearded Bean Signage
    - Downtown Family Pharmacy Signage
  - In Progress
    - Old Billings Hardware Building
    - Rockman Project/Marriott Hotel
    - Frae Collective Signage
    - Wicked Bull Trading Post Signage
    - Little Llama Learners Signage
    - SK-Security Signage
    - Ebon Coffee Collective Signage
    - Frontier Law Firm Signage
    - 2-way project
  - On Deck
    - 5th Ave Corridor
    - 25th Street Pedestrian Bridge
    - Futurity Tower
    - 1st Ave N Project
    - Montana Avenue Road Diet
  - TIF inquiries
    - 25 new TIF inquiries (large developments, facade improvements, signage, CPTED, energy efficiency, streetscaping & landscaping, change of use, housing)

# SBURA TIF DISTRICT





































SOUTH BILLINGS URBAN  
RENEWAL ASSOCIATION

DZ  
DICK ZIER  
CONSULTING

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SBURBILLINGS@GMAIL.COM  
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2139 BROADWATER AVE. STE F  
BILLINGS, MONTANA 59102

1. SBURA HAS INCREASED THE ANNUAL TAX REVENUE APPROXIMATELY \$1,000,000.00 IN OUR DISTRICT.
2. CREATED 38 AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS AND HAVE 34 MORE UNDER CONSTRUCTION.
3. PROVIDED FUNDING FOR CURBS, GUTTERS, AND SIDEWALKS FOR NUMEROUS STREETS IN OUR SBURA DISTRICT. WE PLAN ON DOING THE REST OF THE UNPAVED STREETS IN THE FUTURE.
4. REQUIRED THE APPLICANTS TO EXTEND THE TRAIL SYSTEM THROUGH THEIR PROPERTY WHEN APPROPRIATE.
5. FUNDED THE EVIDENCE CENTER.
6. ASSISTED SERVICE PRO EXPRESS LUBE AND TACO JOHNS IN OPENING THEIR NEW BUSINESSES.

7. PROVIDED FUNDING TO TRAILSHEAD INN TO REMOVE 217 HOTEL UNITS AND ELIMINATE TRANSIENTS AND BLIGHT. THE EXCESS LAND IS NOW READY FOR FUTURE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT, WHICH WILL INCREASE THE TAX BASE IN OUR SBURA DISTRICT.

8. GRANTED A TIF REQUEST TO THE BILLINGS HOTEL AND CONVENTION CENTER TO INCREASE THEIR CONVENTION CENTER BY 15,000 SQ.FT. THIS CONVENTION CENTER IS NOW THE BIGGEST IN A FOUR STATE AREA AND IS ALREADY ATTRACTING CONVENTIONS THAT BILLINGS DIDN'T HAVE THE ABILITY TO HOST BEFORE.

9. WE HAVE ASSISTED THE SCHOOL DISTRICT WITH SOLAR PANELS, SAFE STUDENT DROPOFF AREAS, AND A SOFTBALL FIELD.

10. THE SBURA BOARD RECENTLY APPROVED ASSISTING HOMEOWNERS IN OUR SBURA DISTRICT WITH UP TO \$5,000.00 TO HOOKUP TO CITY WATER AND SEWER. CURRENTLY THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 72 HOMES THAT ARE NOT ON CITY WATER AND SEWER. THIS WILL BE PRESENTED TO THE CITY COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL.

11. FINALLY, OUR NEW \$36,000,000 RECREATION CENTER IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION! A COUPLE OF STUDIES HAD BEEN DONE CLEAR BACK IN 2017, SAYING WE NEEDED MORE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES IN BILLINGS, BUT NOTHING HAD BEEN DONE TO ADDRESS THIS PROBLEM. OUR SBURA BOARD TOOK THIS PROJECT ON WITH 3 GOALS FROM THE BILLINGS CITY COUNCIL.

- A. NO BOND ISSUE TO BE VOTED ON BY THE CITIZENS OF BILLINGS.
- B. NO MILL LEVY FOR OPERATING EXPENSES.
- C. CREATE A PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP.

ALL 3 OF THOSE GOALS HAVE BEEN MET THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF THE SBURA BOARD AND CONSULTANT.

12. THIS RECREATION CENTER WILL BRING IN MILLIONS OF DOLLARS TO OUR LOCAL ECONOMY. THANKS TO THE COORDINATION OF THE BILLINGS CITY COUNCIL, THE SBURA BOARD, SIGNAL PEAK MINE, TBID, THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, AND THE YELLOWSTONE ICE FOUNDATION WE ARE REALIZING THE BEGINNING OF SOMETHING WE CAN ALL BE PROUD OF. THIS COMPLEX WILL RIVAL THE METRA IN BOOSTING OUR ECONOMY.

## Billings West End Water Reservoirs Naming Contest Planning

### The Message

#### 🕒 ⚡ Up and Coming Billings Water Reservoirs Need a Name! 🚀

The biggest public works project in Billings' history –the **West End Water Treatment Plant & Reservoirs** are coming soon, and we need your help naming these reservoirs that will secure Billings' water supply for generations to come!

#### Why is this such a game-changing infrastructure project for our community?

🕒 **Reliable Water Supply** - Expands storage from just hours to weeks for the city in case of an emergency such as flood, oil spills, or other natural and manmade emergencies.

🌿 **Sustainable Savings** - Cuts \$200,000-300,000 in annual energy costs by reducing the need for pumping from the original water plant to all corners of the city.

🏡 **Supports Growth** - Provides a safe and efficient water source for Billings' growing population.

Not to mention, the reservoirs are more than water storage. The reservoir site will be a scenic, nature-inspired destination that celebrates the wonderful city we call home!

Some say, “What’s in a name?” We say, “It’s all in the name!” Since “Great Lakes” is already taken, we’re calling on YOU to bring your best ideas! Get creative, have fun, and help us name the reservoirs that will shape our city’s future.

Check out contest details and participate in the contest at [xxxwebsitewebpage](http://xxxwebsitewebpage)! ❤️

#NameTheReservoirs #BillingsWaterFuture #CityOfBillings



## The Steps

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. <b>Define the Purpose, Guidelines, and Possible Incentive for naming contest</b>  | <b>Aug 2025</b>  |
| 2. <b>Appoint 3-5 Judges</b> – City council members, Public Works rep, Parks rep, Human Relations Commission members, etc. can be designated as judges, informed of their responsibilities.  |  |
| 3. <b>Judging Criteria</b> - Criteria shared with judges through meetings or email.  |  |
| 4. <b>Create Entry Submission Mechanisms</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online Submission Forms on City Website (Submission form with name suggestion, participant's name, and contact details)</li> <li>Email Addresses Dedicated to the Contest (<a href="mailto:Contest@billingsmt.gov">Contest@billingsmt.gov</a> for example)</li> <li>Physical Submission Boxes at City Hall and Community Centers (With entry forms for physical submissions)</li> </ul>  | <b>Sep 2025</b>  |
| 5. <b>Design Entry Forms</b> - Physical Entry Forms (Simple forms with space for name suggestions, participant's name, and contact details)  |  |
| 6. <b>Build contest webpage on Billings Public Works website</b>   |  |
| 7. <b>Build promo material around main message</b> – press release, social media posts, flyers/posters for in person outreach, etc.  |  |
| 8. <b>Promote the Contest &amp; Provide Education to the Community about the History of Billings Water</b> - Launch promotional campaigns through various channels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Website (dedicated contest page with info and online submission form)</li> <li>Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor, Twitter, LinkedIn...)</li> <li>Press releases to media friends</li> <li>Community Events and Meetings (Announcements and flyers)</li> <li>Posters and Flyers in Public Places (Community centers, libraries, parks)</li> <li>The Human Relations Commission is willing to help do research on Billings water history and organize lectures and promote the contest to community partners such as schools, taskforces, clubs, groups, etc.</li> </ul> | <b>Oct 2025</b><br><br>Allow the entire month of Oct for submissions |
| 9. <b>Review and Shortlist Entries</b> - Judges review all entries and shortlist the top suggestions through internal discussions or virtual meetings.   | <b>Nov 2025</b>  |
| 10. <b>City Council Makes Final Decision</b> - Judges will submit their top 5 names for the City Council to consider and City Council makes final selection  |  |
| 11. <b>Legal Considerations</b> (Ensure that the chosen names do not infringe on any trademarks or copyrights.)  |  |
| 12. <b>Announce Winner</b> - Announce the winning name through various channels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Event (announcement &amp; certificate of appreciation at ribbon cutting ceremony)</li> <li>City social media &amp; Website &amp; Press release to local media friends</li> </ul>  | <b>Dec 2025</b>  |
| 13. <b>Implement and Celebrate</b><br>Start using the chosen names in official communications and signage. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Announcement &amp; certificate of appreciation at ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate with the community.</li> </ul>  |  |

**Description of Event and Location:**

Rodeo Billings is the new ideation of the NILE PRCA Rodeo that has always been held in October, indoors, during the NILE Stock Show. This year, we are moving our PRCA rodeo to August (14-16) during MontanaFair to capitalize on the new outdoor arena built on the grounds of MetraPark.

By bringing the rodeo back outdoors, we hope to reconnect the community to its western roots by showcasing this time-honored tradition the way it was meant to be experienced in the summer – under our beautiful Big Sky, with friends and neighbors all around in a festive atmosphere enjoying wholesome, family entertainment.

This mounted rider brigade through downtown Billings - starting at 33<sup>rd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, to 10<sup>th</sup> and then 4<sup>th</sup> Ave N all the way to the Metra, the site of Rodeo Billings - is a fun, visual and engaging way to kickoff Rodeo Billings, which starts the following day. It is a living representation of our western culture in the heart of our city. This will be held during tourist season. It is conceived as much for our own community, as it is for those visiting Billings. An opportunity to give them a taste of our western heritage. A chance for them to see in real-life what many have only seen in movies or on TV – real cowboys and cowgirls on horseback riding through the downtown of Montana's largest city, making a statement that we remain rooted in our western values and traditions. We hope this event will leave a lasting impression on those who live here and reignite a sense of pride in their community. As visitors relay their “rustic” experience to their friends, Billings will be seen as a destination for those eager to share in a bit of western culture. Pictures, videos and stories of how they happened upon this procession will be shared well beyond our state's borders. Others will put Billings on their bucket list in hopes of also being part of this special celebration of the west and seeing first-hand those who still authentically live the western lifestyle every day and stoke the engine of Montana's agriculture industry.

## UPCOMING DRAFT AGENDAS FOR COUNCIL / LEADERSHIP

*Please review the draft agendas below and provide any feedback regarding the order of business, modification of agenda items, or other changes to the consent or regular agendas. City code requires a specific order of business as it relates to certain items on meeting agendas, e.g., placement of public hearings first on the regular agenda, so your feedback will be incorporated with those code requirements in mind. ([BMCC 2-214](#)) Work session agendas are more flexible and can also easily be modified by the Mayor with the consensus of Council during those informal meetings.*

*Thank you for your feedback!*

### **August 4, 2025– WORK SESSION (Chris Out)**

Introduction of Land Use Planning Team

1. Allies in Aging (Erika Purington)
2. Disaster Policy/Update - Derek Yeager
3. Kennedy's initiative - Litter on South Billings Blvd. and Frontage Road

### **August 11, 2025 REGULAR BUSINESS**

#### **CONSENT:**

1. Boards and Commissions
2. Bid Award: W.O. 25-07, Landfill Gas Collection System Lift Two
3. Police Union Labor Contract
4. Purchase (6) Police Patrol Utility Vehicles and (1) Police Responder Patrol Truck
5. Professional Engineering Services, W.O. 26-08, WRF Digester Gas Piping
6. Amendment 1 w/Tyler Technologies/Public Safety Software
7. Donation for Skyline Shade Structure
8. High Sierra Subdivision, 23rd Filing - Preliminary Plat

#### **REGULAR:**

1. Public Hearing and Resolution Creating Downtown Business Improvement District (BID 0001)

### **August 18, 2025– WORK SESSION**

1. Public Art Policy
2. Mental Health Facility – Board of Investments (Aspenlieder's request 7.28.25)
3. Council Rules (Aspenlieder / Rupsis request 7.28.25)

### **August 25, 2025 REGULAR BUSINESS (Chris Out)**

#### **CONSENT:**

1. Bid Award: Fire Station 2 Boiler Replacement
2. Appoint Downtown Business Improvement District (BID 0001) Board of Trustees
3. In-Kind Donation Acceptance - Billings Trail Net - Black Otter Trail Crack Sealing
4. Amended Plat of Lot 6 ,Block 1, Southgate Subdivision, 1st Filing - Exempt Plat

**REGULAR:**

2. PH and RES Setting Annual Levies for Fiscal Year 2025
3. PH and RES Setting PMD Annual Assessments for Fiscal Year 2026
4. PH and RES Road Maintenance District No. 6
5. PH and RES Final Budget Adoption
6. Public Hearing and Resolution Approving a Street Name Change for Leatherneck Lane, Located in Elysian Subdivision
7. Public Hearing - Land Use Contrary to Zoning for Elysian School Parking Lot Landscaping

**September 2, 2025 (Tues.) – WORK SESSION** Kevin Out (Denise)

1. Urban Renewal District Legislative and Operational Modifications
2. SBBURD Expansion Analysis Update???
3. BMCC 22-406 Removal of Snow, ice, etc. from sidewalks by abutting property owners

**September 8, 2025 REGULAR BUSINESS**

**CONSENT:**

1. Airport Consultant Selection – RFQ
2. Prof. Services Contract for W.O. 25-24 Safe Streets for All 2023??
- 3.

**REGULAR:**

**September 15, 2025– WORK SESSION** Kevin Out (Toni)

**Executive Session 4:30 P.M. – 5:30 P.M.**

1. Snow Plowing Update

**September 22, 2025 REGULAR BUSINESS** Kevin Out

**CONSENT:**

1. Microsoft Renewal (IT)
2. Tyler Renewal (IT)

**REGULAR:**

1. Resolution to renew Citizens Police Advisory Committee (Regular Agenda Item)

**October 6, 2025– WORK SESSION**

**October 13, 2025 REGULAR BUSINESS**

**CONSENT:**

**REGULAR:**

2. RES Establishing a Procedure for the Disposition of Unclaimed Property (Not submitted into routing in AQ)
- 3.

**October 20, 2025– WORK SESSION**

Executive Session 4:00 PM-5:30 PM

1. Chris Evaluation

**October 27, 2025 REGULAR BUSINESS** Kevin Out

**CONSENT:**

1. \*Council Meeting Schedule for December

**REGULAR:**

**November 3, 2025– WORK SESSION**

**November 10, 2025 REGULAR BUSINESS** Kevin Out

**CONSENT:**

1. Beartooth RC&D MOU

**REGULAR:**

**November 17, 2025– WORK SESSION**

**November 24, 2025 REGULAR BUSINESS** Kevin Out

**CONSENT:**

- 1.

**REGULAR:**

**December 1, 2025– WORK SESSION**

Executive Session 4:30 P.M. – 5:30 P.M.

December 8, 2025 **REGULAR BUSINESS**  
**CONSENT:**

**REGULAR:**

December 15, 2025– WORK SESSION

December 22, 2025 **REGULAR BUSINESS** Kevin Out  
**CONSENT:**

1.

**REGULAR:**

## **CLERK'S NOTES**

\*Annual Items shown in Blue

**January (First Work Session) after an election:** Swearing in of new Councilmembers and Nominations and Elections of Deputy Mayor Pro Tempore

**January:** Amend Park Development Council Proposed Budget

**January:** Beartooth RC&D MOU

**February or March:** Legislative Updates (ODD years only)

**March:** Budget Calendar

**March:** Council Priorities

**September:** City Administrator's Annual Review

**October:** TRP, ERP and CIP

**October:** Council Holiday Schedule for December

**November (First Regular Business Meeting) after an election:** Nominations and Elections of Deputy Mayor

DRAFT