

# **JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS**

**April 1, 2025**

Regular City Commission Meeting

Mayor Reeves presiding  
Commission Chambers, Room 206

**CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 PM**

## **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ROLL CALL/STAFF INTRODUCTIONS:** City Commission members present: Cory Reeves, Joe McKenney, Rick Tryon, Shannon Wilson, and Susan Wolff. Also present were City Manager Greg Doyon, Public Works Director Chris Gaub, Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry, Finance Director Melissa Kinzler, City Attorney David Dennis, Fire Chief Jeremy Jones, Police Chief Jeff Newton, and City Clerk Lisa Kunz.

**AGENDA APPROVAL:** Without objection, Mayor Reeves removed Item 13, Establishing Residential and Commercial Water, Sewer and Storm Drain Utility Service Rates Effective July 1, 2025, from the agenda for additional time to obtain information pertaining to the significant capital needs and potential future development that was discussed at this evening's work session. There were no proposed changes to the agenda by the City Manager. The Agenda was approved as amended.

**CONFLICT DISCLOSURE/EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS:** None.

## **MILITARY UPDATES**

### **1. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM MONTANA AIR NATIONAL GUARD (MANG).**

**Colonel Scott Smith**, 120<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Commander, announced the following:

- A Site Activation Task Force [SATAF] will kick off the review of the intercontinental ballistic conversion/modernization process on September 15-19, 2025. The proposed timeframe of getting their first airplanes is October 2026.
- Two pilots and seven loadmasters are attending school.
- Last week MANG divested its first C130-H model aircraft to Little Rock, with the last aircraft expected to leave in December.
- The \$31 million dollar fuel tank project is underway with an end date of fall 2026.
- The ramp project for the new C130's should be completed by the end of the month.
- The end date for the landing zone at the airport is Fiscal Year 27.
- HB 5 is still going through the legislature for the state to purchase property in Power, MT for a drop zone.
- After a traffic study, the main gate construction award is set for 2026 with construction beginning in 2027.
- MANG's 10-year construction plan with the new hangar will be approximately \$1 billion dollars.
- A deployment is scheduled for the end of May 2025 with a return date in the fall.
- An inspection is scheduled for June 2026.

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- Sri Lankan partners will be in Great Falls visiting MAFB April 30.

With regard to the military being mentioned in *The Electric's* article today about usage of the Scheel's Aim High Big Sky Recreation and Aquatics facility, Colonel Smith noted that he was not the wing commander during the grant process for the facility. When he took over as wing commander he was informed that MANG would have access to the facility for training events. He is not sure whether that is or is not correct, and commented that it was probably an assumption.

MANG rented the facility on August 24, 2024. However, the 30-foot wide C130 parachutes require a full pool rather than two lanes, and the \$440 cost was not economical for their continued use. MANG performs its water rescue training at Great Falls High School for a rental fee of \$157 for the entire pool.

### PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

2. **Inge Buchholz**, 2208 23<sup>rd</sup> Street South, expressed appreciation to Great Falls Fire Rescue and discussed the professionalism the firefighters exhibited during a call to her apartment building last week.

**John Hubbard**, City resident, commented he could not get answers why Governor Gianforte is sitting on \$2.5 billion dollars of taxpayer money, and where the marijuana tax and lottery monies are going. He further spoke in opposition to any proposed sales tax.

### NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS

3. **MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

None.

### BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

4. **MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

None.

### CITY MANAGER

5. **MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

City Manager Greg Doyon reported that Great Falls' water was voted second best in the state during the Montana Rural Water Association's water tasting competition last week.

The Public Works Department will be partnering with Veolia North America to host a free household hazardous collection waste event for the community on April 12, 2025 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> Street South and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South.

The Park and Recreation Forestry Division received its 44<sup>th</sup> Tree City award. Great Falls is the longest awarded city in Montana.

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The City of Great Falls retained its Aa3 credit rating through Moody's. The Aa rate demonstrates very strong creditworthiness relative to other US municipal or tax-exempt issuers or issues. This rating demonstrates the great financial management from the Finance Department and how the elected officials have been responsible with debt service over the years to maintain that rating.

The City's lobbyist reported that Senate Bill 357 is headed to the governor for signature. That legislation relates to opening the basin that the City is in for water rights activities. It basically extends the perfection deadline for certain areas along the Missouri River that will help the City have options down the road if the city grows and/or has a big industry that comes in that requires a lot of water. Making sure that the City is maintaining those rights in a responsible way to meet the needs as the City continues to grow is one of the most consequential things that we do as a community.

### **CONSENT AGENDA.**

6. Minutes, March 18, 2025, City Commission Meeting.
7. Minutes, March 18, 2025, Special City Commission Meeting.
8. Total Expenditures of \$2,460,405 for the period of February 27, 2025 through March 12, 2025, to include claims over \$25,000, in the amount of \$1,852,383.
9. Contracts List.
10. Approve the Amendment to Section A. of the City Manager Employment Agreement and extend the term for the Agreement an additional three years through March 24, 2029.
11. Set a public hearing for April 15, 2025 on Resolution 10569, Revising Fee Schedule for Great Falls Fire Rescue.
12. Set a public hearing for May 6, 2025 on Resolution 10573, Establishing Residential and Commercial Sanitation Service Collection Rates Effective June 1, 2025.
- ~~13. Set a public hearing for May 6, 2025 on Resolution 10574, Establishing Residential and Commercial Water, Sewer and Storm Drain Utility Service Rates Effective June 1, 2025.~~
14. Approve a change order in the amount of \$8,500 to Guy Tabacco Construction for the SLIPA GFPD Secure Front Desk Project utilizing SLIPA and City funds, and authorize the City Manager to execute the change order documents. **OF 1835.0**

**Commissioner Wolff moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson, that the City Commission approve the Consent Agenda, with item 13 being removed, as presented.**

Mayor Reeves asked if there were any comments from the public or discussion amongst the Commissioners.

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Hearing none, Mayor Reeves called for the vote.

Motion carried 5-0.

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### **OLD BUSINESS**

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**15. WATER TREATMENT PLANT SEDIMENTATION BASIN UPGRADES PROJECT, PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR ENGINEERING SERVICES. OF 1808.2**

Public Works Director Chris Gaub reported that Agenda Item 15 is a Professional Services Agreement with AE2S. This would enable the City to start the process of improving a very old, but key component of the Water Treatment Plant. The Plant has four settling basins that were built in the 1930s and a fifth that was built in the 1950s. They assist with the filtration and sedimentation of the water drawn from the Missouri River. The basins have a track system chain made up of a vast number of polymer 'plastic' components, such as chain links and link pins. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link. The chain links for all five basins would stretch out for one mile. There are approximately 11,000 pins connecting these chain links. Just one pin failure can take a basin off line. Staff is proposing an alternative design that will eliminate this type of failure as well as reducing maintenance requirements.

During peak flow, the basins operate at capacity, sometimes exceeding 30 million gallons of water per day. If one basin were to fail, the City would lose eight million gallons per day of capacity. Service would have to be reduced until repaired, which could take significant time. To reduce service, water conservation may have to be instituted such as watering of lawns.

Due to the age and design, replacement parts are hard to acquire and may even have to be fabricated. This means an emergent repair would require considerable time and likely be significantly more expensive.

With this Agreement, AE2S will design and oversee the installation of new settling basin components within two existing basins. AE2S has extensive experience assisting others throughout Montana with this type of system. The stainless steel plate settling system will allow the plant to fully operate on the two retrofitted basins versus the existing five. If additional capacity is needed in the future, the other three basins could be retrofitted. The new system will also improve durability and assist with improving the lifecycle costs of other plant components. These systems have a proven history of over 30 years and will give the Plant a redundant network with increased capacity.

Staff recommends awarding the Professional Services Agreement to AE2S to move forward with design and construction of this needed improvement.

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Commissioner Wilson moved, seconded by Commissioner Tryon, that the City Commission approve a Professional Services Agreement with Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc. (AE2S) in the amount not to exceed \$446,462.00 for engineering services for the Water Treatment Plant Sedimentation Basin Upgrades project, and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement documents.

Mayor Reeves asked if there were any comments from the public. Hearing none, Mayor Reeves asked if there was any discussion amongst the Commissioners.

Commissioner Wolff applauded staff's inclusion of a risk matrix.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Reeves called for the vote.

Motion carried 5-0.

16. **5<sup>TH</sup> STREET AND 10<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE STORM DRAINAGE CROSSING PROJECT, PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT AMENDMENT NO. 1. OF 1811.2**
17. **5<sup>TH</sup> STREET AND 10<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE STORM DRAINAGE CROSSING PROJECT, CONSTRUCTION AGREEMENT. OF 1811.2**

Public Works Director Chris Gaub reported that the requested action is Commission approval for two agenda items for the 5th Street South storm drainage improvement project, which is near Bison Ford.

Agenda Item 16 requests approval of Amendment No. 1 to the existing agreement with Great West Engineering. This amendment for just over \$68,000 expands their role to include public outreach, construction administration services, and additional engineering support. These services will ensure that construction is managed efficiently, that businesses and residents are kept informed, and that any unforeseen engineering challenges are addressed promptly. This will also enable City Engineer staff to focus on other work. Approval of this amendment will bring the total agreement price for Great West's services to approximately \$161,000.

Agenda Item 17 requests the Commission award a construction contract for this project to Ed Boland Construction for just under \$949,000, which is the low bid. Work is scheduled to begin this summer and be completed in five months.

This phase of the project is a critical step in mitigating the chronic flooding issues along 5<sup>th</sup> Street South between 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, which is severely impacted during major storm events. It will install a 24-inch parallel storm pipe beneath 10th Avenue South, a 36-inch parallel pipe to the north, and a 100-foot 15-inch storm line to the south. Additional inlets and inlet grate upgrades will also enhance drainage capacity.

Construction will have some public impact, particularly in areas near 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and 5<sup>th</sup> Street South. While 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue South will remain open, there will be intermittent closures of the westbound turning lane onto 5<sup>th</sup> Street South and sections of 5<sup>th</sup> Street South. Great West will lead

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public outreach efforts, working closely with affected businesses to minimize disruptions and ensure clear communication regarding the construction schedule.

Staff recommends approving Amendment No. 1 to the Great West Engineering agreement and awarding the construction contract to Ed Boland Construction. These actions will move the City one-step closer to improving storm water infrastructure, reducing flooding risks in this critical area and reducing the City's liability exposure.

**Commissioner Wolff moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson, that the City Commission approve the Professional Services Agreement Amendment No. 1 in the amount of \$68,344.00 to Great West Engineering, Inc., for the 5<sup>th</sup> Street and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue South Drainage Crossing project, and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement documents.**

Mayor Reeves asked if there were any comments from the public. Hearing none, Mayor Reeves asked if there was any discussion amongst the Commissioners.

Commissioner Tryon received confirmation that the funds for this project come from the Public Works capital improvements program and has already been budgeted for.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Reeves called for the vote.

Motion carried 5-0.

**Commissioner Wilson moved, seconded by Commissioner Tryon, that the City Commission award a construction agreement in the amount of \$948,620.00 to Ed Boland Construction for the 5<sup>th</sup> Street and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue South Storm Drainage Crossing project, and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement documents.**

Mayor Reeves asked if there were any comments from the public. Hearing none, Mayor Reeves asked if there was any discussion amongst the Commissioners.

Commissioner Tryon received confirmation that the funds for this project come from the Public Works capital improvements program and has already been budgeted for.

Commissioner Wilson commented, on behalf of all motorcycle riders, she will be glad when the storm water issue is fixed. It is difficult to drive through during storm events.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Reeves called for the vote.

Motion carried 5-0.

### **ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS**

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18. **ORDINANCE 3272, AMENDING TITLE 5, CHAPTERS 1-3, TITLE 6, CHAPTER 1, TITLE 8, CHAPTER 14, AND TITLE 17, CHAPTER 20 OF THE OFFICIAL CODE OF THE CITY OF GREAT FALLS (OCCGF) PERTAINING TO BUSINESS LICENSES, PERMITS, AND SAFETY INSPECTION CERTIFICATES PROVISIONS.**

Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry reported that the requested action is that the Commission accept Ordinance 3272 on first reading, and set second reading for April 15, 2025.

**Commissioner Tryon moved, seconded by Commissioner McKenney, that the City Commission accept Ordinance 3272 on first reading and set second reading for April 15, 2025.**

Mayor Reeves asked if there were any comments from the public or comments amongst the Commissioners. Hearing none, Mayor Reeves called for the vote.

Motion carried 5-0.

19. **RESOLUTION 10570, AMENDING RESOLUTION 10536 TO ESTABLISH PARK AND RECREATION FEES TO WAIVE FEES ALIGNING WITH TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR MALMSTROM AIR FORCE BASE AND MONTANA AIR NATIONAL GUARD AT THE SCHEELS AIM HIGH BIG SKY FACILITY.**

City Manager Greg Doyon reported that the requested action is Commission consideration to revise the previously adopted fee schedule that includes a highlighted green section that reads: Malmstrom Air Force Base and Montana Air National Guard: As long as the City operates the Scheels Aim High Big Sky facility, rental fees for lap lane, pool and one classroom will be waived, conditioned upon any waived fees aligning with training requirements annually submitted in writing to the City.

Malmstrom verbally made the waiver request to him. He had to do some research because this project started a while ago. Initially, Malmstrom received a letter that said no, the fees would not be waived. Malmstrom was politely persistent about their request. The Commission asked him to further evaluate things.

He checked with former Wing Commander Jennifer Reeves, who is retired now, as well as prior Deputy City Manager Chuck Anderson. Neither recall an explicit conversation about waiving fees for training, but they acknowledged that it was never really addressed either. Jennifer Reeves phrased it in a diplomatic, polite way that it kind of got tossed into the assumption pile that they would not have to pay for training at the facility. She went on to explain that, generally, military personnel are provided a gym on the base. Malmstrom has been trying to get an indoor pool for recreation and training for years. They have been unsuccessful in that effort. Therefore, Malmstrom went all in on this application in order to make the Department of Defense (DOD) grant successful for the community and the installation.

He can see why that conversation got pushed aside because of what was happening with that project. There was a very tight submittal turnaround for the Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP) grant. There were multiple parties involved, and the location was changed several times. There was an appeal that was made to the Department of Defense after the grant was awarded.

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However, he did get an email two days after the grant was awarded from the grant administrator acknowledging that the City would charge minimal fees in order to cover costs for use at the facility.

Colonel Smith shared tonight that, when the pool was designed, it was designed to accommodate a parachute drop in the large lap pool. That large beam was added into the construction cost to accommodate that training.

Manager Doyon estimated that it would be \$2,000 to \$4,000 in revenue not generated at the facility, or up to \$8,000 for both military installations. He understands the Commission's desire to maintain a good relationship with Malmstrom and the Air National Guard and the value that their members bring to the community and the mission that they provide for military defense. His memo sets forth in great detail why he thinks the Commission should not waive the fees. But, he totally understands that this is a Commission decision and he will support their decision.

**Commissioner Wolff moved, seconded by Commissioner McKenney, that the City Commission adopt Resolution 10570 and waive facility use fees for training conducted by the Montana Air National Guard (MTANG) and Malmstrom Air Force Base (MAFB) at the Scheels Aim High Big Sky Aquatics and Recreation Facility, subject to annual written training schedules submitted by each entity.**

Mayor Reeves asked if there were any comments from the public.

**James Schroeder**, City resident, submitted written comments in opposition to Great Falls citizens being forced to subsidize Malmstrom's and MTANG's personnel use of the facility for free. He further spoke in opposition to Calumet and Benefis not paying its fair share of property taxes.

Mayor Reeves asked if there was any discussion amongst the Commissioners.

Commissioner Tryon commented he is conflicted on this issue. He is the only Commissioner that has been involved from the outset of this project. He recalls it being the City's understanding that, in order to pay for the ongoing operations, MTANG and MAFB would need to pay to use the facility for training, as well as their members' use of the facility.

The indoor aquatics facility is currently operating at a deficit. The Commission is faced with perplexing issues going forward in relation to the Scheels Aim High Big Sky Indoor Aquatics Facility regarding whether or not to subsidize this facility in the amount of thousands of dollars per month out of the general fund. Park and Recreation and a couple of other departments are already being subsidized out of the general fund for operations. What that does is it takes away from public safety for our community. General Fund money is for public safety.

Commissioner Tryon expressed appreciation to Colonel Voorhies in the audience and appreciates everything that Malmstrom represents for this community. He has heard that "it is only \$8,000 a year" that the City would have to subsidize for the anticipated usage by MAFB and MTANG. If it is not much money for the City, then it is not much money for the Pentagon and the Air Force. It is certainly less of a burden on them for that \$8,000 per year than it is on the general fund of Great Falls. At this point, he is not in favor of waiving the fees.

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Commissioner Wilson commented, having been in the military and having had soldiers under her, she understands the need to have the airmen at the facility to ensure they are being trained properly. But, being in the military, she also understood that when she went to the gym, it was free. The reason for that was because it was operated under funds from the federal government. The military had a budget that was approved to do that. The City is in a unique position that it is running the facility and has to have a budget to run it. She pays for her membership, just as citizens pay to attend the facility. It is only right that the military does too. If MAFB had a pool on base, they would be paying for the use of that facility through federal funds. The City needs to have that support to be able to operate the facility.

Commissioner Wolff sees all sides of this issue. She paid for a membership at the facility, and she sees airmen who have paid to use the fitness center. There is no big facility like the SAHBS that would be paying for itself within a year. It takes time to build up memberships and to have people come in and use the facility. The more people that come into the facility, there is an opportunity for increased memberships. The City would not have an indoor pool in this community without the Department of Defense \$10 million dollar grant.

This is a situation where explicit communication would really help between entities. As she has looked through everything, she can see where it could have gone one way or the other. She is in full support of offering this facility for military training purposes only without a charge.

Mayor Reeves commented that this is not an easy topic, especially knowing the facility is running at a deficit. He, too, will be supportive of waiving the fees for military personnel.

Commissioner McKenney commented that the Department of Defense granted \$10 million for this \$20+ million dollar facility. It would not be here without the Department of Defense stepping up. MAFB stepped up, not just to help out the City of Great Falls, but it was for their advantage too. They could not do the facility they needed on base. Grant money was available for a community, so the City worked together with MAFB on this jointly.

We are talking about free military use for training. That is why Malmstrom was all in in the first place. The cost of the MAFB and MTANG training to be subsidized by the City would be \$4,000 - \$8,000. But, at this point, the facility is a white elephant. It is a huge facility that is not paying for itself. To him, the cost is minimal and the right thing to do is approve facility use for free military training.

Commissioner McKenney suggested marketing. A fitness center sells time on equipment. He sees free use for training a minimal cost, and it could be a marketing opportunity. When the military comes in for training, give them all a one-time free family pass. They bring their families back, and then maybe they sign up for memberships.

Commissioner Tryon clarified that the one-year timeframe was to reevaluate where the facility was at with the programs. When the City received the grant, the grant administrator had said the expectation is that the City will charge minimal fees for use in order to cover operating expenses and the fees will not generate a profit. This is a public facility and should operate similarly to other Great Falls' public facilities. That was his understanding from the very beginning, similar to the

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previous commander's comments that they understood that Malmstrom and MANG would have to pay with a military discount for the use of the facility.

He hears Commission members talk about having to go to the public and ask for a public safety levy again. The Commission scaled back some of the Library funds by agreement to use for public safety that would have come out of the general fund. Now, the \$8,000 pool subsidy a year will be coming directly out of the general fund. The crux of his issue is that what will happen as a result of that is that anytime the Commission wants to ask the public again for a public safety levy or anything else, they are going to say well, you are giving money away for usage of our public facilities. Then you come to us to ask us for more money to make up the difference that you are giving away out of the general fund.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Reeves asked the City Clerk to read the motion on the floor.

City Clerk Lisa Kunz responded that Commissioner Wolff moved, seconded by Commissioner McKenney, that the City Commission adopt Resolution 10570 and waive facility use fees for training conducted by the Montana Air National Guard and Malmstrom Air Force Base at the Shields Aim High Big Sky Aquatics and Recreation Facility, subject to annual written training schedules submitted by each entity.

Mayor Reeves called for the vote.

Motion carried 3-2 (Commissioners Tryon and Wilson dissenting).

### **CITY COMMISSION**

#### **20. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

None.

#### **21. COMMISSION INITIATIVES: Financing for the Fire Training Center Renovations.**

Mayor Reeves reported that the Fire Chief has articulated over the last several months, along with the City Manager, that the fire training structure has been unsafe and unsuitable for training recruits and firefighters for a very long time. The Commission needs to give direction this evening if the Commission wants to proceed with indebtedness. If the Commission does, staff will place the item on an upcoming agenda for formal approval to start the process.

A majority consensus approved moving forward.

Commissioner McKenney dissented, commenting that on behalf of the mayor he has been speaking to community leaders about public safety, a future public safety levy, and future capital campaign. A capital campaign would be for a training center and two fire stations. He has spoken to about 30 community leaders at this point, and it is gaining momentum. It is his intention in the near future to call a meeting with these community leaders. When it comes to income, the legislature controls everything. The City never knows what the legislature is going to do next. If the Commission votes

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to move forward with a 10-year bond, not knowing what future legislatures could do to the City, may be absolutely horrible to future City Commissioners. He suggested the Commission wait a couple of months to determine if there are other options.

City Manager Doyon commented that the Commission had heard from the Fire Chief that there are needs to fix the fire-training center. He provided the Commission with a comprehensive memorandum as to how the City would fund that. So, before staff goes any further, he just needed to know that a majority of Commission members, by consensus, are saying yes, go ahead and put together something that the Commission can formally adopt and direct staff to go pursue to fund those improvements.

Commissioner Wolff commented that this is looking at solving a piece of the public safety issue that we all face. The Commission had said it would use dollars from the 3.5 mills from the Library for public safety. Hopefully, there will be funds left to fund positions for the Court. Using other facilities costs the City more for the firemen to train. She thinks this is a proactive way to use monies that are available and the Commission is not asking the public for additional tax dollars.

22.

### **LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES.**

None.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, **Commissioner Tryon moved, seconded by Mayor Reeves, to adjourn the regular meeting of April 1, 2025, at 8:05 p.m.**

Motion carried 5-0.

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Mayor Cory Reeves

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City Clerk Lisa Kunz

**Minutes Approved: April 15, 2025**