



The Weekly Update – July 10, 2025

Attachments:

1. Journal of City Commission Work Session, June 17, 2025.
2. Journal of City Commission Special Work Session, June 26, 2025.
3. City of Great Falls Total Cash and Investments as of June 30, 2025.
4. Department Monthly Update, June 2025.

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION
June 17, 2025 – City Commission Work Session
Civic Center, Gibson Room 212 -- Mayor Reeves Presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 PM

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, City Attorney David Dennis, Finance Director Melissa Kinzler, Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry and Building Official Bruce Haman, Library Director Susie McIntyre and Library Board Chair Anne Bulger, Police Captain Doug Mahlum, and City Clerk Lisa Kunz.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ben Forsyth, City resident, referenced a letter he received bearing the mayor's signature. In response to that letter, he stated he would limit his remarks to the allotted speaking time. He urged the mayor to engage the broader community in a discussion about the negative impacts of marijuana on the local population. Mr. Forsyth emphasized that this marked the 14th time he had spoken before the Commission, yet the mayor had not scheduled a dedicated discussion on the issue or invited others to participate in such a conversation.

Ron Paulick, City resident, spoke in support of Mr. Forsyth's suggestion in his response letter to the Commission to form a committee to address the marijuana problems that Mr. Forsyth has addressed.

Lola Sheldon-Galloway, County resident and City business owner, addressed the Commission in her capacity as Chair of the Fourth of July Parade Committee. She expressed concerns regarding the increasing scale of the parade and the associated events, including a Hootenanny, baseball game, stock car racing, and fireworks, which have contributed to growing crowds each year. She emphasized her commitment to safety by ensuring volunteers receive proper training and submitting a safety plan to the City.

She noted the need for additional volunteers and more stringent safety precautions due to the event's expansion. She also reported that three businesses received violation notices last year for throwing candy from their parade entries, actions that disqualify them from participating in the 2025 Great Falls Fourth of July Parade.

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION

June 17, 2025

She urged the City's support of that issue to continue staying proactive and safe so it continues to be an enjoyable celebration for the community.

She requested that the City consider doing something big in Great Falls next year for the 250th birthday of the United States of America. She volunteered to be on a committee to plan activities.

WORK SESSION ITEMS

1. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO TITLE 15 REGARDING RESIDENTIAL GEOLOGICAL HAZARDS

Planning and Community Development Director Brock Cherry and Building Official Bruce Haman reviewed and discussed PowerPoint slides (available in the City Clerk's Office) to introduce a more flexible, risk-informed approach for soil evaluation in development projects, particularly for smaller infill lots, to reduce unnecessary barriers while maintaining safety and compliance. Highlights included:

- The history of geotechnical issues in Great Falls.
- The 2008 policy requiring site-specific geotechnical analysis.
- Ongoing litigation despite policy.
- Decline in local engineering support due to liability concerns.
- Single-family home building permits issued from 2011 to 2024: City of Great Falls – 660, Cascade County – 986. County permits rose steadily after 2015.
- In 2020, City staff explored a uniform geotechnical review framework for all new residential dwellings. Engineering firms agreed to resume services if City required upfront testing and on-site inspections. Key features of a proposed 2020 ordinance (not adopted) included:
 - Disclosure of Great Falls' soil risks and owner responsibility.
 - Geologic Hazards Plans and mitigation by qualified experts.
 - Mandatory on-site inspections before foundation pours.
 - Estimated added cost: \$1,500 - \$7,500 per unit.
- The 2025 revised proposal key features include:
 - Initial site evaluation before a full site geotechnical study; the soils and building code will direct next steps.

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION

June 17, 2025

- Exemptions for up to four dwellings on one acre or less, or ADUs on stable ground (IRC-compliant).
- Allows proven foundation types without a full site geotechnical study (with approval by the Building Official).
- City retains discretion to deny exemptions if risk is present.
- Requires a signed Hold Harmless Agreement from the developer.
- Legal implications and concerns include: does not eliminate all risks or potential litigation; provides a degree of protection for the City in certain circumstances; and, effectiveness depends on the specific facts of each case.

Key Components of the proposal include:

1. Stepwise Soil Evaluation Based on Building Code

- Instead of requiring a full geotechnical study upfront for every project, start with a soils analysis.
- The soils analysis will inform whether a full geotechnical study is needed, based on current building code requirements.
- This is a new additional step intended to reduce unnecessary full geotech studies where soils conditions are clearly adequate.
- Goal: Streamline the process and reduce cost/time for sites with known, suitable soils.

2. Exemptions for Certain Low-Risk Infill Projects

- Applies only if all the following criteria are met:
 - The site is an infill lot of 1 acre or less.
 - The project results in 4 or fewer dwellings.
 - The City has no data indicating the soils are unsuitable.
- If eligible:
 - The project can be exempt from requiring a full geotechnical study.
 - Instead, the property owner must submit an affidavit and hold harmless agreement (a waiver of liability).
 - This exemption also applies to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), which currently require geotech studies due to their habitable status.

3. Role of City Building Official

- The building official retains final discretion.

JOURNAL OF COMMISSON WORK SESSION

June 17, 2025

- Even if a project meets the exemption criteria, the official can require a geotech study if any risk is perceived.
- This allows for case-by-case judgment and ensures safety isn't compromised.

Director Cherry concluded that next steps for the Commission are to direct City staff to commence the formal hearing and approval process by bringing the Ordinance before the City Commission for consideration. If passed, City staff will utilize relationships with Great Falls Home Builders, Great Falls Association of Realtors, Great Falls Development Alliance, NeighborWorks, etc., to both spread the word and educate regarding the ordinance change.

Staff have spent significant time on this and believe that this is a step the City can take. If adopted, it may be available for a while and then it may need to be modified.

City Manager Greg Doyon asked the Commission members to review the draft policy and provide individual feedback to him and to let him know if additional information is needed.

He explained that, when the City faces lawsuits related to building or development issues, taxpayers ultimately bear the cost. Settlements or court losses lead to increased City insurance rates. People also need to keep in mind that when their homes lose value because of structural deficiencies and they need to lower the price that also degrades the City's baseline property tax base.

Mayor Reeves inquired if this policy was in place in other communities.

Building Official Bruce Haman responded that since 2020 staff have been researching what other cities are doing. The other big cities constructed their geotech reports based on their soils, and they have all seen growth. This is a way to promote growth, protect the City, protect the developers, and protect the owners, with the landscape and the soils that the City has. It is not a magic bullet. It is a living document that may need to be adjusted.

Commissioner Wilson inquired if the hold harmless agreement would be specified on the deed for the property.

Director Cherry responded that is something that staff and the legal department are fleshing out.

Commissioner McKenney inquired if there has been outreach to the folks that are experts in the field.

Director Cherry commented that, based upon the Commission's directions tonight, after this meeting there will be broader outreach.

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION

June 17, 2025

Commissioner McKenney commented that he sees the Building Official choosing which properties are required or not required to obtain a geotech report as a red flag.

Director Cherry commented that the way the policy is being drafted it to ensure that there are safeguards.

Commissioner McKenney expressed that he would like to see the ordinance come back before the Commission after the outreach.

Commissioner Tryon inquired if the new policy would expedite the process for residential development, and was informed it could be significant for infill, ADUs and will help with the overall costs.

Manager Doyon added that the typical turn around for residential review is 5-10 days; if an engineer is involved it could be up to eight months.

Commissioner Tryon inquired if this would increase the workload of Planning and Community Development staff.

Director Cherry responded that staff could accommodate the processing. The City received a pro-housing grant that will also help to continue to investigate this matter, but he thinks this is a good first step.

It was the consensus of the Commission to encourage staff to move forward and to talk with community partners.

2. FY2026 GREAT FALLS PUBLIC LIBRARY BUDGET PRESENTATION

Great Falls Public Library Director Susie McIntyre and Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees Vice-Chair Anne Bulger reviewed and discussed PowerPoint slides (available in the City Clerk's Office) regarding the Fiscal Year 2026 Great Falls Public Library Budgets. Highlights included:

- Fiscal Year 2025 accomplishments.
- Fiscal Year 2026 goals.
- Library remodel planning.
- Operational budget and Foundation/Donation budget.
- Great Falls Public Library Foundation independent non-profit audit.
- Fiscal Year 2026 Library fund account 2220 revenue and expenses.
- Fiscal Year 2026 Library Organization Chart.
- Fiscal Year 2026 Library Foundation fund account 2221 revenue and expenses.
- Reserve account - \$585,000 – to help fund a \$1.7 million dollar air handler/chiller on the third floor of the Library.

Director McIntyre provided a handout about SB 542 that is a new law passed by the Montana Legislature that revised property tax laws including changes for voted mill

JOURNAL OF COMMISSON WORK SESSION

June 17, 2025

levies. A taxing entity with a local mill levy limit on a specified number of mills that may be imposed that was authorized by the voters shall (a) elect to transition a voted mill levy to a dollar-based mill levy equal to the amount of property taxes assessed in fiscal year 2025 and thereafter subject to the provisions of Mont. Code Ann. § 15-10-420(1)(a); or (b) levy the number of mills in fiscal year 2026 that will generate the amount of property taxes assessed in fiscal year 2025. In fiscal years after 2026, the local government shall levy the number of mills levied in fiscal year 2026.

Director McIntyre reported that Finance Director Melissa Kinzler has reached out for guidance on how the Library and the City should switch the Library levy to a dollar levy. The information will be provided to the Library Board of Trustees and the City Commission to take any necessary actions. Her best guess is that, when the Commission adopts the annual tax levy in August, it will include the mills converted to a dollar amount.

Mayor Reeves asked if the Commissioners had any questions.

Commissioner Tryon inquired about the discrepancy in 2009 Library visits when the Library had less money to work with compared to considerably less visits the past 12-months.

Director McIntyre explained that over 30% of the checkouts are now digital. Twelve years ago people couldn't check out books with their phones. Additionally, the number of visits in 2020 and 2021 really decreased during Covid.

Commissioner Tryon commented that the amount of money that was levied was actually higher than what was originally thought because of the mill value. He inquired if the mill value or dollar amount calculated for this fiscal year doesn't match what the Library budgeting and is in excess, would that money automatically go into the reserve account. If the Library doesn't get as much as anticipated, does the Library anticipate reducing services or personnel.

Director McIntyre responded that her guess is that the Library will look at funding deferred maintenance and also look at developing another strategic plan.

After the 3.5 mills were allocated back to the general fund by agreement, Commissioner Tryon noted the difference between the number of staff the Library budgeted for and the actual number of staff the Library has.

Director McIntyre explained that positions were held open. Staff were not laid off, rather positions were not filled pending the negotiation period.

Commissioner McKenney inquired about the Library's goal for a remodel and capital campaign.

JOURNAL OF COMMISSON WORK SESSION

June 17, 2025

Director McIntyre responded that the Library Foundation is the lead on the capital campaign. They are also looking into significant grants for infrastructure.

Commissioner McKenney also inquired if the changes made pursuant to the new agreement affected the Library.

Director McIntyre noted the positive that the Library is stable and has an agreement in place, keeping half the funding instead of losing all of the funding, and supervision of the Library Director by the Library Board has been going well. Challenges include some difficulties in getting all the policies in place, and some people not seeing the Library as part of the City.

DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL UPCOMING WORK SESSION TOPICS

City Manager Greg Doyon reported that the Fiscal Year 2026 proposed budget will be a topic for the June 26, 2025 special work session.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Reeves adjourned the informal work session of June 17, 2025 at 6:45 p.m.

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION SPECIAL WORK SESSION
June 26, 2025 – City Commission Special Work Session
Civic Center, Gibson Room 212 -- Mayor Reeves Presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 3:00 PM

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, City Attorney David Dennis, Finance Director Melissa Kinzler and Deputy Finance Director Kirsten Wavra, Police Chief Jeff Newton, and Deputy City Clerk Darcy Dea.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Written correspondence was received from **Shyla Patera**, North Central Independent Living Services (NCILS) (via June 26, 2025 email), commented that the City has made strides improving disability accessibility; however, projects and initiatives are often delayed by funds and policy considerations. NCILS advocates that all north central communities in Montana develop Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) transition plans which address the needs regarding physical and housing accessibility and affordability shortages in universal and sidewalk design.

WORK SESSION ITEMS

1. 2026 PROPOSED BUDGET DISCUSSION

City Manager Greg Doyon reported that the budget is the Commission's greatest policy statement. It is where politics meet policy in terms of who gets what, where, when, and how. The City budget is always under review, scrutiny and development. When there is growth in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts, the new tax revenue stays in those districts for public infrastructure and is not added back into the general property tax base. The legislative interference of local control is profound, has an impact and limits the ability of the commission or any elected body to govern its own budget. There is never enough money to cover the needs through the budget proposals. The community has seen the impact of not maintaining its facilities.

City departments are passionate about serving the residents in the community and it can be tough meeting the public's expectations with regard to the budget process. After two budget cycles since the Public Safety Levy failed in 2023, it remains to be seen whether residents feel that there is adequate police and fire coverage. When the City is presented with resource challenges,

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION

June 26, 2025

resources from another area may need to be shifted, which has an impact on how departments do their job when they are already thinly staffed. The budget is the best projection of estimated revenues and expenditures; however, it will change over the FY cycle. The legislature will also have a significant impact on the City's budget and next year's budget is going to be more difficult than this year's budget. The City needs to keep a strong undesignated fund balance because it will need to be used to balance the budget over the next couple of years. The City retained a lobbyist over this past session to have representation in Helena during the session. SB 542 and HB 231 will directly impact the property tax structure for taxpayers and create uncertainty for the City in terms of its revenues for next year.

Another external driver is tax appeals and protests. There is a current protest that is under review with a large industry in the community. It is likely that had that been resolved, the City would not have had to use the amount of fund balance that it is using. When the City projects its revenues, it does not build anticipated revenues from those protests in the budget because it does not know what it is going to get. Maintaining a solid fund balance for next year through this proposed budget potentially to use over the next two years is going to be important unless something miraculously changes. The City acknowledges the public's sentiment against property taxes, fees and assessments. The public wants less government but not less services. City leadership and elected officials constantly hear that they are not doing enough to grow Great Falls, and the Commission decided this year to increase utility rates to create more development capacity. Citizens are frustrated with the utility rate increase, code enforcement process, street maintenance and parking.

The General Fund is where all property taxes go and 80% of the proposed budget goes to public safety, 9% to administration, 8% to Park and Recreation and 3% transfers out. The City has been trying to create capacity in the General Fund for public safety and has not worked because those requests for subsidies have increased in other areas of the budget. The option would be to eliminate certain services to facilitate growth in the tax base. The taxable value in Great Falls remains relatively flat and if there is growth, it's typically in TIF districts where those tax revenues stay for public infrastructure.

City Manager Doyon reviewed and discussed General Fund Expenditures by Department and General Fund Budget History documents on pages 34 and 35 of the agenda packet.

City Manager Doyon explained that in November 2024 he emailed the Commission about the FY26 Budget inquiring about the following:

- Is the service, program or fund considered essential to the community's core needs and values, or does it simply enhance quality of life.
- Is it the City's responsibility to provide this service, or could it be effectively delivered by another entity.
- To what extent should this service generate its own funding to sustain operations with fees or services charges.
- Can the service feasibly operate without heavy reliance on General Fund appropriations.
- What criteria should the Commission use to determine the percentage of General Fund support allocated to this service.

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION

June 26, 2025

- Is the Commission open to revising, restructuring or discontinuing the service if necessary.
- Which stakeholders, if any, should be engaged in the evaluation and decision-making regarding the service.

City staff created and presented a non-performing fund Action Plan to the Commission that included Golf, Recreation, Multi-Sports, Civic Center Events, Parking, Planning and Community Development, Health Insurance, Aquatics, and Natural Resources.

The Commission extended a contract with CourseCo and a debt retirement plan was adopted. The golf courses owed a lot of money to the General Fund and that debt service should be retired within two or three years. The General Fund will be reimbursed for what it gave to the golf operations.

An appraisal is underway for the old recreation center and the proceeds from when it can be sold will be used to help offset a deficit in the Recreation fund. Park and Recreation developed a Request for Proposals (RFP) to evaluate department structure and a cost recovery model particularly looking at the Scheels Aim High Big Sky (SAHBS) programming, as well as potentially privatization to determine whether the City can continue to operate that facility.

External users of the Multi Sports are going to need to pay more or find an alternate location. There could be a potential reduction of fields, some of which another entity might want to lease on their own so there is one space to maintain. There is discussion about potentially selling parkland that is undeveloped and won't be utilized over time.

The Civic Center events is a business model that is not sustainable and competing with newer venues. It does not have the ability to produce its own shows and is going to require a business model shift of how to coordinate the use of the facility. There is an RFP out to evaluate what that may look like.

There is no real immediate solution to the challenge with parking, although there have been several attempts to evaluate the City's options. There has been additional signage, summer garage incentive and the use of TIF is likely for some of the repair work to help sustain that program.

Changing to an 80/20 split for health insurance prevents an increase in the Permissive Medical Levy that was utilized to help offset the General Fund costs. It is likely that in the future the City will need to look at other things associated with health insurance. Employees are looking for higher wage jobs than the benefits.

With regard to the non-performing funds, the City will not be able to provide the services in a manner that it would like; however, it is not prepared to eliminate services at this point and will do the best that it can with what it has.

City leadership, staff and the Commission have acknowledged the interconnectivity between City services and the impact that eliminating services would have on the community, recruiting

JOURNAL OF COMMISSON WORK SESSION

June 26, 2025

employees to businesses in the community, as well as law enforcement. The City can cut, defer and modify the budget, but each decision carries visible consequences to the community.

City Manager Doyon explained that Commissioner Tryon had asked staff to develop an illustration of what would happen if the City did not use its Permissive Medical Levy at all and there was no inflationary increase. Three scenarios included the following:

- The budget would be short, about \$4.8 million and to achieve \$4.8 million, Park and Recreation and Civic Center Events would be eliminated, and it would deplete Planning and Community Development.
- The budget would be short, about \$443,000. It would eliminate a substantial portion of the Parks Department, some trail work, likely close neighborhood pools and limits operations in other areas of Park and Recreation, and programming.
- There are currently five vacancies at the Great Falls Police Department for patrol and money could be recovered into the General Fund to make the budget balance to get the \$457,000 amount that is short.

Manager Doyon reiterated that these are just scenarios and not recommended as part of his budget.

Commissioner Tryon commented that he requested scenarios for the Commission and public to see that there is a price to pay if there is no inflationary increase on property taxes.

Commissioner Wilson mentioned that the inflationary increase is one half the rate of inflation for the last three years and is not keeping up anyway.

Commissioner McKenney commented that he looks at the inflationary increases as running it like a business.

City Manager Doyon further explained that to get to this proposed budget, departments, manager and commission priorities were considered, and departments were asked again to re-evaluate their budgets. Reductions were made on the above and beyond requests, traveling, training, supplies and equipment. Departments were directed to use fund balances to reduce internal service for next year that could be purchased this year that were needed and necessary. Legal, Fire, Police and Court did not fill position vacancies and service provisions were reduced. Park and Recreation significantly reduced their request for additional subsidies regarding aquatics and SAHBS.

Instead of eliminating an entire service or division in the proposed budget, Manager Doyon explained the following for this year's budget:

- There are concerns that next year's budget will be more challenging and the budget process will be started earlier.
- Reduction in public safety was avoided because it seemed counterintuitive with the recent violent crime activity and police demand to reduce services now only to request filling

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION

June 26, 2025

those services back in the event the commission and community decides to consider a levy request in the future.

- Some of the Park and Recreation items can be picked up by utilizing Park Maintenance District 1 funding.
- There are two RFP's for evaluating operations and fees for the Civic Center Events and Park and Recreation.
- Staff are hoping that some of the pending tax appeals will be resolved over the coming year.
- Contemplate using approximately \$647,000 in the designated fund balance.
- Collective Bargaining Agreements ratifications are pending and will have an impact on the budget for FY 2026 as well as next year's budget.
- Not recommending increasing the Permissive Medical Levy over last year's amount.

City Manager Doyon explained that the City is experiencing a slight development shift and public safety needs have not changed. Next year's budget is projected to be more difficult with the legislative changes, labor costs and tax protests and will necessitate managing them differently or eliminating services that cannot be supported any longer. A proposal about a Strategic Development Officer and coordinating a TIF Advisory Committee will be forthcoming.

Manager Doyon reviewed and discussed PowerPoint slides (available in the City Clerk's Office) regarding the Fiscal year 2026 Great Falls Budget. Highlights included:

- Commission Goals and Priorities.
- City Manager Goals and Priorities.
- FY2026 Budget Arena.

Finance Director Melissa Kinzler and Deputy Director Kirsten Wavra reviewed and discussed PowerPoint slides (available in the City Clerk's Office) regarding the Fiscal year 2026 Great Falls Budget. Highlights included:

- Legislative Impacts FY 2026 and Beyond.
- FY2026 General Fund Drivers.
- Other General Fund Highlights.
- General Fund Fund Balance.
- General Fund Revenue Increases.
- FY 2026 Detail General Fund Revenue.
- FY 2026 Detail General Fund Expenses.
- Public Safety Shortfall without Entitlement Share Revenue.
- Upcoming Budget Process.

With regard to the "Legislative Impacts FY2026 and Beyond" slide, Commissioner Tryon inquired about comparing the 4%, 75% and 40% formulas with last year and what that amount would look like compared to what the City was able to assess.

JOURNAL OF COMMISSON WORK SESSION

June 26, 2025

Finance Director Kinzler responded that there is not a specific number for newly taxable property because of the industrial tax abatements and protests and growth in a TIF district or non-profit does not increase the City's tax value.

Manager Doyon added that comparing formulas with last year would be misleading because the taxation codes will be changing.

With regard to the "Legislative Impacts FY2026 and Beyond" slide, Commissioner McKenney received clarification that legislative impacts have a lot to do with why next year's budget will be difficult. He further received clarification that there are two options according to the Legislative Service Division about considering a one-time reset of voted library levies.

Commissioner Wolff explained that every municipality in Montana is experiencing the same thing that the City is.

Commissioner Wilson inquired if tax abatements are being used to entice new businesses and industries to come into the city.

Manager Doyon responded that it would not be responsible for him to speculate at this point.

With regard to the "FY2026 General Fund Drivers" slide, Commissioner McKenney inquired about the health insurance rate increase and if employees are getting a raise and paying more for health insurance.

Finance Director Kinzler responded that the City considers the market rate and there is a shift in the way the City pays and compensates its employees.

Manager Doyon added that City staff are hearing that employees would rather have the cash in hand rather than the benefits.

Commissioner McKenney inquired if the City is kicking the financial can down the road by not increasing the Permissive Medical Levy now because it will increase again in the future. With regard to the "FY 2026 Detail General Fund Expenses" slide, Commissioner McKenney further inquired if the 5.14% for personal services was from previous union agreements.

Finance Director Kinzler responded that the City is not kicking the financial can down the road or the Permissive Medical Levy if it takes the amount that was taken last year. Page 39 of the agenda packet shows all the history since 2022. Personal services is 5.14% because there was a slight decrease in health insurance costs and staff is projecting certain increases for the budgets that have not been settled yet.

Commissioner Tryon received clarification that there was an FTE reduction in the General Fund because the Fire Department consolidated two of its Deputy Chief positions into one Assistant Chief.

JOURNAL OF COMMISSON WORK SESSION

June 26, 2025

With regard to the “Public Safety Shortfall without Entitlement Share Revenue” slide, Commissioner Tryon inquired if it is standard for most municipalities of this size to not be able to cover the police and fire department budgets with taxes alone.

Finance Director Kinzler responded that she was not sure but would find out and report back to the Commission.

It was the consensus of the Commission to adhere to the upcoming budget process as presented.

Finance Director Kinzler added that there could be additional budget work sessions if the Commission decides it needs more information about the budget.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Reeves adjourned the informal special work session of June 26, 2025 at 4:51 p.m.



Finance Department Memorandum

To: Greg Doyon, City Manager; City Commission; Members of the Investment Committee
From: Kirsten Wavra, Deputy Finance Director
Date: July 10, 2025
Re: Total Cash and Investments as of June 30, 2025

The City of Great Falls' total cash and investments at the end of June 2025 was \$105,006,607.26. This included cash in bank accounts totaling \$15,301,210.71. Total cash and investments increased from \$93.3 million in May to \$105.0 million in June. It is normal for this amount to fluctuate from month to month depending on payments made on large capital projects and funds received from utilities, taxes, and grants, for example. The General Fund cash balance increased from \$55,343.65 in May to \$9,229,235.41 in June, due to the 2nd half tax payments received. The graphs for the City's total cash and investments as well as the General Fund, specifically, are on the next pages. All cash balances are monitored on a monthly basis.

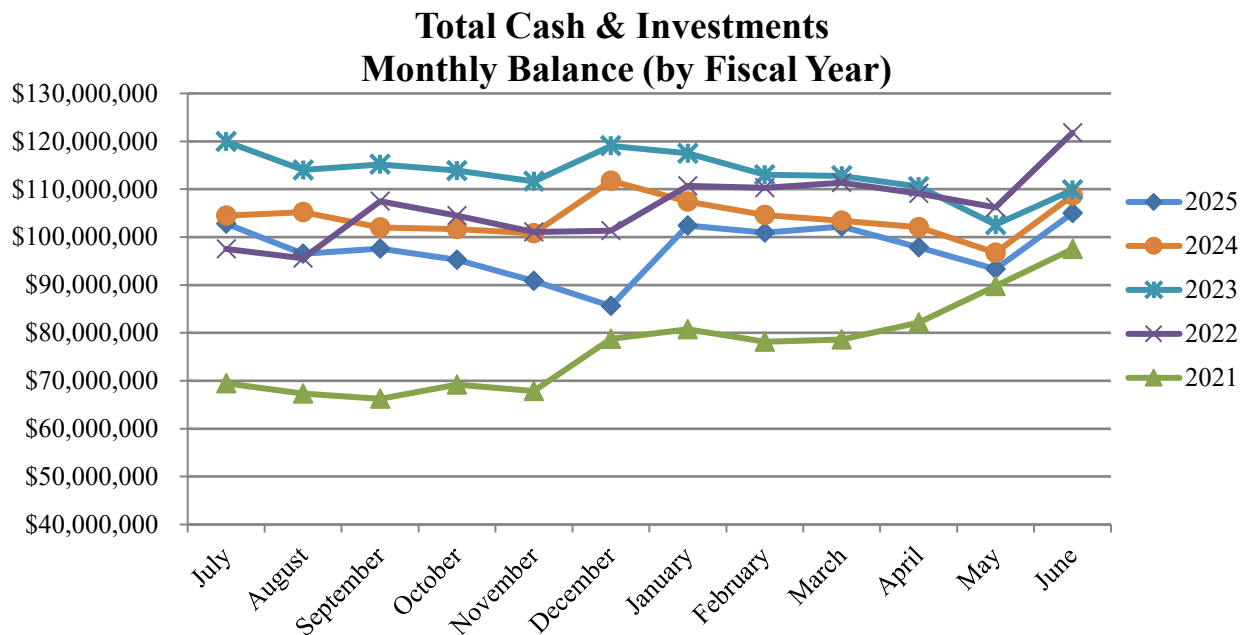
Also on the next page is the summary of the City's total cash and investments. The City's investment policy specifies the percentage the City of Great Falls must have of the different types of instruments allowed by state statute. The chart below lists those percentages compared to the City's investments as of June 30th. The investments in the Montana Board of Investments (STIP) and US Bank Insured Cash Sweep (ICS) are liquid and may be called at any time. The current interest rates being earned in STIP and ICS are competitive. They are listed in the table on the next page.

Issuer category	Minimum %	Maximum %	City's Investments % as of June 30, 2025
Master, savings, and ICS accounts	20% combined	100%	100%
Montana Board of Investments STIP		100%	
Money Market/Repurchase Agreements		100%	
Direct Obligations of the U.S. which includes Treasury Notes and Bills	0%	80%	0%
Obligations of agencies of the U.S.	0%	30%	0%

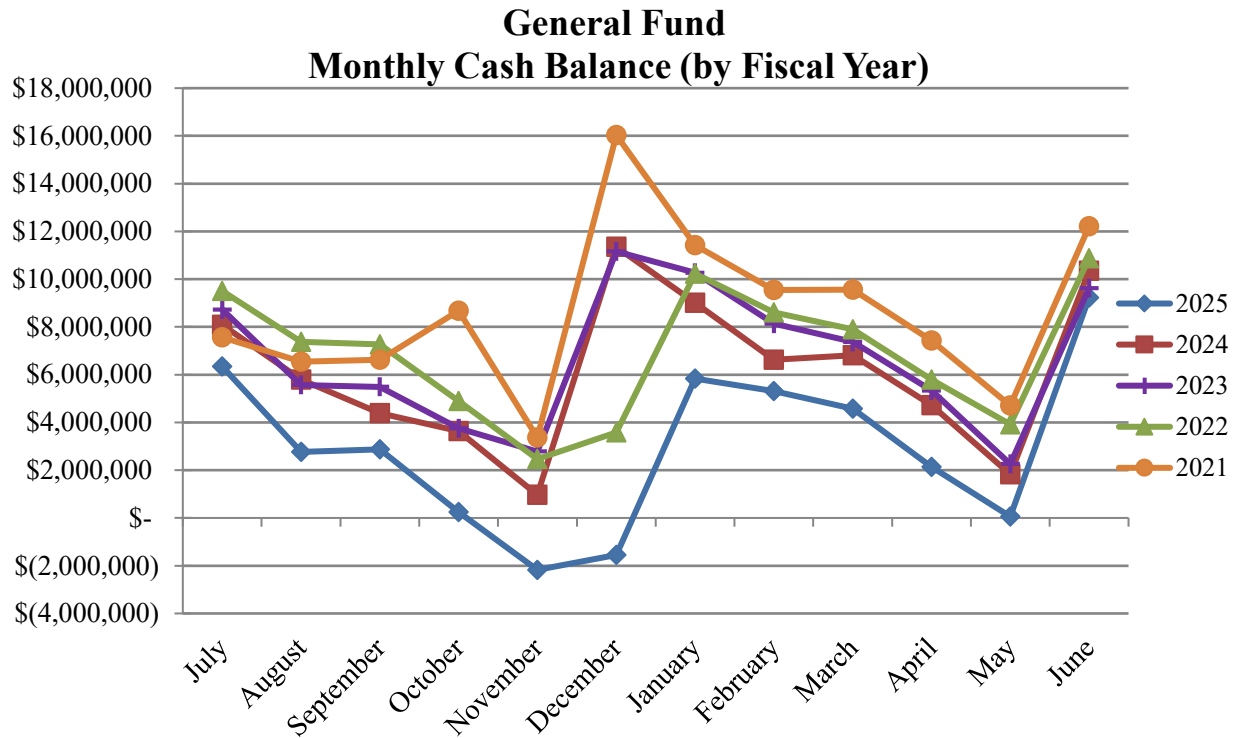
City of Great Falls
Total Cash & Investment Summary
June 30, 2025

Description	Rate	Due Date	Principal Cost	Market Value
US Bank Investments				
Insured Cash Sweep	3.450%		42,728,324.04	42,728,324.04
Total US Bank Investments			42,728,324.04	42,728,324.04
State of Montana Short Term Investment Pool (STIP)	4.357%		46,977,072.51	46,977,072.51
Total Investments			89,705,396.55	89,705,396.55
Cash on Hand, Deposits in Bank			15,301,210.71	15,301,210.71
Total Cash and Investments			<u>\$105,006,607.26</u>	<u>\$105,006,607.26</u>

Compared to 2021, total cash and investments are still at a higher level (see graph below). The higher levels can be attributed to receipt of American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funding. These monies originally accounted for \$20 million included in our total cash and investments. All ARPA funding has been committed at this time and is being spent down on a project-by-project basis. The final projects for the police evidence building and new municipal court space are well underway. All ARPA funds must be spent by December 31, 2026.



The General Fund monthly cash balances generally show a cyclical pattern largely dependent on the receipt of tax revenue usually in December and June each year (see graph below).



If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (406) 455-8423 or kwavra@greatfallsmt.net.

Department Monthly Update
June 30, 2025
Key Updates

City Manager	<p>1) The month of June was primarily driven by FY2026 budget preparation with Finance and City Departments.</p> <p>2) Attended one session of the MLCT/MMIA Municipal Summit.</p> <p>3) Attended GFDA's Annual Investor Meeting.</p> <p>4) Met with P&R Staff and Legal about a request from the Montana Veterans Memorial organization.</p> <p>5) Received a legal and consultant update regarding the City's Water Rights portfolio.</p>
Deputy City Manager (Clerk, Comm Specialist, Neighborhood Councils, Events, GFAS)	<p>Clerks: Provided administrative support to the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees during the Executive Session meeting held on June 24, 2025. Processed and completed 80 JustFOIA public records requests in April/June.</p> <p>Animal Shelter: June was a whirlwind for the animal shelter. We have spent the month trying to fill a couple open kennel tech positions, though we have now made one hire and hope to offer the other this week. We received several major donations from estates including \$10,078.09 from the estate of Frank Smith and \$50,000 from the estate of Leslie Lemire. We also received a \$700 donation from Magpie following their Dad Bod's Cars and Canine event. We have also been blessed with a full scholarship from the Compassion Consortium for Tiffany Staigmiller (senior office clerk) to complete the entirety of their Animal Chaplain program. She will start the program in September and be a certified Animal Chaplain in May 2026.</p> <p>Communications: Held June's Communication Team meeting, where we had training on federal digital accessibility guidelines. Started a Nextdoor account for the City (a social networking platform for neighborhoods) to send out important information to residents. Shared pictures of the renovation progress of Mansfield Theater. Created a guide for our utility customer service folks with basic information about utility rate increases and answers to FAQs. As of 6/30, combined views on the three downtown parking videos have reached over 14,000. Posted updated steps to starting a mobile food truck on social media, added to the City website, and shared with Kellie Pierce. Continued to share downtown construction updates. Created a video for Park & Rec. month. Posted firework reminders.</p> <p>Neighborhood Councils: Neighborhood Councils: During the month of June Neighborhood Councils had 5 meetings. Some highlights for this month was a presentation and discussion about the Great Falls Animal Shelter, City Safety Funding presentation by Commissioner Joe McKenney, Great Falls Long Range Transportation Plan presentation by Andrew Finch, Summer Ice Cream Social Planning and Update on Sunrise Park dog station.</p> <p>Events: Work on the Manfield Theater is in progress and on schedule. All seats have been removed and the ceiling above the main floor has been restored. Scaffolding will be moved from the main floor to the balcony on July 7th. Spark the Arts, Shrine Banquet and the Rural Economic Development conference were held in the Convention Center. John Gemberling, our Technical Director for the Theater for 40 years, retired in June and the search for his replacement has begun. An RFP has been created called the "Facilities Utilization & Feasibility Study" in order to explore new ways our facility can be utilized for Event rentals to improve revenues.</p>
Finance	<p>1) The Utility Billing division is implementing the rate increases for water, sewer, and storm drain effective July 1.</p> <p>2) Staff is working on finalizing grants for the FY 2025.</p> <p>3) The accounting staff is preparing for the FY 2025 year end which is June 30, 2025.</p> <p>4) The first budget work session for Fiscal Year 2026 was held June 17, 2025. The second budget work session will be held July 1, 2025.</p>
Fire	<p>1) The fire prevention bureau started its summer fire education programs including the third annual Safety Town which provides fire prevention education to roughly 20 kids starting kindergarten and presentations throughout the summer in conjunction with GFPS summer lunch program in the city's parks.</p>

Department Monthly Update
June 30, 2025
Key Updates

	<p>2) Working with the Deputy City Attorney on finalizing the updates to Title 15, Chapter 9 which is the fire code section of city code. This will be presented to the commission in the near future. Also, working on a minor change to Title 5 (Business Licenses). In working with the city IT department, and PCD, to make the licensure process smoother and easier for the public, the business licenses renewal date will be moved to match up with the state requirement for alcohol licensure renewal. This is being done so businesses that have both licensures can renew at the same time.</p> <p>3) Working to update city code to reflect the future change of the Fire Department taking the lead on processing Parade applications from the Park and Recreation Department.</p> <p>4) GFFR transported 5 patients due to surges in the EMS system</p> <p>5) Recruit Training started July 7th for Ayden Conley, a new probationary fire fighter.</p> <p>6) A total of 12 Fires were reported for the month which consisted of structure fires, dumpster fires and grass fires</p>
Human Resources	<p>1) Managed the recruitment for 39 positions. There were 203 applicants yielding the onboarding of 28 new employees. June's turnover rate was 1.61 percent. The average time to fill a position was 24 days.</p> <p>2) All departments and divisions conducted the annual employee evaluation process for FY25.</p> <p>3) There was four new work comp claims (Police, Public Works(2), GFFR) in June for sprains/strains and contusion bruising type of injuries. There are a total of 50 reported claims FY25 with 20 open claims.</p>
Information Technology	<p>1) Transitioned to a new ticketing system. Effective immediately, please use the following URL and email address for all IT support requests: URL: http://gfmt.link/itsupport Email: itsupport@greatfallsmt.gov.</p> <p>2) Implemented a new SharePoint site to share valuable information, including news, tips and tricks, project spotlights, and more.</p> <p>3) Implemented a new endpoint management system Ninja One RMM to monitor system health and manage operating system and software updates.</p>
Legal	<p>1) Four new threatened litigation: *Three alleged civil rights violations *One alleged due process violation</p> <p>2) Ongoing work on the Dec Action in District Court with Public Works regarding the storm drain and Harlan's Property.</p> <p>3) All hardware equipment for the new prosecution software has been installed on the criminal side. Staff are expected to begin implementing portions of the software soon. Also contracted with the software to create an Interface with police CAD system to pull cases/tickets over directly to the prosecution software.</p> <p>4) General Statistics: No new Code Enforcement Cases, 2 closed *114 Public Records Requests *105 Deferred Prosecution Agreements Processed</p> <p>*Approximately 752 subpoenas issued for witnesses to attend trials and hearings.</p>
Park and Recreation	<p>1) Park and Recreation in conjunction with FWP celebrated National Trails Day by hosting a crossing the dam event, June 7.</p> <p>2) Park and Recreation supported Walleye Unlimited and FWP in hosting Kids Fishing Day out at Wadsworth Pond, June 7.</p> <p>3) The winner of the 16th Annual Paris Gibson Award was announced as Jane Weber. For more than three decades, Jane Weber has dedicated herself to volunteer and professional activities. Jane has significantly contributed to the preservation of Great Falls' history and to the ongoing improvements of Great Falls residents' quality of life.</p> <p>4) Park and Recreation hosted the first of a three part trail run series. In conjunction with the RET Foundation these races will be hosted during June, July and August. These fun runs are free to participate in and if 2 of 3 of the races are completed by runners they will receive a t-shirt. The first race had over 90 participants.</p>

Department Monthly Update
June 30, 2025
Key Updates

Police	<p>1) Numerous meetings between the GFPD, CCSO and Municipal Court Judges occurred, which resulted in a coordinated effort to address criminal activity in the downtown area. School Resource Officers and the Directed Enforcement Team were tasked with focused patrol in the downtown area, which has shown success.</p> <p>2) The Evidence Expansion project is well underway, with the metal support structure nearly completed.</p> <p>3) June was challenging for GFD officers, as they dealt with a homicide and another incident where multiple officers were shot at by a violent suspect.</p>
Planning and Community Development	<p>1) Residential Geological Hazards Ordinance: An informational session on the proposed Residential Geological Hazards Ordinance will be held on August 20, in partnership with the Realtors Association and Home Builders Association.</p> <p>2) Workforce Housing & TIF: In collaboration with the Great Falls Development Alliance, staff is developing a proposal to make workforce housing a reimbursable expense in the Downtown TIF District. An update will be shared at the July 15 City Commission work session.</p> <p>3) Staffing: Kalaysha McWilliams (formerly Utility Billing) and Kristie Nelson have joined the team as Permit Technicians.</p>
Public Works	<p>PWA: Finalized all budgets and presented to City Manager; met with Calumet representatives per their interest in potential land swap--no decisions, just generally discuss if COGF is still open to this; worked with City attorney on next steps for City's protest on Republic landfill increases; presented Water Rights Strategy to City Manager; Utility Rates (with Capital Investment Fund) and Sanitation Rates now approved by City Commission; completed all employee annual evaluations</p> <p>Street: Completed minor repairs on several downtown routes in preparation for the MDT Urban Pavement Preservation Project. This work helps ensure the City is ready to take full advantage of state-funded improvements to our local street network.</p> <p>Water Plant: High Service #2 repairs completed; pump is aligned, installed, and running. System demand increasing above 20MGD with summer heat approaching. New chemical contract vendors begin delivering in July; site is preparing for switching of vendors. Preparing High Service pump #4 to be taken offsite for teardown and inspection. Reviewing alternative polymer supplies for solids mitigation building. Compiled a training matrix to visually track completion and compliance for WTP personnel. Working with Utility Billing and Finance on Malmstrom AFB underpayment for sewer. MDEQ notified us of requirement for PFOS/PFAS testing in the next year; will brief PW Director on testing plan in July. Progressing multiple regulatory plans for the WTP that have deadlines at the end of December 2025. Preparing a visual tracking methodology for budget lines for Lab, WWTP, and WTP; will be reviewed during team meetings (Utilizing MS 365 platform).</p> <p>Sanitation: Collaborated with IT Mapping to update sanitation maps. Implemented major residential route changes to improve efficiency; sent over 600 notification letters to residents informing them of new routes.</p> <p>Environmental: Continued increasing in the field presence with development community by conducting active construction inspections. One resulted in a Level 2 Notice of Violation.</p> <p>Utilities: 16" water main repair; 4-CL12 taps (new water taps) completed; sewer main repair along with hauling about 600 tons of sludge from the Water Plant to the transfer site to dry out. Training on new Rovver X CCTV crawler for sanitary sewer along with demo of two vac truck options for purchase next year.</p> <p>Engineering: Continued collecting data associated with the flooding complaints in Gibson Flats by tracking Russell Pond water surface elevations as the pond is being drained and comparing to the water surface levels of the spring flowing out of the hillside below Russell Pond. Jesse Patton received the 2025 GFDA Ally Award. Continued ongoing efforts to update and protect the City of Great Falls Water Rights.</p>