

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL

December 9, 2025

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Laurel, Montana, was held in the Council Chambers and called to order by Mayor Dave Waggoner at 6:30 p.m. on December 9, 2025.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Thomas Canape
Michelle Mize
Casey Wheeler
Richard Klose

Irv Wilke

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:

Heidi Sparks
Jodi Mackay

Jessica Banks

OTHER STAFF PRESENT:

Michele, Braukmann, Civil City Attorney
Britney Harakal, Administrative Assistant
Kelly Strecker, Clerk/Treasurer
JW Hopper, Fire Chief
Vince Ricci, Senator
Charlie Breerton, Director MT DPHHS (via phone)
Dan Villa, MT BOI (via phone)

Mayor Waggoner led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag.

MINUTES:

Motion by Council Member Wilke to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of November 25, 2025, as presented, seconded by Council Member Mize. There was no public comment or Council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All five Council Members present voted aye. Motion carried 5-0.

CORRESPONDENCE:

- Police Monthly Report – November 2025

COUNCIL DISCLOSURE OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS: None.

PUBLIC HEARING:

- Budget Amendment FY 2025-2026

Mayor Waggoner opened the public hearing and asked Staff to present the item.

Mayor Waggoner opened the floor for public comment and stated that copies of the rules governing the public hearing were posted in the Council chambers.

The Clerk/Treasurer reviewed the attached budget amendments.

Mayor Waggoner asked three (3) times if there were any proponents. There were none.

Mayor Waggoner asked three (3) times if there were any opponents. There were none.

Mayor Waggoner stated that he would not have Staff respond to questions as there were none.

CONSENT ITEMS:

- **Claims entered through December 5, 2025.**
A complete listing of the claims and their amounts is on file in the Clerk/Treasurer's Office.
- **Approval of Payroll Register for PPE 11/23/2025 totaling \$282,499.82.**
- **Clerk/Treasurer Financial Statements for the month of November 2025.**

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The Mayor asked if there was any separation of consent items. There was none.

Motion by Council Member Klose to approve the consent items as presented, seconded by Council Member Canape. There was no public comment or Council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All five Council Members present voted aye. Motion carried 5-0.

CEREMONIAL CALENDAR: None.

REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:

- Budget/Finance Committee Minutes of November 28, 2025.
- Laurel Urban Renewal Agency Minutes of November 24, 2025.
- Laurel Airport Authority Minutes of November 12, 2025.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (THREE-MINUTE LIMIT):

Charlie Brereton, Director of the Department of Public Health and Human Services, see attached statement.

Dan Villa, Montana Board of Investments, see attached statement.

SCHEDULED MATTERS:

- **Resolution No. R25-100: Resolution Approving A Memorandum Of Understanding By And Between The City Of Laurel And Beartooth Resource Conservation & Development Area, Inc.**

Motion by Council Member Canape to approve Resolution No. R25-100, seconded by Council Member Wilke. There was no public comment or Council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All five Council Members present voted aye. Motion carried 5-0.

- **Resolution No. R25-101: A Resolution Of The City Council Approving Amendments To Appropriations And Revenues For The City Of Laurel's Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget.**

Motion by Council Member Wheeler to approve Resolution No. R25-101, seconded by Council Member Mize. There was no public comment or Council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All five Council Members present voted aye. Motion carried 5-0.

- **Resolution No. R25-102: A Resolution Of The City Council Authorizing The Mayor To Execute An Independent Contractor Service Contract With Donahue Roofing & Siding LLC.**

Motion by Council Member Mize to approve Resolution No. R25-102, seconded by Council Member Wilke. There was no public comment.

Council requested clarification on this item. It was clarified that this was included in the original quote and was needed to meet building codes. This project was budgeted for this year.

A vote was taken on the motion. All five Council Members present voted aye. Motion carried 5-0.

ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA: None.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS (ONE-MINUTE LIMIT):

At 10 a.m. on Saturday, they will begin placing wreaths at Yellowstone National Cemetery.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION:

Some LURA board members reached out to a Council Member with concerns about whether their ordinance change would be processed to allow for more members and whether this would be done by the first of the year. It was clarified that the ordinance will be before Council during the next Council cycle; however, it will not be completed before the first of the year.

MAYOR UPDATES: None.

UNSCHEDULED MATTERS: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Council Member Wheeler to adjourn the Council meeting, seconded by Council Member Wilke. There was no public comment or Council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All five Council Members present voted aye. Motion carried 5-0.

There being no further business to come before the Council at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.


Britney Harakal, Administrative Assistant

Approved by the Mayor and passed by the City Council of the City of Laurel, Montana, this 22nd day of December 2025.


Dave Waggoner, Mayor

Attest:


Kelly Streckert, Clerk/Treasurer





Good evening, Mayor and Council Members. I'm Charlie Brereton, Director of the Department of Public Health and Human Services. Thank you for the opportunity to speak and provide additional information to the Laurel community.

Many of you may know that Montana needs more secure, clinically appropriate care for individuals in the justice system with serious mental illness.

The demand for forensic restoration services within DPHHS facilities is ever-growing and exceeds our current bed capacity, as demonstrated by the current statewide waitlist of 103 individuals. Our proposed forensic mental health facility near Laurel is part of the State's multi-year effort to improve Montana's behavioral health system and ensure public safety.

I deeply understand the community concerns about this facility, which deserve meaningful attention. It's important to note that patients admitted to this facility in the future – many of whom will be from your region – will ultimately be there on a temporary basis, receiving court-mandated evaluation and restoration services to determine their fitness to proceed to trial, and cared for 24/7 by clinical staff.

Forensic facilities have significant security requirements and features, including 24/7 interior and exterior live video monitoring, double-layer security fences around all outdoor areas, 'sally port' doors, which ensure one door is closed before the other to prevent patient elopement, and an always-staffed central command station that controls facility access and manages patient and staff movements.

It may surprise you that this facility is part of a closed loop system for forensic patients. In other words, patients will be securely transported to the facility under court order and will return to their county detention facility of origin, the Montana State Hospital, or the Montana State Prison or Montana Women's Prison after treatment without ever leaving the campus.

I want to be clear that patients cannot leave the facility. In the highly unlikely event that a court decides the patient should be discharged into the community, DPHHS would coordinate with the judicial system to return the patient to their home community and provide wraparound services.

We are deeply committed to working with Laurel's leaders and residents to ensure transparency, safety, and shared benefits associated with this project.

I encourage you and your constituents to visit hhs.mt.gov for additional information on this project and pay special attention to the DPHHS FAQs document.

I appreciate your time and partnership.

Thank you, again.

Mr. Mayor, and members of the Laurel City Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to address you this evening. I am Dan Villa, Executive Director of the Montana Board of Investments. I appreciate the professionalism and patience you've demonstrated during a period of uncertainty, and I want to speak directly and plainly about BOI's role as the real estate development partner for the proposed forensic behavioral health facility.

Let me begin with the facts on the ground. No land has been purchased. No offers have been made to any property owner. I understand that uncertainty breeds concern in any community, and I want you to hear directly from me that BOI is conducting preliminary discussions regarding potential sites—nothing more. We are evaluating feasibility, infrastructure compatibility, and the practical requirements of building a 32-bed forensic facility that will serve central and eastern Montana's most vulnerable patients and the law enforcement professionals who care for them.

Now to the commitment I'm here to make on behalf of BOI: When—and if—BOI enters into a contingent Buy/Sell agreement with a property owner, the City Council will hear about it first. You will hear about it during the public comment period of a regular city commission meeting. You will not read about it in a press release. You will not see it covered by news media before you have been informed directly. BOI will share that information with you and your city staff in an open, public meeting. That is my personal and professional commitment to you. This is your community. You deserve transparency from the state before the public learns of material developments.

Third, BOI will follow every existing city resolution, ordinance, and process that governs land use in Laurel. If annexation is required—and it likely will be—we will file an annexation request through proper channels. If zoning considerations arise, we will work through those processes as well. We understand that you have established procedures for evaluating land use proposals, and we respect them. BOI does not intend to circumvent city governance. We intend to work within it.

I also understand that some of you learned of this announcement from the press rather than from the state directly. That process could have been—should have been—handled better. Going forward, you can expect a different sort of state partnership that is grounded in transparency, is respectful of local process, and genuinely interested in the wellbeing of your community.

I look forward to hearing your questions and concerns at the appropriate time. I am here to assure you that BOI acts as a prudent investor and developer—we do not move forward without careful analysis, we do not make commitments lightly, and we do not circumvent the communities we serve. I believe that when we work together through proper channels, with honesty and respect for each other's roles, good outcomes follow.

I thank you for your time and your consideration of this important project.”

DAN VILLA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MONTANA

BOARD OF INVESTMENTS
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