

Rimrock Neighborhood Task Force

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 21, 2026 - 7:00pm

Mayflower Church Meeting Room

Board members in attendance: Leslie Cooke - Chair, Simon Harper - Vice Chair, Kevin Moser, Holly Schwarm - Secretary, David Schwarm

There were 32 people in attendance.

Leslie welcomed everyone to the meeting. The meeting minutes from November were approved.

Law Enforcement Update - Sgt. Glenn Gunther BPD

Sgt. Gunther discussed the recent email sent out regarding task force reports. He noted that the most current report is the December report and that the January report won't be available until July. He said that he has spoken to the gentleman who creates the reports, and that a much more up to date and user-friendly report system is in the works. Sgt. Gunther also talked about the swastikas that had been painted on the Mayflower building. The detective in charge said the case is still under investigation and he was unable to speak in depth about the case. However, he is certain it was the work of a single individual.

Old Business - Leslie spoke about the Rimrock Corridor Safety Committee. At the meeting last week, the group discussed what safety issues on Rimrock Road need to be the priority. It was determined that it is pedestrian crossings. This committee will continue to work with the city for the transportation corridor plan.

2026 Q&A Panel - Panel Members: Mike Nelson - Mayor, Andrew Lindley - Ward 4 City Council, Mark Nicholson - Ward 1 City Council, Mike Waters - Yellowstone County Commissioner District 3, and Mike Boyett - City Council Member Ward 5 and Vice Mayor

1. Upcoming Mill Levy voting in November

There are 2 mill levies expected to be on the ballot this year - one is for an expansion on the jail the other is for school district 2. The panel members spoke about the jail levy. Due to the overwhelming number of inmates, the jail needs to be expanded. They are trying to educate the community on the issue. It was mentioned that law enforcement and judicial officials are having to make difficult decisions due to the overcrowding. The jail's occupancy is 430. On Monday there were 660 inmates.

2. How can we find funds to hire new law enforcement?

The bottom line is taxes. Billings property taxes don't go to help pay for emergency services, so the money has to come from somewhere else. When citizens are asked "hey can we raise your taxes to pay for more police" the answer is a resounding "NO". At a certain point something is going to have to give. It was mentioned that as much as Montanan's don't want sales tax, that money would go a long way to help get more law enforcement on the streets as well as fund other needed items.

3. Was Stagecoach Trail put on hold?

The answer is no. The trail is still going to be built. It is still in the planning phase. Stagecoach Trail is being funded mostly by grants with a smaller portion coming from the city. There were a few other trails that were put on the back burner for the time being so that the city can focus more on safe routes to school.

4. Increase in disruptive airport noise.

The FAA does have laws on airport noise, things like limited flight paths and only using certain runways for preflight engine checks. That being said, Billings and the surrounding area are growing which means more flights and that equals more noise. Plus, we are one of the top 150 airports in the nation for freight, big planes equal more noise and the National Guard Helicopter Program will add a potential 6 Apache helicopters to the noise. Airport officials have been contacted as well as FAA officials in Washington DC.

5. Sewer infrastructure updates.

The city is working on replacing all the old lead sewer pipes. It is a slow and expensive job. They are working to replace pipes every year, but other pipes break and that becomes priority.

6. When will the new water plant on Hesper open up?

It will be a year or two before the lakes are finished, but the new plant will be up and running this year. At that time they will shut down the old plant and make necessary repairs and upgrades - it needs to keep running.

7. What do you think is going really well with the city right now?

Andrew Lindley- 1. The city is continuing to develop and grow. 2. The city council is working really well together.

Mayor Nelson - Public safety. Crime statistics are going down, and the citizens of Billings seem to have a lot of pride in their community.

Mark Nicholson - Agrees with how well the city council is working together and is excited for the final report of the Energy and Conservation Commission. Which will help the city by recommending ways to save money on energy.

Mike Waters - All the live entertainment like the rodeos, comedy shows and concerts, and the upcoming air show.

Mike Boyett - New gymnasium and hockey rinks being built at Amend Park they will bring entertainment as well as revenue into Billings.

Panel Discussion was closed.

New Business

Mike Yakawich - MT State Senator for the 24th District, was in attendance and spoke briefly on what is going on at the state level. Mentioning he is partnering with Billings and the City Council to keep lines of communication open.

Meeting was adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Holly Schwarm, RNTF Board Secretary