

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS
May 6, 2025 -- Regular City Commission Meeting
Civic Center Commission Chambers, Room 206 -- Mayor Reeves Presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 PM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL/STAFF INTRODUCTIONS:

City Commission members present: Cory Reeves, Joe McKenney, Rick Tryon, and Shannon Wilson. Commissioner Susan Wolff was excused.

Also present were City Manager Greg Doyon, Interim Deputy City Manager Bryan Lockerby, Public Works Director Chris Gaub, Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry, Finance Director Melissa Kinzler, City Attorney David Dennis, Police Chief Jeff Newton, and City Clerk Lisa Kunz.

AGENDA APPROVAL:

There were no proposed changes to the agenda by the City Manager or City Commission. The Commission approved the Agenda as presented.

CONFLICT DISCLOSURE/EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS:

Commissioner McKenney acknowledged that Agenda Item 25 involves a development project for 163 single-family homes. As a realtor who specializes in single-family residential properties, he recognized that there could be a perceived conflict of interest. To address this, he consulted with the City Attorney, who advised that, since there is no direct personal or financial interest in the specific development project, there is no actual conflict of interest. Therefore, he will participate in both the discussion and the vote on this item.

MILITARY UPDATES

**1. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM
MALMSTROM AIR FORCE BASE.**

Colonel Benji Johnson, Dep. Commander, 341st Missile Wing, introduced Lt. Col. John Mayer and 2nd Lt. Colton Parcell.

Lt. Col. Mayer shared personal and professional background information that he was born in Colorado and raised in England and France. He joined the ROTC program,

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met his wife in England, and they both commissioned in California. The couple moved to Great Falls in 2007, where they started their family. After relocating for several job assignments and expanding their family, they were determined to return to Great Falls. His parents now reside in Great Falls, and with retirement expected in about 18 months, they plan to stay in the community permanently.

Professionally, he is a Missileer who has pulled alert approximately 250 times across all 15 launch control centers in the 341st Missile Wing. Currently, he leads the Site Activation Task Force for the Sentinel ICBM, tasked with preparing the base and overseeing the deployment of the new system.

He also announced that public town hall meetings regarding the Sentinel ICBM would be held next week: Tuesday at 6 pm at the Lewistown Fairgrounds, Wednesday at 5 pm at the Fairfield High School, and Thursday in Great Falls at West Elementary School.

2nd Lt. Parcell, from South Carolina, expressed his gratitude for the warm hospitality he has received since being stationed at Malmstrom Air Force Base (MAFB) in November 2024. He announced that MAFB would be hosting Police Week on base next week, featuring a series of events to recognize and honor the men and women who have served in law enforcement, as well as those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. He encouraged those wanting to attend any of the events to contact the City Clerk with the required information to get on base.

Col. Johnson announced that since the end of March, Malmstrom Air Force Base (MAFB) has hosted several high-profile visits. General Thomas Bussiere, Commander of Air Force Global Strike Command, visited the base, along with representatives from the Government Accountability Office, who were gathering information to report to Congress on the future viability of the Minuteman III system and the Sentinel program.

Professionals from the House Armed Services Committee visited MAFB to discuss an ongoing cancer study related to remnants of cancer-causing agents historically used in electronics during the 1960s.

Major General Sean Choquette, Air Force Chief of Safety, also visited to gain insight into MAFB's weapons safety protocols and how the base safeguards its arsenal. He also came to review the integration of the new helicopter being introduced.

Looking ahead, MAFB will see 17 changes of command this summer.

Commissioner Wilson extended heartfelt thanks to Col. Johnson and the base leadership. She explained that, on April 16, VFW Post 4669 held a Buddy Poppy fundraiser at the base. Thanks to the generosity of the airmen, \$2,500 was raised to support a veteran who was critically injured and is currently in the ICU.

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PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

2. **John Hubbard**, City resident, commented that the City should make do with the Fire Training Center that it has. He opined that building a new center is a \$2 million dollar waste of money.

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS

3. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

None.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

4. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

None.

5. APPOINTMENTS TO THE GREAT FALLS PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD/ZONING COMMISSION.

Mayor Reeves reported that in March 2021, Lindsey Gray was appointed to the Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission for her first three-year term and reappointed for her second term on December 19, 2023. Ms. Gray resigned from the Board/Commission on March 1, 2025; therefore, the City needs to fill the remainder of her term through December 31, 2026.

In February, the City Commission appointed three new members to this Board from seven citizens that applied during the advertisement period. Staff reached out to the unselected applicants to see if they would be interested in being considered for this opening. Michael Keith Bicsak and Joe McMillen were interested in being considered for this opening. The City also posted the opening on the City's Website to seek other citizen interest, receiving applications from Katheryn Hanning, Robert Long, and Sandor Hopkins.

Planning Board Chair Tory Mills and Vice Chair Julie Essex conducted telephone interviews of all the applicants with the assistance of Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry, Deputy PCD Director Lonnie Hill and PCD Administrative Assistant Jamie Nygard. The consensus was to ask the Planning Board to recommend Katheryn Hanning to the City Commission for appointment.

The applications were included in the Planning Board meeting packet. On April 22, 2025, prior to the Planning Board meeting, staff received a resignation from member Pat Green. His term is set to expire December 31, 2025.

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Chair Mills and Vice Chair Essex provided a summary of the interview process. The Board voted to recommend appointment of Katheryn Hanning to the remainder of Ms. Gray's term through December 31, 2026, and appointment of Joe McMillan to the remainder of Mr. Green's term through December 31, 2025.

Commissioner Tryon moved, seconded by Commissioner McKenney, that the City Commission appoint Katheryn Hanning to the Great Falls Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission for the remainder of a three-year term through December 31, 2026, and appoint Mike Bicsak for the remainder of a three-year term through December 31, 2025.

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 expressed reservations regarding the appointment of Katheryn Hanning, citing her current role as Chair of the Home Builders Association. He noted uncertainty about whether this dual role could create a conflict of interest—or the appearance of one—on this Board. Commissioner Tryon stated a preference for appointing Mike Bicsak and Joe McMillan, both of whom have previously applied.

Commissioner Wilson noted that Katheryn Hanning is also a member of the County Planning Board, and that may present conflicts serving on both boards. She thinks the best applicant is Sandor Hopkins, a certified land use planner, floodplain manager and is a licensed title insurance producer.

Commissioner McKenney also expressed concern regarding the appointment of Katheryn Hanning, specifically the potential for a conflict of interest. However, he stated his belief that Ms. Hanning would exercise sound judgment and recuse herself should a conflict arise. Commissioner McKenney voiced strong support for appointing Mike Bicsak to the second opening, noting that Mr. Bicsak has been actively seeking opportunities to serve the community and that this role would be a good fit.

Commissioner Tryon concurred with Commissioner McKenney's comments about Mr. Bicsak, adding that he would be a fresh face and is a young leader in the community.

Mayor Reeves inquired of the City Attorney if he sees a conflict with Ms. Hanning serving on both the City and County Planning Boards.

City Attorney David Dennis responded that serving on both boards could present a conflict of interest. He explained that situations may arise where the interests of the City could be adverse to those of the County, potentially complicating impartial service on the Board.

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Based upon the opinion of the City Attorney, **Commissioner Tryon moved to amend the main motion, seconded by Commissioner McKenney, that the City Commission appoint Joe McMillan to the Great Falls Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission for the remainder of a three-year term through December 31, 2026, and appoint Mike Bicsak for the remainder of a three-year term through December 31, 2025.**

Mayor Reeves asked if there was any public comment on the amended motion.

Ron Paulick, City resident, commented that Sandor Hopkins is a good person and committed to what he is doing. He should be considered more for the Planning Board.

Mayor Reeves asked if there was any further discussion amongst the Commissioners on the amended motion.

Hearing none, Mayor Reeves called for the vote.

Amended Motion carried 3-1 (Commissioner Wilson dissenting).

CITY MANAGER

6. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

City Manager Greg Doyon updated the Commission on the following:

- **Public Works**

Environmental partnered with Veolia to host their biannual household hazwaste collection event on April 12, 2025. Approximately 1000 gallons of flammable liquids and 180 pounds of batteries and other items were dropped off and disposed of properly.

The City's Water Plant leveraged this opportunity and was able to have several containers of corrosive liquids and other materials hauled off site and disposed of properly.

National Public Works Week - This year's theme, "People, Purpose, Presence," highlights three cornerstone ideals that motivate public works professionals to serve in their communities every day.

- The Public Engagement Report for the Future Great Falls Growth Policy is now available at futuregreatfalls.com. The report captures the most extensive outreach effort the City has ever undertaken for a planning initiative, with over 2,300 community members sharing ideas through surveys, workshops, and community events. From housing to downtown to public safety, the

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feedback reflects what matters most to our community. All of this input will be used to inform the plan's goals, future land use map, and strategies for managing growth.

- Legislature adjourned
SB 117 and SB 542 are waiting the Department of Revenue's interpretation. The City's budget process has been delayed because of legislative changes, and he does not know the full extent of it yet. The legislature certainly has an impact on how we do business in local government. He asked the lobbyist to produce a summary and maybe visit with the Commission again late summer.

CONSENT AGENDA

7. Total Expenditures of \$2,319,995 for the period of March 27, 2025 through April 9, 2025, to include claims over \$25,000, in the amount of \$1,604,300.
8. Minutes, April 15, 2025, City Commission Meeting.
9. Contracts List.
10. Approve the cancellation of City of Great Falls checks that remain outstanding and unpaid for a period of one (1) year or longer as authorized by section 7-6-4303 MCA.
11. Approve the purchase of one new 2025 Envirosight Rovver X Camera System from Normont Equipment of Great Falls, Montana, through Sourcewell, a governmental purchasing service cooperative, in the amount of \$120,920.
12. Approve the Lease Agreement with Ugrin Alexander Zadick, P.C. for storage space located in the basement of #22 Railroad Square and authorize the City Manager to execute the document. **T20N R3E S11**
13. Approve a change order credit in the amount of \$-3,369.60 to A & R construction, LLC for the Great Falls Animal Shelter Remodel Project, and authorize the City Manager to execute the change order documents. **OF 1831.0**
14. Approve the Final Payment for the Civic Center Infrastructure Renovations Project in the amount of \$69,949.31 to AT Klemens, and \$706.56 to the State Miscellaneous Tax Fund, and authorize the City Manager to make the payments. **OF 1750.2**
15. Award a contract in the amount of \$445,000 to Custom Plaster, LLC for the Mansfield Theater Ceiling Repair Project utilizing the Montana Historic Preservation Grant and City funds and authorize the City Manager to execute the construction contract documents. **OF 1833.1**

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16. Set a public hearing for May 20, 2025 to consider a lease agreement of City owned property located in Sacajawea Park and Riverside Little League Park with the Riverside Little League Association.
17. Set a public hearing for May 20, 2025, to consider a lease agreement of City owned property located at 38th Street North and 10th Avenue with the Americans Little League Association.
18. Set a public hearing for May 20, 2025 to consider a lease agreement of City owned property located in Grande Vista Park described as Westside Little League Park with Westside Little League.
19. Set a public hearing for June 3, 2025, on Resolution 10574 to establish residential and commercial water, sewer, and storm drain utility service rates effective July 1, 2025.

Commissioner Tryon moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson, that the City Commission approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

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

Written comment received from **Renae Munson** expressed opposition to agenda item 19.

Commissioner Wilson commented she toured the Animal Shelter last week and the project work looks great.

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

Motion carried 4-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

20. RESOLUTION 10572, ESTABLISHING FEES PERTAINING TO BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TO INCLUDE REDUCED PLAN REVIEW FEES ON IDENTICAL STRUCTURES FOR COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL PLAN REVIEWS AT 25% OF THE BUILDING PERMIT FEE.

Mayor Reeves declared the public hearing open and asked for presentation of the staff report.

Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry reported that Resolution 10572 proposes a change to how plan review fees are calculated when the same building plans are submitted for identical structures—a common scenario in single family speck subdivisions, multi-family and commercial development.

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Under the proposal, the plan review fee would be standardized at 25% of the building permit fee for any additional buildings using the same approved plans. The first structure would pay the full plan review fee, but any identical buildings that follow would receive a reduced rate.

Currently, the fees are set at 65% for commercial and 50% for residential plan reviews. However, in recent years, staff has informally reduced those fees for repeat structures—sometimes as low as 10%—without a formal policy in place. This inconsistency has created confusion for applicants and made it harder for staff to plan and budget effectively.

Resolution 10572 addresses three key goals - (1) it brings clarity and fairness, (2) it protects the health of the enterprise fund, and (3) it aligns with practices across Montana.

An example is, if a developer submits plans for five identical apartment buildings, the first building would be charged the full review fee. The remaining four building, once verified as identical, would be charged 25% for each additional plan review. It is a simple, fair system that ensures oversight.

Great Falls Home Builders Association is in full support of this change.

In short, this resolution helps modernize the process, stabilizes the department's funding, and offers a fee structure that is consistent, reasonable, and easy to administer. Staff recommends adoption of Resolution 10572.

Mayor Reeves asked if the Commissioners had any questions of Director Cherry.

Hearing none, Mayor Reeves asked if there were any comments from the public in support of or in opposition to Resolution 10572.

Hearing none, Mayor Reeves closed the public hearing and asked the will of the Commission.

Commissioner McKenney moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson, that the City Commission adopt Resolution 10572.

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

Commissioner Wilson commented that this is good business.

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

Motion carried 4-0.

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21. RESOLUTION 10573, ESTABLISHING RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL SANITATION SERVICE COLLECTION RATES EFFECTIVE JUNE 1, 2025.

Mayor Reeves declared the public hearing open and asked for presentation of the staff report.

Public Works Director Chris Gaub reviewed the same PowerPoint slides that were presented at the April 1, 2025 work session. Three big items to note include a multi-year rate structure, phasing out the senior rate and phasing in a low to moderate-income rate, and a large landfill increase that Republic notified the City about in January due to a large infrastructure project that they built and installed. The City formally protested the cost of Republic's methane capture project and is awaiting a response. That results in higher rates, a 17% increase versus 2.5%. It also has an opportunity cost for the department to move into front loading trucks versus side loading trucks for commercial customers. Commercial customers are demanding it and the industry is moving in that direction. Notes from the slides include:

- The City has 85% of the customer base
- The roll-off service is up 13% and continues to grow
- 93 new commercial accounts were added in 2023/24. To date in 2025, 22 new commercial customers have been added
- Pros of a multi-year rate increase include customers can financially forecast/budget for two years, and provides for the City to make longer range decisions and strategic planning for fleet purchases, portfolio changes (front loaders)
- Cons of a multi-year rate increase may include unforeseen, significant emergency financial requirements. However, should that occur staff could request that the Commission adjust rates
- Significant points this year include the landfill tipping fee increase. Generally, it is driven by the CPI, which is 2.45%. Republic increased the rate another 14.30% due to its methane infrastructure project. This results in a 16.75% increase. The additional landfill costs will result in a delay transitioning to front loader trucks. From 2017 through 2024, the average rate increase was 3.79% per year. That will drastically change this year with the 16.75% increase from Republic. The City is currently paying the increased Republic fees
- The current senior citizen rate is not covering the cost of the service, with or without capital costs. The rate will be phased out as of June 1, 2026.

Mayor Reeves asked if the Commissioners had any questions of Director Gaub.

Commissioner Tryon referred to the pie chart slide that set forth the sanitation operating costs. He inquired if Director Gaub could make any reductions to operating costs to offset the rate increase.

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Director Gaub responded no, service would be reduced in both quantity and quality.

Commissioner Tryon reiterated the residential rate now is \$17.33. The proposed rate would increase the residential rate to \$18.71 for 2025, and to \$20.20 in 2026. If approved, the residential customer will pay over two year an additional \$2.90 per month.

Mayor Reeves asked if there were any comments from the public in support of or in opposition to Resolution 10573.

Hearing none, Mayor Reeves closed the public hearing and asked the will of the Commission.

Commissioner Wilson moved, seconded by Commissioner Tryon, that the City Commission adopt Resolution 10573, establishing residential and commercial sanitation service collection rates effective June 1, 2025 and June 1, 2026.

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

Hearing none, Mayor Reeves called for the vote.

Motion carried 4-0.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

22. PURCHASE OF PROPERTY ADDRESSED AS 5200 2ND AVENUE NORTH IN BEEBE TRACTS, SECTION 10, TOWNSHIP 20 NORTH, RANGE 4 EAST, LOT 047, IN CASCADE COUNTY, MONTANA. OF 1841.0

Public Works Director Chris Gaub reported that this property purchase is a unique and strategic opportunity to strengthen stormwater infrastructure in eastern Great Falls. The address 5200 2nd Avenue North is centered on an existing low spot that functions as a pond that currently receives stormwater from the surrounding region, including incorporated City limits and county properties. The pond also sits adjacent to parcels that, together would have a total storage potential of about 1.3 million cubic feet, which is a similar volume to the Sand Hills Park Pond near the University of Providence.

The City's Stormwater Master Plan Update, currently in draft form, has identified this pond as a high priority project. We would plan future pond improvements here that would alleviate existing flooding problems in the area, as well as support future development proposals. City storm mains would be directed here, alleviating existing pipes and providing an alternative to costly upsizing of pipe. For example,

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developers could work with the City to improve a pond on this property instead of on their property. Or, the City could size the pond in anticipation of future developments and be reimbursed later.

In summary, this purchase would be the first step of a multi-phase plan to alleviate the existing stormwater issues in the area and support future development.

Commissioner Wilson moved, seconded by Commissioner McKenney, that the City Commission approve the purchase of property in Beebe Tracts in Section 10, Township 20 North, Range 4 East, Lot 047, in Cascade County, Montana for a purchase price of \$374,000, and authorize the City Manager to enter into all necessary documents and agreements to complete the transaction.

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

Ron Paulick, City resident, spoke as a proponent with suggestions and concerns. He commented that property.mt.gov indicates the property had a \$179,000 market value in 2023 and 2024 and a taxable value of \$1,700. The current selling price equals an inflationary increase of \$171,000 from the State's market price of \$179,000. He recommended negotiating a lower selling price. He also recommended purchasing property east of 5200 2nd Avenue North with stormwater utility funds for future storm water retainage.

Mr. Paulick expressed concerns about the home inspection report and suggested an alternative funding source other than the general fund if the house needs to be demolished, or negotiate the selling price further.

Christian Leinhauser, Great Falls Development Alliance (GFDA), commented that stormwater can hinder development if there is not any retention and even cancel projects. GFDA is seeing a lot of growth at the east end of town, and have developers with strong interest in developing the east end with announced and unannounced projects. GFDA urges the Commission to support that growth on the east end and growth in the City of Great Falls. Approval of this item is something that is needed moving forward.

There being no one further to address the Commission, Mayor Reeves asked if there was any discussion amongst the Commissioners.

Commissioner McKenney commented that the appraised price of the property is different from what is seen in cadastral. The appraised price is \$350,000. He noted that staff's negotiated price from \$374,000 to \$350,000 was rejected.

Director Gaub noted that the original asking price was \$425,000, and the original offer was \$374,000. After the inspection came back with concerns and it appraised at \$350,000, the City offer of \$350,000 was rejected.

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Commissioner McKenney noted that the extra money spent now would be made up in development and property tax revenue later.

Commissioner Tryon inquired about the house on the property.

Director Gaub commented that the home inspection came back with multiple issues, including foundation, water in the basement, electrical, structural, deck and window, and the list goes on and on. A decision will need to be made on what to do with the house in the future.

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

Motion carried 4-0.

23. UNION BETHEL AME CHURCH PASS-THROUGH GRANT FROM THE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE (SHPO).

Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry reported that Commission approval is being requested for a \$20,000 Special Projects Grant from the State Historic Preservation Office, which would pass through the City to support the Union Bethel AME Church rehabilitation project at 916 5th Avenue South.

This 1917 church is listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its importance to Great Falls' African American community and its role in both religious life and civil rights advocacy. Organizations like the Dunbar Art and Study Club met there regularly and led local efforts to oppose discrimination, including work to support Black airmen at Malmstrom Air Force Base in the 1950s.

The City previously declined to serve as the fiscal agent for a much larger pass-through amount due to concerns about liability, staff capacity, and having necessary monies on hand. SHPO has proposed another way to manage that funding and is asking the City to assist with a smaller, much more limited pass-through grant of \$20,000 to help cover design services. This would require less administrative effort and would be covered by the annual funding our Historic Preservation program already receives.

This proposal would be consistent with past City practice, such as similar pass-through grants that included the program that helped launch key downtown rehabilitation projects like the Arvon Hotel and Baum-Trinastich Building.

It also aligns with goals in the Growth Policy—especially those calling for stronger preservation incentives, nonprofit capacity building, and partnerships that support community-based revitalization.

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The Historic Preservation Advisory Commission has reviewed and unanimously supported this proposal.

Commissioner Wilson moved, seconded by Commissioner Tryon, that the City Commission approve the special projects grant for the Union Bethel A.M.E. Church at 916 5th Avenue South from the State Historic Preservation Office.

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 Wilson expressed concern about grants in general being cut.

Director Cherry commented that, if that should occur, the only one that would be detrimentally affected is the Bethel Church.

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

Motion carried 4-0.

24. FRANKLIN SCHOOL (820 1ST AVENUE SW) NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES.

Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry reported that the Commission is being asked to consider whether to support the nomination of the Franklin School, located at 820 1st Avenue Southwest, to the National Register of Historic Places. This nomination is being initiated by the property owner, Charles Street, LLC, who is seeking to rehabilitate the building as part of its continued use as long-term housing.

The Franklin School complex includes two historic structures built in 1910 and 1916, with a later addition in 1938. Originally serving the educational needs of the West Side, the buildings were converted into housing in 1989. They are now in need of reinvestment, and the owner is pursuing federal and state Historic Preservation Tax Credits to support the rehabilitation. To qualify for these credits, the property must first be listed on the National Register.

As part of the nomination process, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is required to consult with local governments. The City Commission has three options - (1) support the nomination, (2) object, or (3) defer or waive comment.

If the Commission defers or takes no action, the positive recommendation already made by the Historic Preservation Advisory Commission, which reviewed and supported the nomination at its April 9 meeting, would still allow the application to move forward to the State Preservation Review Board later this month.

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Although this proposal is not City-initiated and carries no fiscal impact to the City, it is fully aligned with the adopted Growth Policy, which calls for the preservation, rehabilitation, and continued use of architecturally and historically significant buildings. Specifically, the Growth Policy encourages the use of financial tools like tax credits to help maintain historic structures and support community revitalization. Supporting this nomination helps achieve those goals while reinforcing the City's ongoing role as a Certified Local Government in partnership with SHPO.

Commissioner Wilson moved, seconded by Commissioner McKenney, that the City Commission support the nomination of the Franklin School to the National Register of Historic Places.

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 inquired if there would be restrictions for future use of that building beyond the intended historical designation.

Director Cherry responded that, if a future owner did things to the building that did not align with standards set within the register, the building would no longer qualify for those credits. The applicant is committing himself to the historical integrity of the building. Even though there are some savings by the designation, the applicant also has to follow all the rules in order to be eligible for those monies.

Commissioner Tryon inquired who monitors the applicant to make sure the restrictions are being followed, and was informed state and federal entities.

Commissioner Wilson commented this agenda item was a pleasure to go through because it gave her closure to a 10-year problem she has been researching. The City park in front of the Franklin School is Rhodes Park. In the corner of the park is a memorial to Ida Rhoads, a principal at Franklin School. She has been researching if the memorial spelled Ida's last name wrong. She learned that Rhodes was the architect of Franklin School, and probably the reason they named the park.

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

Motion carried 4-0.

25. ORDINANCE 3273, ASSIGNING PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD) ZONING TO LOTS 8-10, AND 13-15 OF BEEBE TRACTS, CASCADE COUNTY, MONTANA.

Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry reported that this item is Commission consideration of Ordinance 3273 on first reading and to set a public hearing for June 3, 2025. This ordinance would assign Planned Unit Development

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(PUD) zoning to approximately 27 acres proposed for annexation, subdivision and development by Upslope Development at Meadowview Village—a 163-lot, single-family subdivision aimed at providing attainable, entry-level housing.

Staff recommends acceptance on first reading and setting the public hearing.

Commissioner Tryon moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson, that the City Commission accept Ordinance 3273 on first reading and set a public hearing for June 3, 2025.

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

Christian Leinhauser, Great Falls Development Alliance, commented there are four things to think about in the next month about this project: support of strategic infill development, solves storm water issues for 80 acres in Great Falls, attainable housing and market impact, and the collaboration for community-focused development. This is a generational, large-scale home ownership project that he has not seen in Great Falls in a very long time.

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

Commissioner McKenney noted that it took less than 90 days from plan submittal to staff review, Neighborhood Council and Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission approval. He inquired why the public hearing was set for June 3, rather than the next Commission meeting.

Director Cherry noted the time period is in code, and expediting the process may take away time for public comment.

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

Motion carried 4-0.

ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS

26. ORDINANCE 3274, AMENDING TITLE 2, CHAPTER 21 PERTAINING TO THE CODE OF ETHICS.

City Manager Greg Doyon reported that several months ago there was some conversation with Commission members about the Ethic Committee, the process, and how it was working out for the City. His previous memo to the Commission summarized what the internal process is to deal with ethics complaints, and outlines a pathway for an alternative choice to return it to the way it was before the City adopted the ordinance establishing an Ethics Committee.

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State law sets forth a code of ethics that elected and appointed officials in government need to follow, as well as a process to address ethical concerns or complaints. The statute provides for persons to make the ethical violation complaint to the County Attorney.

The Ethics Committee was established in 2017 as an advisory body to evaluate ethics complaints and refer valid complaints to the County Attorney. The intended purpose was to add a local layer of oversight beyond the state law process.

Since the process was adopted, there have been three ethics complaints, primarily against Commission members and one that also included staff.

He was not sure that the Commission and the public anticipated how internally complicated it would be when Commission member complaints were brought to him to decide whether there is some merit. It was problematic to evaluate complaints against Commission members due to the potential strain on the governance structure. The City Attorney, who works closely with the Commission, was placed in a difficult position when tasked with evaluating those complaints. That is not a good model for relations between a strong city manager-commission form of government.

The City had to bring in external legal counsel to support impartiality, adding to expenses and complexity.

Manager Doyon proposed reverting to the state law process and eliminating the Ethics Committee. Ethics complaints would be filed directly with the County Attorney for independent review and investigation. This streamlines the process, avoids internal conflicts, and aligns with statutory procedures.

City Attorney David Dennis noted difficulty in maintaining a pool of qualified, trained committee members. Members, while capable, often lack experience or prior exposure to handling such sensitive complaints. Ethics cases are legally complex, even for seasoned attorneys. Outside legal counsel had to be retained to advise the committee, increasing costs and administrative burden. He suggested disbanding the Ethics Committee. Ethics complaints would be directed to the County Attorney, a neutral third-party entity, as provided by state statute. This approach would ensure independence, consistency, and reduce internal friction and costs.

Commissioner Wilson moved, seconded by Commissioner McKenney, that the City Commission accept Ordinance 3274 on first reading and set second reading for May 20, 2025.

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

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Mayor Reeves noted that this proposal removes any conflict of interest and he prefers ethics matters be handled by a completely separate entity.

Motion carried 4-0.

CITY COMMISSION

27. APPOINTMENTS, GREAT FALLS CITIZEN'S COUNCIL.

The Commission discussed availability. Mayor Reeves and Commissioner McKenney noted they could attend the May 27, 2025 meeting.

Commissioner Wilson moved, seconded by Commissioner Tryon, that the City Commission appoint Mayor Cory Reeves and Commissioner Joe McKenney to serve on the Great Falls Citizen's Counsel, also known as the Council of Councils, for the May 27, 2025 meeting.

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

Hearing none, Mayor Reeves called for the vote.

Motion carried 4-0.

28. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

None.

29. COMMISSION INITIATIVES.

None.

30. 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 May 6, 2025, at 8:31 p.m.**

Motion carried 4-0.

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Mayor Cory Reeves

City Clerk Lisa Kunz

Minutes Approved: May 20, 2025