# AGENDA
# CITY OF LAUREL
# CITY COUNCIL MEETING
# TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2026
# 6:30 PM
# COUNCIL CHAMBERS

***WELCOME** . . . By your presence in the City Council Chambers, you are participating in the process of representative government. To encourage that participation, the City Council has specified times for citizen comments on its agenda -- once following the Consent Agenda, at which time citizens may address the Council concerning any brief community announcement not to exceed one minute in duration for any speaker; and again following Items Removed from the Consent Agenda, at which time citizens may address the Council on any matter of City business that is not on tonight's agenda. Each speaker will be limited to three minutes, unless the time limit is extended by the Mayor with the consent of the Council. Citizens may also comment on any item removed from the consent agenda prior to council action, with each speaker limited to three minutes, unless the time limit is extended by the Mayor with the consent of the Council. If a citizen would like to comment on an agenda item, we ask that you wait until the agenda item is presented to the Council by the Mayor and the public is asked to comment by the Mayor.*

*Any person who has any question concerning any agenda item may call the City Clerk-Treasurer's office to make an inquiry concerning the nature of the item described on the agenda. Your City government welcomes your interest and hopes you will attend the Laurel City Council meetings often.*

## Pledge of Allegiance

## Roll Call of the Council

## Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of Minutes of January 27, 2026.

## Correspondence

2. Hurd Letter of Resignation from Cemetery Commission.
3. County Correspondence Appointing Mike Waters to the Laurel City County Planning.
4. Police Monthly Report - January 2026
5. Fire Monthly Report - December 2025.
6. FY27 CDS Application Correspondence

## Council Disclosure of Ex Parte Communications

## Public Hearing

## Consent Items

*NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC*

*The Consent Calendar adopting the printed Recommended Council Action will be enacted with one vote.* ***The Mayor will first ask the Council members if any Council member wishes to remove any item from the Consent Calendar for discussion and consideration.*** *The matters removed from the Consent Calendar will be considered individually at the end of this Agenda under "Items Removed from the Consent Calendar." (See Section 12.) The entire Consent Calendar, with the exception of items removed to be discussed under "Items Removed from the Consent Calendar," is then voted upon by roll call under one motion.*

7. Claims entered through February 6, 2026.
8. Approval of Payroll Register for PPE 2/1/2026 totaling $274,962.29.

## Ceremonial Calendar

## Reports of Boards and Commissions

9. Budget/Finance Committee Minutes of January 13, 2026.
10. Library Board Minutes of September 9, 2025.
11. Library Board Minutes of October 14, 2025.

12. Library Board Minutes of November 11, 2025.
13. Laurel Airport Authority Minutes of January 20, 2026.
14. Emergency Services Committee Minutes of January 26, 2026.
15. Laurel Urban Renewal Agency Minutes of December 22, 2025.
16. Laurel Urban Renewal Agency Minutes of January 12, 2026.
17. Laurel Urban Renewal Agency Minutes of January 26, 2026.

## Audience Participation (Three-Minute Limit)

*Citizens may address the Council regarding any item of City business that is not on tonight's agenda. Comments regarding tonight's agenda items will be accepted under Scheduled Matters. The duration for an individual speaking under Audience Participation is limited to three minutes. While all comments are welcome, the Council will not take action on any item not on the agenda.*

## Scheduled Matters

18. Resolution No. R26-05: A Resolution Of The City Council Of The City Of Laurel, Montana Amending Resolution No. 25-75 And Affirming Continuation Of Services Under The Managed Service Agreement For Renamed Systems Technology Consultants.
19. Resolution No. R26-06: A Resolution Of The City Council Approving A Transportation Coordination Plan For The City Of Laurel Transit.

## Items Removed From the Consent Agenda

## Community Announcements (One-Minute Limit)

*This portion of the meeting is to provide an opportunity for citizens to address the Council regarding community announcements. The duration for an individual speaking under Community Announcements is limited to one minute. While all comments are welcome, the Council will not take action on any item not on the agenda.*

## Council Discussion

*Council members may give the City Council a brief report regarding committees or groups in which they are involved.*

## Mayor Updates

## Unscheduled Matters

## Adjournment

*The City makes reasonable accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person's ability to participate in this meeting. Persons needing accommodation must notify the City Clerk's Office to make needed arrangements. To make your request known, please call 406-628-7431, Ext. 2, or write to City Clerk, PO Box 10, Laurel, MT 59044, or present your request at City Hall, 115 West First Street, Laurel, Montana.*

**File Attachments for Item:**

1. Approval of Minutes of January 27, 2026.

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# MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL

January 27, 2026

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 January 27, 2026.

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| COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: | Thomas Canape | Heidi Sparks |
| | Michelle Mize | Jessica Banks |
| | Casey Wheeler | Irv Wilke |
| | Richard Klose | Jodi Mackay |
| COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: | None | |
| OTHER STAFF PRESENT: | Michele, Braukmann, Civil City Attorney | |
| | Brittney Harakal, Administrative Assistant | |
| | Kurt Markegard, CAO | |
| | Kelly Strecker, Clerk/Treasurer | |

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

**MINUTES:**

Motion by Council Member Canape to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of January 13, 2026, as presented, seconded by Council Member Wilke. There was no public comment or Council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All eight Council Members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

Civil Attorney Braukmann briefly reviewed how land issues work and what it means for the Council to serve as a quasi-judicial body for land use matters. In layman's terms, they are judges on land use matters. Judges cannot hear a full evidentiary record until it is put in front of them. Council can acknowledge ex parte communications, but they cannot speak until the full record is put in front of them.

Civil Attorney Braukmann read the attached emails into the record.

**COUNCIL DISCLOSURE OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS:**

Council Member Edgmond noted that he heard from three constituents and responded that he did not know.

Council Member Mackay reviewed the attached communications log.

Council Member Wilke received two voicemail messages from constituents. He played both messages during the meeting. One is from someone who did not leave their name, and the other is from Richard Swanson. Council Member Wilke responded to the first voicemail and encouraged her to write a letter to the Mayor and Council with her concerns.

Council Member Naylor reviewed the attached communications log.

**PUBLIC HEARING:** None.

**CONSENT ITEMS:**

- **Claims entered through January 23, 2026.**
  A complete listing of the claims and their amounts is on file in the Clerk/Treasurer's Office.

- **Approval of Payroll Register for PPE 1/18/2026 totaling $254,217.79.**

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- **Council Workshop Minutes of January 6, 2026.**
- **Council Workshop Minutes of January 20, 2026.**

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 Wilke. There was no public comment or Council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All eight Council Members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

**CEREMONIAL CALENDAR:** None.

**REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:**

- Budget/Finance Committee Minutes of January 13, 2026.
- Tree/Park Board Minutes of January 8, 2026.
- Public Works Committee Minutes of December 15, 2025.
- Laurel Urban Renewal Agency Minutes of January 12, 2026
- Emergency Services Committee Minutes 11.24.2025

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (THREE-MINUTE LIMIT):**

CAO Markegard: So there's a lot of public comment public interest in this and I've spoken to the Mayor we've had discussions over say the last six months I've talked to him about if I can discuss close the conversations that we've had with between each other, me and him. After the meeting, after the Council does their business, I would be willing to stay here and I've offered tonight, tomorrow night, and that's Thursday night and Friday night to come in here, meet with the members of the public, go over zoning, go over annexation, the laws that we are going off of, and I have all my emails from the state Board of at their, my chair, and I'd be willing to, after the meeting, to go over all the emails and do a timeframe of what transpired over the last six months to the members of the public. I will sit here, and I will discuss it. If everything can be civil, I'll be sitting here and discussing it with you. I would, I'm not sure the Council should be involved in it if it's going to pop.

Mayor Waggoner: Council will not be there.

CAO Markegard: So the city attorney has agreed to sit with me. Be willing to sit here and talk to you about our zoning laws, our annexation resolution, and then go over my emails and chronological, sorry, order of how those came about, and the discussion and how it went, so that there can be no miscommunication on what city staff has to do when they bring in a project like this. We've got to sit there and go through a certain criteria when we're reviewing stuff. And so I just want to let the public know, the state reached out to us in July and invited us on a tour. I think the commissioner was there. There were council members in Billings there. There were state representatives there. I was one of many that got included in a tour of facilities in Billings and one in Laurel, which was up by the airport. So, with that, I'd be willing to stay tonight and discuss my email. Their public record just like my letter states in November 17th I'd like to clarify that letter and what that meant and why it was written so after the meeting if people want to stay I will have no problem discussing with you the last thing I would have to say to the public I have been committed this community my entire life last 22 years here so I want open and transparent government that's what I want that's what I want from the council members that's what I want from the Mayor and I want that from the public I'm so tired of not having that maybe in the last few years so I want to be an open book I will discuss my emails my communication and where it was going and where it was being directed so after the meeting I'd like to do that Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Waggoner: okay now this three minutes, you come up, and you give your name and your address. The clerk is timing because we've got a lot of people. So when it hits three minutes, I'm going to gavel and please stop and go back to your seat, and then the next person. So we can get plenty of people up talking. Okay, first. Yes.

Matt Torix: I'm Matt Torix, 635 Mountain Front Avenue in Billings. I am the superintendent of Laurel Public Schools, and I'm here on behalf of myself, but I also feel I represent the school district. I would not be in support of this facility in any way, being close to Laurel Elementary School. It is within about 460 yards of the edge of the properties. I do feel like it's just not the appropriate place. My concern is safety for students, and I do not feel that this lends itself to the safety of our children. There's a lot of other things. I won't reiterate all the other items that have been read into the record already, but I just

DRAFT

want to say that I do not support the facility being placed where it currently is being suggested. I would encourage the City Council to vote against annexation of this state request if should it come to this group. Thank you.

Kris Vogele: Hi, I'm Kris Vogele, 306 East 4th Street, Laurel, Montana. And Kurt, thanks for standing up and also making yourself available to the citizens. You have a leadership role now, so I think you can do that without anybody else getting in the way of it. And we were hoping that maybe that would have happened over the last six months versus now. Things have gotten to this point. I understand a lot of us understand the executive versus the legislative or Council branches. And we understand that all the authority and basically the buck stops with the Mayor in terms of operations and day-to-day activities. Council's involved in planning and looking toward the future and setting guidance for that. They also serve on committees that deal with day-to-day operations and would deal, I would think, information about the state coming in to build this facility. One thing I want to apologize to the Mayor and to Kurt about is there were negative comments made about your children in Facebook posts. And when we make posts, we don't we don't encourage that, and we don't like invite that. And so we do apologize for comments that were made personally about you, because this is a professional matter, not a personal matter. There, Kurt, when you had sent, when the CAO had sent his letter to the state about a piece of land, we understand that it would have been about Woods Power Grip, and that was a 10-acre piece of land, but it also opened up the floodgates and the search capacity for the state. Information was given to the state that's normally not given to a private party, about, hey, here's ways that you can save costs. And it was almost like a broker. It felt like a brokerage of a deal or finding land. And we have a lot of questions as city members about that. We're here basically for a concern for the future of our city. Questions that I have: Who authorized the chief administrative officer to work with the state of Montana on siting a forensic psychiatric facility in Laurel? Why was the city council not of staff communications with the state beginning in August of 2025? Does identifying sites, utilities, and annexation potential constitute facilitation of this project? Why were feasibility, fiscal impact, and public safety studies not completed before sites were offered? And if they were completed, has the Council seen those? Because the public has not. What is the project's net fiscal impact to the city over the next 10, 20, and 30 years? How will police, fire, and emergency services be funded for tax-exempt state facility? What infrastructure upgrades will be required, and who will pay for them? Why were residents and City Council told the city had no involvement when documentation shows staff engagement? We understand that you have said now that there was an involvement, but people were acting really surprised when the state chose Laurel. Will the city pause cooperation with the state until independent studies are completed and reviewed publicly? What steps will the Council take to ensure staff cannot unilaterally facilitate major projects without Council approval?

Juanita Bear: My name is Juanita Bear. My husband's family has four generations of living three parcels away from this field that has been a peaceful field. We have some additional questions. What specific authority does the Chief Administrative Officer have to communicate with state agencies regarding siting major state facilities within city limits? First of all, thank you, Mr. Mayor. Thank you, Councilmembers. Thank you, City Attorney. Each one of you have challenging situations as you serve our community, and I want to thank you, each one of you. Thank you. Was the City Council ever asked to authorize the CAO to engage in discussions with the State of Montana regarding a forensic psychiatric facility? If no authorization was given, under what legal authority did the CAO proceed? Does the city have a written policy governing when staff may negotiate or coordinate with outside governmental entities? Was the Mayor aware of the CAO's communications with the Board of Investments at the time they occurred? Did the Mayor approve or direct the CAO to send the letter identifying potential sites? Was the city attorney consulted before the letter was sent to the Board of Investments? If not, why was legal counsel excluded from a decision with major legal and financial implications? Did the CAO brief the city council after the letter was sent? If not, why was the Council not informed? Does the city consider identifying sites and utility availability to be an application or facilitation of a project? If not, how does the city define an application? How does the city ever take in the position? Has the city ever taken the position that providing site selection assistance is not participation? Would the city accept the same definition if it were applied to a private developer? Did the CAO exceed the scope of administrative authority by influencing site selection? Has the city council reviewed the CAO's job description? In relation to this matter is there any precedent for staff independently offering land options to outside entities without council approval if this is precedent setting why was Council not involved has any disciplinary or review process been initiated regarding this conduct if not why not and again thank you each one because each one are so important to our community and I want to emphasize that we are so of each of you. Why were these discussions not disclosed during public city council meetings? Why were executive sessions held? Were any executive sessions held regarding this facility? If so, under what statutory exemption? Were meeting notes, emails, or calendars related to this project made available to the public? Has the city conducted a

DRAFT

public records review of communications with the state where citizens were intentionally excluded from early discussions? Was a public ever given? Thank you, sir.

Chris Lorash: Okay. Hi, I'm Chris Lorash. I live at 1805 Duval Drive here in Laurel. I'm a citizen, but also a board member of the school board, currently serving as the chair of that board. And I just wanted to reiterate, I'm sure you saw our message today in opposition as a board to the location of this facility near West Elementary, formerly West Elementary, now Laurel Elementary. The reasons, as Matt articulated, mostly related to safety, for the students and safety doesn't just mean we're worried about trust me this facility is secure we've spent a lot of time and effort recently even doing that but safety is more than just access to the building it's the students and the teachers state of mind having a facility like this nearby. I've already had my children coming home asking about this facility and wondering about what it means, so I think something that needs to be considered. As a citizen, I'm also concerned, but I also understand that you don't have a lot of information, and a lot of that comes out. A lot of the questions that are here and a lot of questions that have been asked ad nauseam in the previous section of this meeting will be answered during discovery, but I can assure you that there's no amount of discovery that could take place that would change my mind that this is an inappropriate location due to safety for the students. Our school district. I am in support of such a facility in eastern Montana as a citizen. Again, I'm separating that. I am in support of that, and I'm supportive it in Laurel or in its vicinity. This is just not an appropriate location given its proximity to such a sensitive area. So that's what I had. You don't have to knock on me. What do we say, 27? 27, anyone.

Julie Jones: My name is Julie Jones. My residence is at 1201 4th Street West, which is very close to the property in question. And I guess I'd just like to ask the Council a favor that they take the same stance as the school and oppose this project. All the way. Thank you.

Bailey Dempster: My name is Bailey Dempster. I'm at 209 Golf Course Road in Laurel. Members of City Council, I'm speaking today as a parent and as a homeowner, and I am firmly opposed to the proposed forensic mental health facility being placed near our homes and our schools. This location is inappropriate. Parents should not be asked to accept added risk to their children's safety. Homeowners should not have to live with increased security concerns, constant uncertainty, and long-term impacts that come from placing a high-risk facility in a residential area. While mental health treatment is important, a forensic mental health facility serves individuals involved in the criminal justice system. That reality must be acknowledged. This is not a stigma or fear. It is about responsibility and common sense. Facilities of this nature should be located in areas designed to support secure operations and public safety, not next to children's schools and family homes. Once this facility is built, the impact is permanent. The consequences will be carried by residents long after this vote is taken. Please reconsider this location and look for safer alternatives. Thank you for your time.

Jennifer: Hi, my name is Jennifer live at 916 5th Avenue in Laurel obviously and I'm here to oppose the annexation and then I'm gonna continue on the list all right well number 27 was the public ever given the opportunity to comment before the state selected Laurel why was the first public notice the state's announcement does the city believe that this meets standards of transparent governance would the city consider this process acceptable if rules were reversed did the CAO or Mayor correct the public record when they stated that the city had no involvement if not why were city staff instructed not to discuss the project project publicly who made that that instruction did the city consider issuing a clarification once documents became public does the city believe a mission of material facts is consistent with public trust Has the City Council reviewed the letter sent to the Board of Investments? When did the Council first become aware of its contents? Why was the Council blindsided if staff had been working on this since August of 2025? And what safeguards exist to prevent this from happening again? Did the CAO conduct any feasibility study before identifying sites? Was a cost-benefit analysis performed? Was a fiscal impact study conducted? Was a long-term operating cost analysis done? Were emergency service impacts evaluated? Was traffic impact on Highway 10 analyzed? Was proximity to schools evaluated? Was public safety staffing analyzed? Was police overtime cost estimated? Was the fire and EMS capacity evaluated? Was water demand modeling performed? Was sewer capacity evaluated? Capital upgrades identified? Who would pay for those upgrades? Was lifecycle infrastructure cost considered? Was insurance or liability exposure evaluated? Were mutual aid agreements considered? Was an annexation fiscal analysis completed? Was a facilities compatibility study done? Were alternative locations outside Laurel evaluated? Did the CAO consider declining to participate? Did the CAO consider the City Council's stated opposition? Did the CAO document any risks? Where is that documentation? If no studies exist, why not? Okay, so is a facility exempt from property taxes? If so, how will the city recover service costs? Has the city calculated the net fiscal impact? Has the city requested a payment in lieu of taxes? If not, why? Will the city subsidize state operations? Has the city evaluated bond rating impacts? All right. 73.

DRAFT

Brian Lubinski: Alright, my name is Brian Lubinski, 327th Avenue. My wife, Callie, and I very strongly oppose this. We have three small children in the school system moved out here to create a family in a family setting, and we are very close to the schools, and this would absolutely get it. So, we will utility rates increase for residents? Will capital improvement plans change? Has the city identified unfunded mandates? Has the city budgeted for increased calls for services? Has the city negotiated reimbursement with the state? Has the city evaluated long-term maintenance costs? Who pays for the infrastructure fails? Has the city identified opportunity costs? What city projects will be delayed or displaced? Has the city modeled worst-case scenarios, cost scenarios? Has the city disclosed these risks to the residents? Will taxpayers be asked to subsidize this facility? Why was the Council not given the information beforehand? Who initiated annexation discussions? Was annexation conditioned on council approval? Was annexation analyzed independently of the project? Does annexation primarily benefit the state? Was limited annexation considered? Why was 114 acre parcel proposed? Proposed? Does the facility require that much land? What future uses are contemplated? Does annexation create future development pressure? Has zoning capabilities been evaluated? Was a growth policy consistency review done? Were statutory annexation findings prepared? Has the Council reviewed those findings? Does the annexation obligate the city to future costs? What was discussed in public? Was annexation leveraged as an incentive? Is the city exposed if annexation is denied? Has the city considered rescinding annexation support? Can the city withdraw cooperation? What is the city's exit strategy? Does the City Council believe the staff acted appropriately? Should staff have sought council discretion? Should feasibility studies have been mandatory? Will Council require these studies now? Will Council pause cooperation until studies are complete? Will Council request an independent audit? Will Council request a third-party fiscal analysis? Will Council formally clarify staff authority limits? Will Council correct public statements? Will Council require disclosure of all communications? Will Council consider censure or reprimand? Will Council adopt a policy preventing unilateral facilitation? Will Council commit to a public engagement before a future siting? Who is accountable if this harms Laurel? How will the Council restore public trust?

Brittany Hunter: Brittany Hunter, 2604 Willowwood. I also am a school board trustee, and I oppose this. The only thing I'm going to ask the rest of you is, once the state leaves and this facility stays, can you look us in the eyes?

Rich Holstein: Hi, my name's Rich Holstein. I live over on 712 8th Avenue. And as somebody who lives very close in proximity to this, as somebody who lives with a bunch of elderly and disabled people around me, it's a concern. And I know that I hear it from everybody in that community. All those, all the little old ladies, everybody, man, I hear it from, and they're worried about this. Know it shouldn't be in a neighborhood it's not it's not the right place you know um I don't feel that that it should be by a school I'm I'm right there I got grandkids going to school here I do all of that and there's just nothing good that really comes out of this and in the end I think that we really need to be looking at what would this benefit Laurel? If there's no benefit to Laurel, other than we sold them some land, then why are we doing it? It's really simple. Why are we doing it?

Steve Kurm: Hi, my name is Steve Krum. 24th Avenue West, Laurel, Montana. I'm a county resident, and one of the things I want to say here is that even though we're county residents, decisions this city council makes does affect us. That's why there was a state law to have zoning authority outside of it, because you do impact people who live around the city when you make these decisions, which we've been here. I've been here before with you guys, and you've heard me speak before, and it is important that you think of how you impact your community, and that is the citizens of Laurel and the county. That power plant that went in is not the issue here, but it does impact people. It affects their mental health and their physical health. My daughter's house, when that plant's up and running, water glass vibrates inside their house, ripples, because of the vibration from that plant, this noise vibration. That same thing's gonna happen when this mental institution is built around your neighbors, and they're going to be stressing about it. They're going to be worried about it. This affects their health. So you got to ask yourself some questions, because this has happened just recently when loves coming in with this truck stop. They do full well with the sign height of that ordinance said that they could put up there. They wait till it gets built, put up a 2000-foot sign, and say, City Council, you want to approve that? Heck, yeah, we're going to prove that. So it concerns me now that we went from a 10-acre lot to 114 acre lot with this little small facility, what are their other plans there? Do they plan on putting a super fence around it because it's such a dangerous facility and a big buffer zone? If that's the case, then it definitely doesn't belong here. If they plan on more expansion there, so the same thing. Here loves to get their new sign. What is the state going to be dumping on them same lots there? What's next? Have they told you what's next for the other 110 that they bought there? We should be concerned about this. This should be very, very open. So I ask that you think about this, you have the opportunity to say no, and I know Kurt came up here and said, there's laws that say you have to do stuff during

DRAFT

zoning, but this is a state public entity, and this is a city public entity, and it's a county public entity. You guys don't necessarily have to force stuff like that on the people of this town. You can bump this up. Laurel, you have the opportunity to bump this up to the county. They need more prison or jail cells. And they're the ones that are bringing these people back and forth to this building right next to the county jail. Expand their seats, their jail cells, expand seats for these mentally ill criminals with the money they're using to buy this land instead of building something like this in the middle of our community. So please, and let the county have it, let them build it there. So no matter where you put it in Laurel, you're gonna have a neighbor that's not gonna want it. It just doesn't belong here. Thank you.

Mark Morris: Mayor Wagner, City Council, my name's Mark Morris, Chairman of the Yellowstone County Board of Commissioners. Thank you for allowing comments on the proposed mental health prison. County commissioners have received many questions request from Laurel residents concerning the mental health facility. County commissioners have voiced their concerns. I have my concerns. The devil is in the details. Without detail, I cannot support this facility being in Yellowstone County. That is a shame because Montana is in dire need of additional mental health resources. Without details, I am concerned they are building this facility, not for additional space for these mentally ill folks, but as a replacement for the forensic facility in Galen and Warm Springs, which the state has admitted they struggled to staff. The state has said this facility to be billed as a forensic facility by which, by state administrative rules, means it's a secure facility for the mentally ill. It is like a jail or share similar characteristics to a prison. It is not a residential campus. Residents of these facilities are generally committed to a forensic facility after judicial action, such as evaluating whether the resident is mentally fit to stand trial. People charged with homicide or other assault of crimes populate these facilities. It is, in fact, a forensic facility, as the state has said that most of these inmates are pending criminal trial or will have been sentenced to the facility by conviction of a crime. Yellowstone County already has the Montana Women's Prison, the largest number of pre-release centers, the largest number of criminal the largest number of sober living facilities, and several other state programs, including treatment for sex offenders. No other county in Montana comes close to housing this number of facilities. All these facilities and programs take a toll on our neighborhoods and the resources provided by the county and municipalities. These types of facilities and programs bring a substantial number of people sentenced to the criminal justice system into Yellowstone County. Despite best efforts, criminal recidivism rates are sky high in Montana. A significant portion of these folks will continue to commit crimes, whether suffering a mental health issue or not. Since I have been elected commissioner, I have repeatedly heard from the state and local leaders that Billings and Yellowstone County are the dumping grounds for the rest of the state's problems. The reason they say why the facility must be here is that we have the resources. Approximately 20 years ago, Yellowstone County invested in themselves and they passed a public safety mental health levy. It generates approximately one to one and a half million dollars annually, and we share that with Bridgemont Health, the Crisis Center, Rimrock Foundation, and other smaller partners. One of the reasons other counties in Montana bring their mental health patients to our community is because we have these resources. Warm Springs, the location of the state hospital, intentionally discharges their patients. So I would urge you to deny annexation if it comes before you. Thank you for your time.

Darby Turndale: Hi there. My name is Darby Turndale. I live at I am also a local small business owner. So while my home isn't in city limits, my businesses so just wanted to point out or talk with you and oppose the facility. One of the things that sorry I struggle with talking. I'm good, I just want to let you know that I oppose. Thank you.

Kellen Renner: Hi, my name is Kellen Renner, 606 10th Ave. I live about 250 yards from where this facility is proposed to go, right behind the school. Kind of going off of what the man from the accounting commissioning board said, I work with law enforcement and billings. I have no idea how this community plans on actually releasing people from this facility or how our police will actually be able to respond to any incidents. And that's pretty much it. That's my concern. I want to oppose the annexation.

Ellie Marshall: Good evening. I'm Ellie Marshall, 1518 West 9th Street. I am directly and negatively affected by the proposed prison in Laurel. I'm not alone. One public elementary school, over 10 businesses, and over that families live in, where grandparents, parents, and our kids live, that directly surround the proposed prison. All four sides are surrounded. This isn't farmland. This isn't ranchland. We live here. The city of Laurel is also negatively affected by this prison. If the state assumes this 114 acres, look at it under an assumption of 80 private homes at $2,000 home, that's revenue $160,000 loss for our town. That's just taxes. Laurel's first responders are already stretched thin. We know that. We live here. The city of Laurel can't even afford an ambulance. We're currently holding privately funded fundraisers so we can buy an ambulance. This prison has no business surrounded by family homes and

DRAFT

businesses, especially has no business near our elementary schools and private schools. When escapes happen, these prisoners are the worst of the worst, convicted rapists and murderers. In 2013, two prisoners escaped: Charles White, a convicted murderer, and another male, convicted of rape and murder. An escapee, and these are Montana, and during COVID, another escapee convicted murderer. And as late as early as 2023, another escapee. It's not if, it's when. I'm not opposed to Montana building a mental facility at all. As others have expressed as well. But I am opposed to such a prison in my hometown and in our backyard, literally my backyard. Vote no to a prison in Laurel.

Devin Rotabaugh: Hello, my name is Devin Rotabaugh. I'm at 715 West 6th Street here in Laurel. I just encourage you to be against this as well. I'm coming at it from a different angle. As a graduate from here, I have a lot of pride as a locomotive and a loco, and having this facility in our town changes what a loco is. So thank you.

Shawna Hopper: Hi, my name is Shawna Hopper. I'm at 504 Roundhouse Drive here in Laurel, and I'm just going to share a couple of things that have been spoken at the school board meeting last night. One of the school board members stated last night that during her tenure as a student teacher, she had children stating that they were scared to go to the bathroom alone. She reiterated that this would only add to that problem. Another person stated, community member, that although property values may not decrease, as there's not really any study proving that, families will want to leave this community. Families will not want to live near a prison. And what does that do? That will then take taxes. It will take residents from voting for city mills levies that will take residents and parents from supporting school bonds what else will that do that will continue to take people out of small businesses and we will lose businesses and other businesses other than Main Street will leave this community one other statement last night at the school board was why is the state of in Montana not being held to the same accountability that the school was when they had to go through the annexation process. The final thing I'm going to comment on is the fire department. That's very dear, near and dear to my heart. And this is not something that should put the risks, the lives, the lives at risk for people that don't get paid. These guys go out, men and women, protect our community day in and day out for pennies on what they put into this community. And this is absolutely not okay with me as a wife, as a parent of a firefighter, or as a citizen of Laurel. Please oppose annexation and having this in our community. Thank you.

Jean Kerr: My name is Jean Kerr. I live at 1128 Ninth Avenue, and I am asking the Council to not consider the forensic mental hospital that basically is also an incarceration center. People have talked about that the potential for property values could go up. I will tell you that as of today, my best friend in the whole world, I talked to them, told them about this meeting. They put their housing plans on hold. They were going to move to Laurel. They called their builder. They said, it's on hold. We're going to see what the city of Laurel does with this issue. We have seen a lot of community backing. As someone had just stated, as far as the ambulance fire truck, a lot of community outside of the outside of the edges basically doing community spaghetti dinners and such to raise funds to get this for the police to help fund the fire department to help fund that ambulance, and yet when the people, I think that that speaks volumes, too. So I really feel that if the community does not support this, stop the process now. Don't even go forward. There's talking about safety studies, economic studies, infrastructure studies, community impact studies. They all cost money. Who pays for those? And as a past employee, I saw a lot of studies that would happen, whether it was building a swimming pool or whatever, that's all it was, was a study. Money spent, nothing happened after that. The project was just null and void. And so with that in mind, I also think that there needs to be that consideration as far as we're the ones that are gonna pick up the tab for this building after it's built. Talking about safety, it seems like with the law, Safety usually occurred after there was an incident. Then that's when we tighten up the rules as far as how we respond to issues that lack the safety of our community members. So with that in mind, more than likely it would take a bad thing to happen without a safety impact study as well. And it's not just with CHS, it's with anybody. When I served as judge here in this city for all these years, there used to be a transport system where if somebody was in jail and they had to go to another facility to be seen by the judge or whatever, there was a van that picked them up and took them to the next place and dropped them off at that facility. Thank you. Please vote no.

Pamela Trostle: Hello, my name is Pamela Trostle. My address is 1310 Saddlehorn Drive I am in the county not in the city but I do oppose this I have two sons that have went all the way through Laurel schools the safety concerns with the school the concerns with water the you know safe fire police all of that so basically I'm just requesting that you vote no when the annexation comes if it becomes an issue Thank you.

Miles Walton: Evening. My name is Miles Walton. I've sat where you gentlemen set a few years back. I just want to say that this, this project brings nothing to the city of Laurel. It drains another drain on

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the city of Laurel. We don't need another drain. Our roads and our infrastructure needs a lot of care and upbringing. This will just take money we don't need to give out. Please oppose this.

Smiley Nagy: Hello, I'm Smiley Nagy. I live at 415 8th Avenue. And I see that the kids here in the schools, I've had three grandkids go from South School all the way through in high school and graduating. And they've got enough safety problems over at West Elementary now with the way they've redone that place. The parking facility is terrible, dangerous for the kids crossing there with the drivers going in, and we do not need another unsafe thing set there for our kids. Get rid of that thought of even letting that place come into our town. Thank you.

Brian Letcher: Hello, my name is Brian Letcher, and my five acres directly borders that property. And I have two young kids that go to school at West. So I don't want them to look at that place, and I don't want them to go to school where there's essentially a prison. And so if that does happen, we I will for sure leave, and I will tell my friends not to come here. This place is just, I just ask you vote no, please. There's enough going on in this town anyway. I moved back here to get away from all of this stuff, and I don't really want to get back into it. So thank you.

Casey Britton: My name is Casey Britton. I live on West 4th, three parcels from the proposed lot. As elected officials, I'm asking the elected officials of this town to oppose this and kill this idea. I think that the entire country we're in a bit of a mental health crisis. We need these facilities, absolutely. Just don't think this is a really good spot for it. If they require city utilities, fully understand. I think that the state should look elsewhere. Maybe we can find a different place that's not near school. It's not surrounded by residential homes. Yeah, thanks. Thanks for your time. Please oppose.

Jacob Schreiner: My name is Jacob Schreiner. I live in the county, but I still have a Laurel but I pastor one of the churches here in town. And as we're discussing what's happening within our community, I just want to represent how much we have fought for this town to make progress, for things to change, for things that would actually benefit this community. And as we step in and look at a facility that literally brings the worst of us together, I really question why there any even thought about why this is right for this community. We're raising kids. We're trying to help stand for things to be different. I offer that as someone who steps into that world every day, trying to help people, trying to get people pulled from what is destroying them. It's not the right thing. I run a school a block from here to try and help the next generation make different choices, to be able to walk into it and look at and be proud of this community just to step in and say no this is great for everybody without looking at it it really is a sad view for this community that we would even have to have this kind of conversation where people have made every effort to say this is ridiculous please do what this community needs and step in to take care of our families to take care of what is happening don't make this an issue where the city once again does something that looks horrible in everybody's eyes and we go, our hands are tied. It's not true. Everybody knows that. Everybody can make a different choice. Quite frankly, we probably need to start pushing this on the state level. We need to start here, but this has to look different. How we run these things has to look different. It really is part of, I'm in this community. My grandparents farmed between here and Park City. We love this area. Please don't do this.

David Bear: I'm David Bear. I live at 1113 West in Laurel, just two houses down, basically from this proposed site. It's been farmed. Cougars farmed it for years. It's been farmed by Doug Schreiner for a lot of years, while Miller, the housing contractor, figured out what to do with the land, and I guess he finally found something to do with it, but it's not safe for kids to be right that close to that place. I don't I vote no. All right. If anybody's been up to Sydney, Montana, there's a prison up there. Sydney prison has to fly in guards to watch their prisoners because of the fact nobody in town wants to work at the Sydney prison. And so eventually, the town becomes a ghost town. And Laurel will. You'll see U-Hauls going out here like California.

Gloria Alwin: I'm Gloria Alwin, 185 Gulf Course Read. Our land is right across the fence from the land you're proposing to put this on. If you want city growth, this is not going to help it. People aren't going to want to live out there or build more businesses, and we oppose it.

Heather Safford: My name is Heather Safford, and I live at 1103 Milwaukee Read, and I'm all for before it gets this far but once it's to this point it's too much and I am opposed to this thank you do we have other people if we do please step up we have other business tonight okay seeing none we'll move on to schedule matters.

Many who spoke during the public comment period read portions of the attached questions.

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**SCHEDULED MATTERS:**

- **Appointment of Joe Holzwarth to the Tree/Park Board for the remainder of a four-year term ending December 31, 2028.**

Motion by Council Member to approve the Mayor's appointment of Joe Holzwarth to the Tree/Park Board for the remainder of a four-year term ending December 31, 2028, seconded by Council Member Wilke. There was no public comment or Council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All eight Council Members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

- **Resolution No. R26-02: A Resolution Of The City Council Authorizing The Removal Of City Council Member Heidi Sparks From All City Accounts, Adding City Council President Thomas J. Canape, And Adding Chief Administrative Officer Kurt Markegard To All Such Accounts.**

Motion by Council Member Wilke to approve Resolution No. R26-02, seconded by Council Member Klose. There was no public comment or Council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All eight Council Members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

- **Resolution No. R26-03: A Resolution Of The City Council Of The City Of Laurel, Montana Approving Agreement Between Peaks Planning And Consulting, LLC And The City Of Laurel Related To On-Call Planning Services.**

Motion by Council Member Naylor to approve Resolution No. R26-03, seconded by Council Member Wilke. There was no public comment or Council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All eight Council Members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

- **Resolution No. R26-04: A Resolution Of The City Council Of The City Of Laurel, Montana Approving Agreement Between KLJ Engineering LLC And The City Of Laurel Related To On-Call Services For Subdivision And Engineering Review Involving Public Works.**

Motion by Council Member Mackay to approve Resolution No. R26-04, seconded by Council Member Wilke. There was no public comment or Council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All eight Council Members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

**ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA:** None.

**COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS (ONE-MINUTE LIMIT):** None.

**COUNCIL DISCUSSION:** None.

**MAYOR UPDATES:** None.

**UNSCHEDULED MATTERS:** None.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion by Council Member Edgmond 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 eight Council Members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

There being no further business to come before the Council at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Brittney Harakal, Administrative Assistant

Approved by the Mayor and passed by the City Council of the City of Laurel, Montana, this 10th day of February 2026.

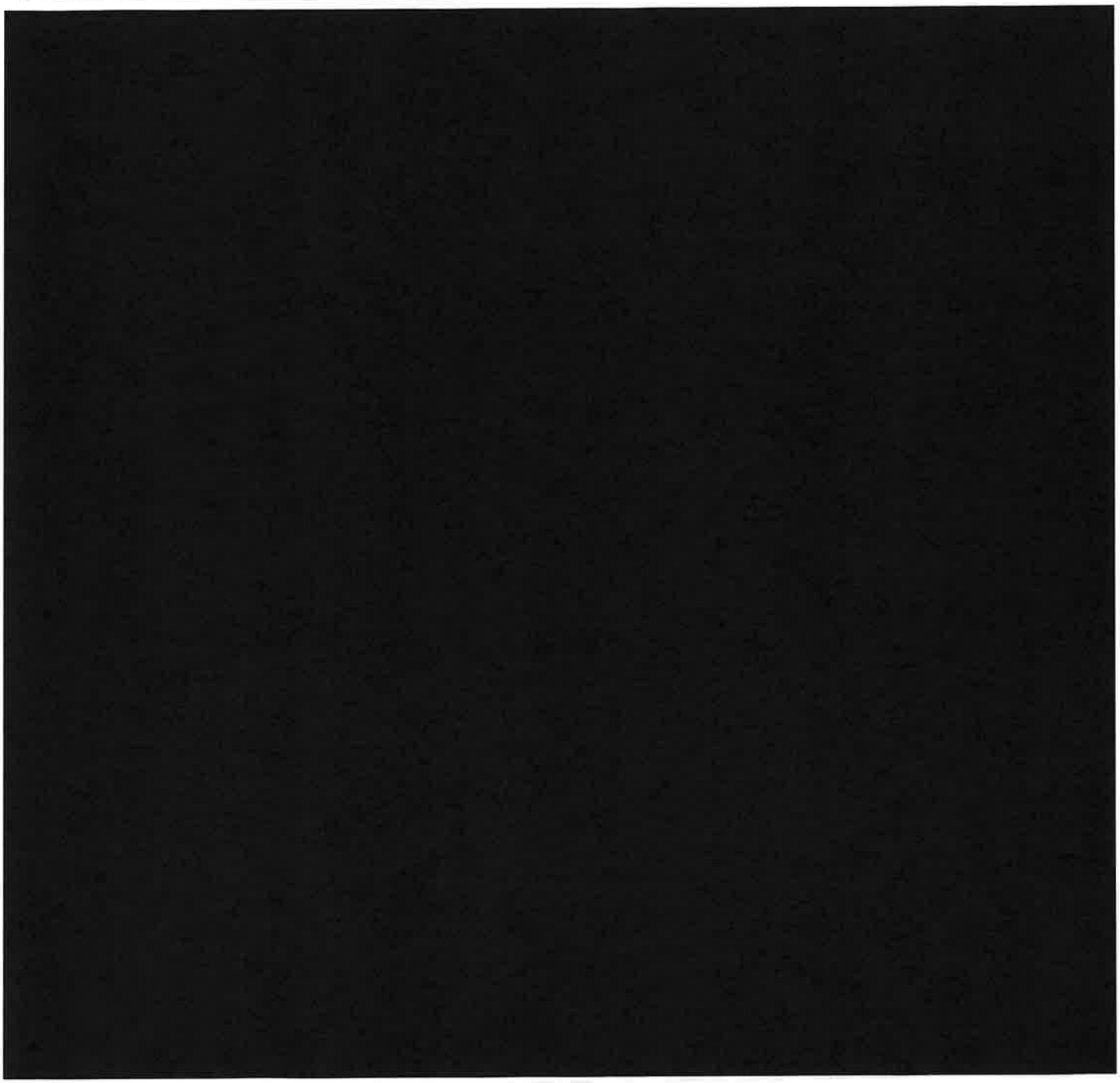
DRAFT

Dave Waggoner, Mayor

Attest:

Kelly Strecker, Clerk/Treasurer

**Brittney Harakal**



**From:** Peggy Arnold <pegyarn@gmail.com>
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 27, 2026 3:35 PM
**To:** Ward 2A <ward2a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov>
**Subject:** Annexation

Dear council representatives,
I am happy that you are my representatives. I have looked at MCA Title 7, chapter 2 part 42 through 47. I believe it is up to the council to approve any and all annexations as stated in Title 7-2-4202. I am opposed

to this attempt to steamroll the annexation for the state mental hospital. The letter that the CAO sent to the state was dated November 17 after the election. There are too many things to consider starting with how close the proposed site is to a public school, a private pre-school, a private school, the public library and the softball field. Other concerns are the impact to our infrastructure and traffic. Also that this property will not bring in new property tax funds. Thank you for considering my concerns,
Peggy Arnold,
long time resident

**Brittney Harakal**

**From:** Ward 2B
**Sent:** Monday, January 26, 2026 8:12 PM
**To:** Brittney Harakal
**Subject:** FW: State Psychiatric Facility

Same as the one before. Please communicate to the City Attorney.

Thank you!

**From:** Ward 2B
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 21, 2026 4:33 PM
**To:** 'Samantha Mayes' <brown.samantham@gmail.com>
**Subject:** RE: State Psychiatric Facility

Mrs. Mayes;

Thanks for reaching out.

I do appreciate your communication and understand your concerns.

I understand the three Yellowstone County Commissioners are upset. However; I have not had any communications from them..

Nothing has yet been presented to the City Counsel.

That's all I know.

Sincerely,

Brent

**From:** Samantha Mayes <brown.samantham@gmail.com>
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 21, 2026 8:12 AM
**To:** City Mayor <citymayor@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1A <ward1a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2A <ward2a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3A <ward3a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3B <ward3b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4A <ward4a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4B <ward4b@laurel.mt.gov>
**Subject:** State Psychiatric Facility

Good Morning! I hope this email finds you well.

I am just reaching out to see what can be done by Laurel citizens to stop the state psychiatric facility from being built between Highway 10 and Golf Course Road. The buy-sell that was released last night at the Laurel City Council meeting has that facility right in the middle of a residential area, right by our houses, and near an Elementary school. I understand the need for a new mental hospital for the state,

but does it really need to be there? Laurel would be losing 114 acres of taxable land while using city taxpayer-funded resources. This is a net negative for our small community. Instead of bringing in taxes to fund our schools and community, this gives the state land that they can use with little oversight from the Laurel City Council. I am so incredibly concerned about this plan, as it will drive down home values, drive down the value of the Laurel Golf Course, and is close to an elementary school! Is there anything we, as Laurel citizens, can do? Have you spoken to the state about this plan? Ryan and I are so worried about the long-term impacts that this could have on our family. I hope there is something you or we can do to at least get the facility built somewhere else in Laurel. It does not need to be in the middle of a residential neighborhood, near a school, and one of the economic drivers of our community.

Thanks for your time,

Samantha Mayes

**Brittney Harakal**

[redacted]

**From:** Samantha Mayes <brown.samantham@gmail.com>
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 27, 2026 6:42 AM
**To:** City Mayor <citymayor@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1A <ward1a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2A <ward2a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3A <ward3a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3B <ward3b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4A <ward4a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4B <ward4b@laurel.mt.gov>; Kurt Markegard <kmarkegard@laurel.mt.gov>
**Subject:** Re: State Psychiatric Facility

Good Morning-
As I am sure you each know, the school board last night came out in opposition to the plot of land for the proposed mental health prison, as did County Commissioner Mark Morse. I encourage each of you to watch the video to hear the opposition from our elected school board members, the commissioner, and the community. I understand it has to go to the planning board first, but since we do not have public contact information for the planning board, I will urge each of you to oppose this plan and vote against the placement of a prison within yards of an elementary school.

Thank you,

Samantha Mayes

On Wed, Jan 21, 2026 at 8:12 AM Samantha Mayes <brown.samantham@gmail.com> wrote:

Good Morning! I hope this email finds you well.

I am just reaching out to see what can be done by Laurel citizens to stop the state psychiatric facility from being built between Highway 10 and Golf Course Road. The buy-sell that was released last night at the Laurel City Council meeting has that facility right in the middle of a residential area, right by our houses, and near an Elementary school. I understand the need for a new mental hospital for the state, but does it really need to be there? Laurel would be losing 114 acres of taxable land while using city taxpayer-funded resources. This is a net negative for our small community. Instead of bringing in taxes to fund our schools and community, this gives the state land that they can use with little oversight from the Laurel City Council. I am so incredibly concerned about this plan, as it will drive down home values, drive down the value of the Laurel Golf Course, and is close to an elementary school! Is there anything we, as Laurel citizens, can do? Have you spoken to the state about this plan? Ryan and I are so worried about the long-term impacts that this could have on our family. I hope there is something you or we can do to at least get the facility built somewhere else in Laurel. It does not need to be in the middle of a residential neighborhood, near a school, and one of the economic drivers of our community.

Thanks for your time,

Samantha Mayes

[redacted]

**From:** Samantha Mayes <brown.samantham@gmail.com>
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 27, 2026 9:42 AM
**To:** Kelly Strecker <kstrecker@laurel.mt.gov>
**Subject:** Re: Public Records Request

Good Morning- not to bother you again but with the time crunch of the speed of all of this, do you have a time frame on when that record request will be reviewed? The state generally gives a response within 2 business days.

On Mon, Jan 26, 2026 at 8:37 AM Kelly Strecker <kstrecker@laurel.mt.gov> wrote:

> Good morning,
>
> I have forwarded your message to the appropriate personal.
>
> Thanks
>
> Kelly Strecker
> Clerk/Treasurer
> City of Laurel, Montana
> (406) 628-7431 extension 5100
>
> **From:** Samantha Mayes <brown.samantham@gmail.com>
> **Sent:** Monday, January 26, 2026 8:26 AM
> **To:** City Clerk <cityclerk@laurel.mt.gov>; Civil Attorney <civilattorney@laurel.mt.gov>
> **Subject:** Re: Public Records Request
>
> Good Morning!

I would like to confirm receipt of this public records request.

Thank you!

Samantha Mayes

On Fri, Jan 23, 2026 at 1:43 PM Samantha Mayes <brown.samantham@gmail.com> wrote:

> I am writing in accordance with MCA 2-2-1003 to request all copies of any emails and communications between Mayor Dave Waggoner, City Administrator Kurt Markegard, the city council, or Michelle Baukman regarding the planning and proposal of the new mental health inpatient facility in Laurel. Including proposals, emails, discussions with the state, and memos.
>
> Thank you,
>
> Samantha Mayes
> Laurel Resident

**Brittney Harakal**

**From:** Ward 1A
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 27, 2026 2:55 PM
**To:** Brittney Harakal
**Subject:** FW: State Psychiatric Facility

Sara B. Naylor

Council Member City of Laurel Ward 1

✦ 406 598 0499

✦ Ward1a@laurel.mt.gov


**From:** Samantha Mayes <brown.samantham@gmail.com>
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 27, 2026 12:54 PM
**To:** Ward 1A <ward1a@laurel.mt.gov>
**Subject:** Re: State Psychiatric Facility

I appreciate your reply. I understand that this is not officially on the agenda, but since it is going to the planning board and this directly impacts my family and our community, I will not wait until it is on the agenda to reach out and will continue reaching out. Thank you for sharing my comments with the Mayor, as he has yet to respond to any of my concerns or emails.

On Tue, Jan 27, 2026 at 12:39 PM Ward 1A <ward1a@laurel.mt.gov> wrote:

Good afternoon,

Thank you for your outreach and for taking the time to share your perspective. As a City Council Member, I value thoughtful public engagement and the role it plays in our civic process.

At this time, there is no formal matter related to this issue pending before the City Council, and therefore no action currently before me for consideration. That said, I will ensure your comments are shared with the Mayor and appropriate City staff and included for review as part of the public record.

Please note that public comment is most impactful during the designated comment period once an item is on the agenda. You are welcome and encouraged to participate and to attend all duly noticed City Council meetings should you wish to speak when the matter is presented.

Thank you again for your engagement and continued interest in the City's work.

Respectfully,

Sara B. Naylor

Council Member City of Laurel Ward 1

- 406 598-9499
- Ward1@laurel.mt.gov


**From:** Samantha Mayes <brown.samantham@gmail.com>
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 27, 2026 6:42 AM
**To:** City Mayor <citymayor@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1A <ward1a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2A <ward2a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3A <ward3a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3B <ward3b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4A <ward4a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4B <ward4b@laurel.mt.gov>; Kurt Markegard <kmarkegard@laurel.mt.gov>
**Subject:** Re: State Psychiatric Facility

Good Morning-

As I am sure you each know, the school board last night came out in opposition to the plot of land for the proposed mental health prison, as did County Commissioner Mark Morse. I encourage each of you to watch the video to hear the opposition from our elected school board members, the commissioner, and the community. I understand it has to go to the planning board first, but since we do not have public contact information for the planning board, I will urge each of you to oppose this plan and vote against the placement of a prison within yards of an elementary school.

Thank you,

Samantha Mayes

On Wed, Jan 21, 2026 at 8:12 AM Samantha Mayes <brown.samantham@gmail.com> wrote:

Good Morning! I hope this email finds you well.

I am just reaching out to see what can be done by Laurel citizens to stop the state psychiatric facility from being built between Highway 10 and Golf Course Road. The buy-sell that was released last night at the Laurel City Council meeting has that facility right in the middle of a residential area, right by our houses, and near an Elementary school. I understand the need for a new mental hospital for the state, but does it really need to be there? Laurel would be losing 114 acres of taxable land while using city taxpayer-funded resources. This is a net negative for our small community. Instead of bringing in taxes to fund our schools and community, this gives the state land that they can use with little oversight from the Laurel City Council. I am so incredibly concerned about this plan, as it will drive down home values, drive down the value of the Laurel Golf Course, and is close to an elementary school! Is there anything we, as Laurel citizens, can do? Have you spoken to the state about this plan? Ryan and I are so worried about the long-term impacts that this could have on our family. I hope there is something you or we can do to at least get the facility built somewhere else in Laurel. It does not need to be in the middle of a residential neighborhood, near a school, and one of the economic drivers of our community.

Thanks for your time,

Samantha Mayes

**Brittney Harakal**

**From:** Laurel MT <laurel-mt@municodeweb.com>
**Sent:** Monday, January 26, 2026 8:37 AM
**To:** Brittney Harakal
**Subject:** Samantha Mayes

Submitted on Monday, January 26, 2026 - 8:36am

Submitted by anonymous user: 71.85.191.45

Submitted values are:

Name Samantha Mayes
Address 1102 Duval Drive
Public Comment The lack of transparency the city is giving Laurel residents about the proposed inpatient facility for the criminally insane is bothersome. There are also serious concerns about the proposed site itself. The location is in a residential area, adjacent to a school, youth softball fields, a golf course, and a public library. It is also within a mile of the CHS refinery. Given current land values, this raises legitimate questions about whether the state may be overpaying for property that appears poorly suited for this purpose. In addition, I am requesting clarification regarding the site's proximity to nearby oil refineries or related industrial facilities. Specifically, I would appreciate information on: Whether the proximity to schools, an oil refinery, and public facilities was considered during site selection. Why did you not loop Rep. Deming and Sen. Ricci into the decision-making process on this plan? Why not listen to our County Commissioners? Do you have an evacuation plan in place if something were to happen at the refinery? How will you safely remove 32 criminally insane people from the facility without posing a danger to the community? Have you even spoken to CHS about this? Have you been in contact with our school board or superintendent about the placement so close to the school? If not, why? Wouldn't protecting our children be the primary question to be asked here? Whether any environmental, air quality, or health impact assessments have been conducted in relation to this site. Have you studied water tables? Have you reviewed safety concerns related to the proximity of the refinery? Have you done traffic studies? Have you done tax studies? Exactly how many dollars will this pull from our already struggling schools? What will happen to the real estate values in the area? Have you done economic studies? What will this do to expansion in our city? We are limited geographically on where we, as a town, can expand- residentially or commercially. Have you researched whether this will impact future expansion? Most troubling is the apparent breakdown of the local governmental process. The majority of residents oppose this plan, and our city does not have the tax base to absorb the infrastructure demands this facility would create. Backdoor deals have been made without consulting the Laurel community. We deserve answers. I again what to know what role the city played in this decision, how Laurel was selected over other willing communities, and—most importantly—how the voices of residents and elected officials are intended to be heard. The continued lack of response only reinforces the perception that this process has excluded the community most directly affected. I respectfully request a response addressing these concerns. Thank you for your time and attention.
Email brown.samantham@gmail.com

The results of this submission may be viewed at:

https://cityoflaurelmontana.com/node/16092/submission/3250

**Kelly Strecker**

**From:** Ward 2B
**Sent:** Monday, January 26, 2026 8:19 PM
**To:** Kelly Strecker
**Subject:** FW: State Psychiatric Facility

Hey there.

More data that was communicated to me.

Thank you!

**From:** Ward 2B
**Sent:** Monday, January 26, 2026 7:39 PM
**To:** 'Samantha Mayes' <brown.samantham@gmail.com>
**Subject:** RE: State Psychiatric Facility

Not at all.
I'll always listen.

**From:** Samantha Mayes <brown.samantham@gmail.com>
**Sent:** Monday, January 26, 2026 12:25 PM
**To:** Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov>
**Subject:** Re: State Psychiatric Facility

As always thank you for response! I may become a name you dread seeing in your inbox :)

On Mon, Jan 26, 2026 at 11:53 AM Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov> wrote:

Hey Sam.

Thank you for your comments and insight.

I do appreciate your concern.

Sincerely,

Brent

**From:** Samantha Mayes <brown.samantham@gmail.com>
**Sent:** Monday, January 26, 2026 8:24 AM
**To:** City Mayor <citymayor@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1A <ward1a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2A <ward2a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3A <ward3a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3B <ward3b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4A <ward4a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4B <ward4b@laurel.mt.gov>
**Subject:** Re: State Psychiatric Facility

Good morning,

I am writing again to follow up on my previous email regarding the proposed facility in Laurel. To date, I have received a response from a few of you, and for that I am very grateful. I know you are all just doing your best, but after more thinking about this, I have some more questions. **With such little information we have, I urge the City Council to stop this facility from proceeding as soon as possible.**

As I outlined previously, after speaking with Lee Deming, and our County Commissioners, it appears that no local representatives were consulted or gave approval for this plan. What role did Kurt Markeegard and Mayor Waggoner play in bringing this to Laurel?

There are also serious concerns about the proposed site itself. The location is in a residential area, adjacent to a school, youth softball fields, a golf course, and a public library. It is also within a mile of the CHS refinery. Given current land values, this raises legitimate questions about whether the state may be overpaying for property that appears poorly suited for this purpose.

In addition, I am requesting clarification regarding the site's proximity to nearby oil refineries or related industrial facilities. Specifically, I would appreciate information on:

- Whether the proximity to schools, an oil refinery, and public facilities was considered during site selection, and will be considered when it comes to annexation.

- Why did you not loop Rep. Deming into the decision-making process on this plan? Why not listen to our County Commissioners?

- Do you have an evacuation plan in place if something were to happen at the refinery? How will you safely remove 32 criminally insane people from the facility without posing a danger to the community? Have you even spoken to CHS about this?

- Have you been in contact with our school board or superintendent about the placement so close to the school? If not, why? Wouldn't protecting our children be the primary question to be asked here?

- Whether any environmental, air quality, or health impact assessments have been conducted in relation to this site. Have you studied water tables? Have you reviewed safety concerns related to the proximity of the refinery? Have you done traffic studies?

- Have you done tax studies? Exactly how many dollars will this pull from our already struggling schools? What will happen to the real estate values in the area?

- Have you done economic studies? What will this do to expansion in our city? We are limited geographically on where we, as a town, can expand- residentially or commercially. Have you researched whether this will impact future expansion?

Most troubling is the apparent breakdown of the local governmental process. The majority of residents oppose this plan, and our city does not have the tax base to absorb the infrastructure demands this

facility would create. Backdoor deals have been made without consulting the Laurel community. We deserve answers.

I am again requesting clarification on the city's role in this decision, how Laurel was selected over other willing communities, and—most importantly—how the voices of residents and elected officials are intended to be heard. The continued lack of response only reinforces the perception that this process has excluded the community most directly affected. At this point, because of the lack of information coming from the state and the city, but with the information I do have from the County, **I can only see negatives to the placement of this facility and I urge you to oppose annexation.**

I respectfully request a response addressing these concerns.

Thank you for your time and attention.

On Wed, Jan 21, 2026 at 8:12 AM Samantha Mayes <brown.samantham@gmail.com> wrote:

Good Morning! I hope this email finds you well.

I am just reaching out to see what can be done by Laurel citizens to stop the state psychiatric facility from being built between Highway 10 and Golf Course Road. The buy-sell that was released last night at the Laurel City Council meeting has that facility right in the middle of a residential area, right by our houses, and near an Elementary school. I understand the need for a new mental hospital for the state, but does it really need to be there? Laurel would be losing 114 acres of taxable land while using city taxpayer-funded resources. This is a net negative for our small community. Instead of bringing in taxes to fund our schools and community, this gives the state land that they can use with little oversight from the Laurel City Council. I am so incredibly concerned about this plan, as it will drive down home values, drive down the value of the Laurel Golf Course, and is close to an elementary school! Is there anything we, as Laurel citizens, can do? Have you spoken to the state about this plan? Ryan and I are so worried about the long-term impacts that this could have on our family. I hope there is something you or we can do to at least get the facility built somewhere else in Laurel. It does not need to be in the middle of a residential neighborhood, near a school, and one of the economic drivers of our community.

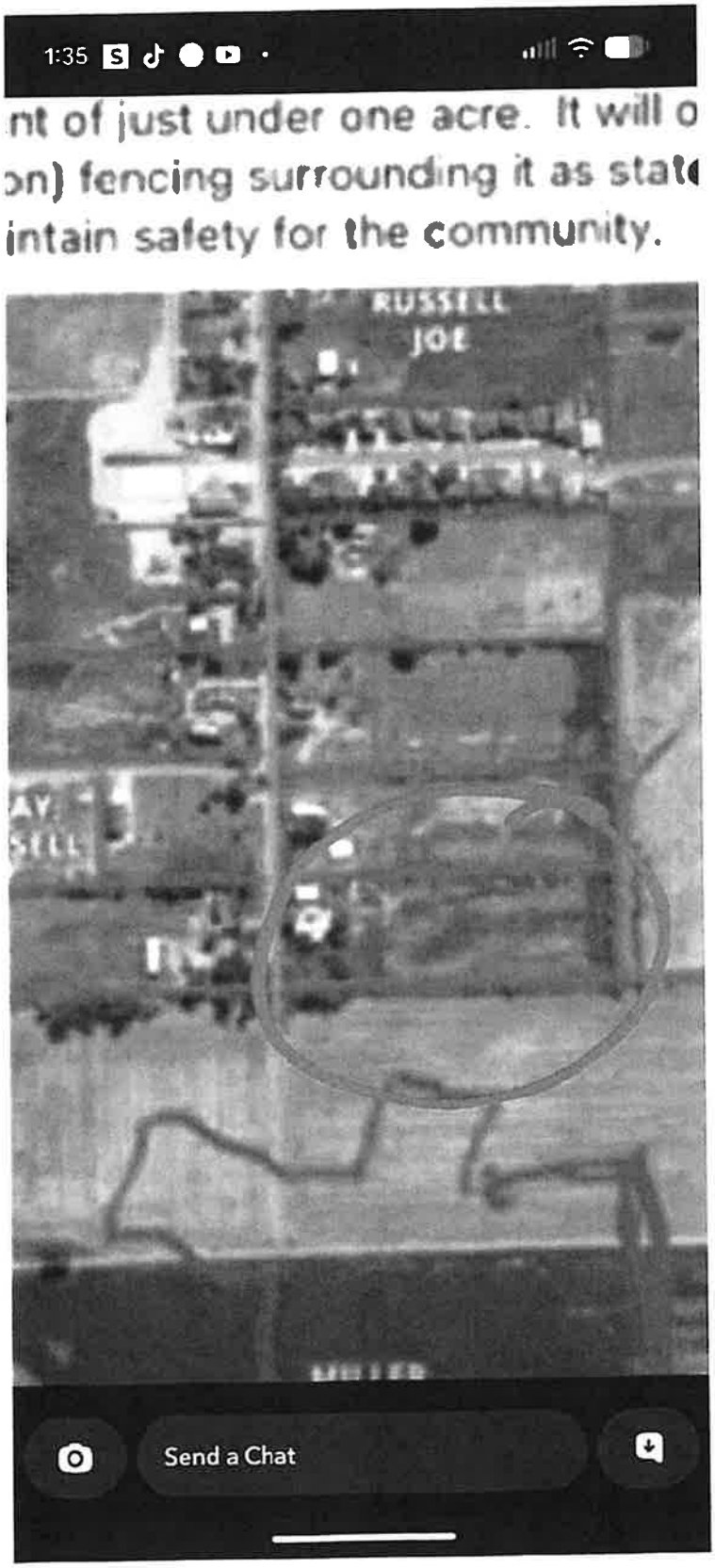
Thanks for your time,

Samantha Mayes

**Brittney Harakal**

[redacted]

**From:** Amber Zahn <blondie_locks09@yahoo.com>
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 21, 2026 1:41 PM
**To:** Civil Attorney <civilattorney@laurel.mt.gov>
**Subject:** Re: Psychiatric prison

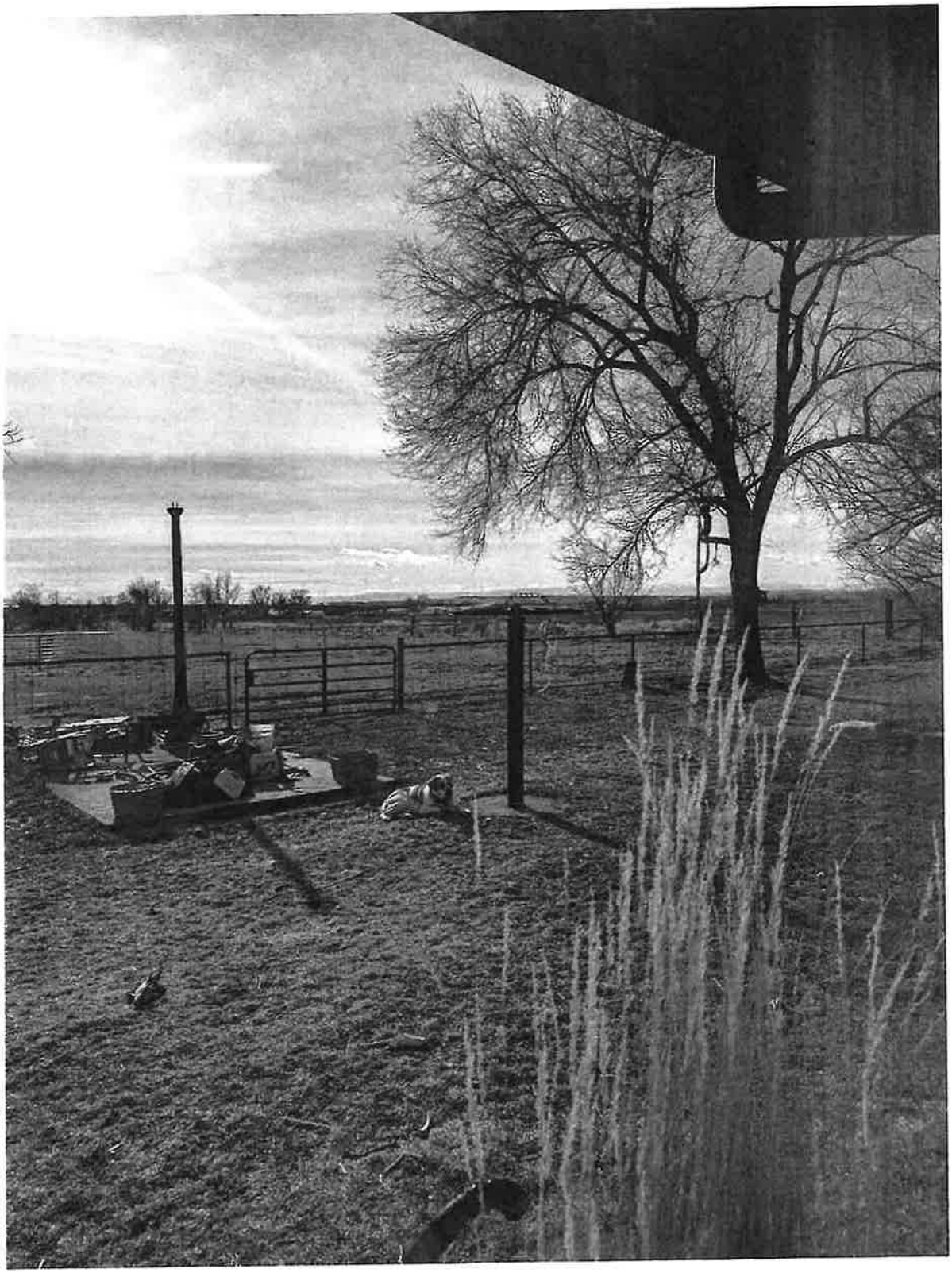

1:35
nt of just under one acre. It will o
on) fencing surrounding it as stat
intain safety for the community.
RUSSELL
JOE
Send a Chat

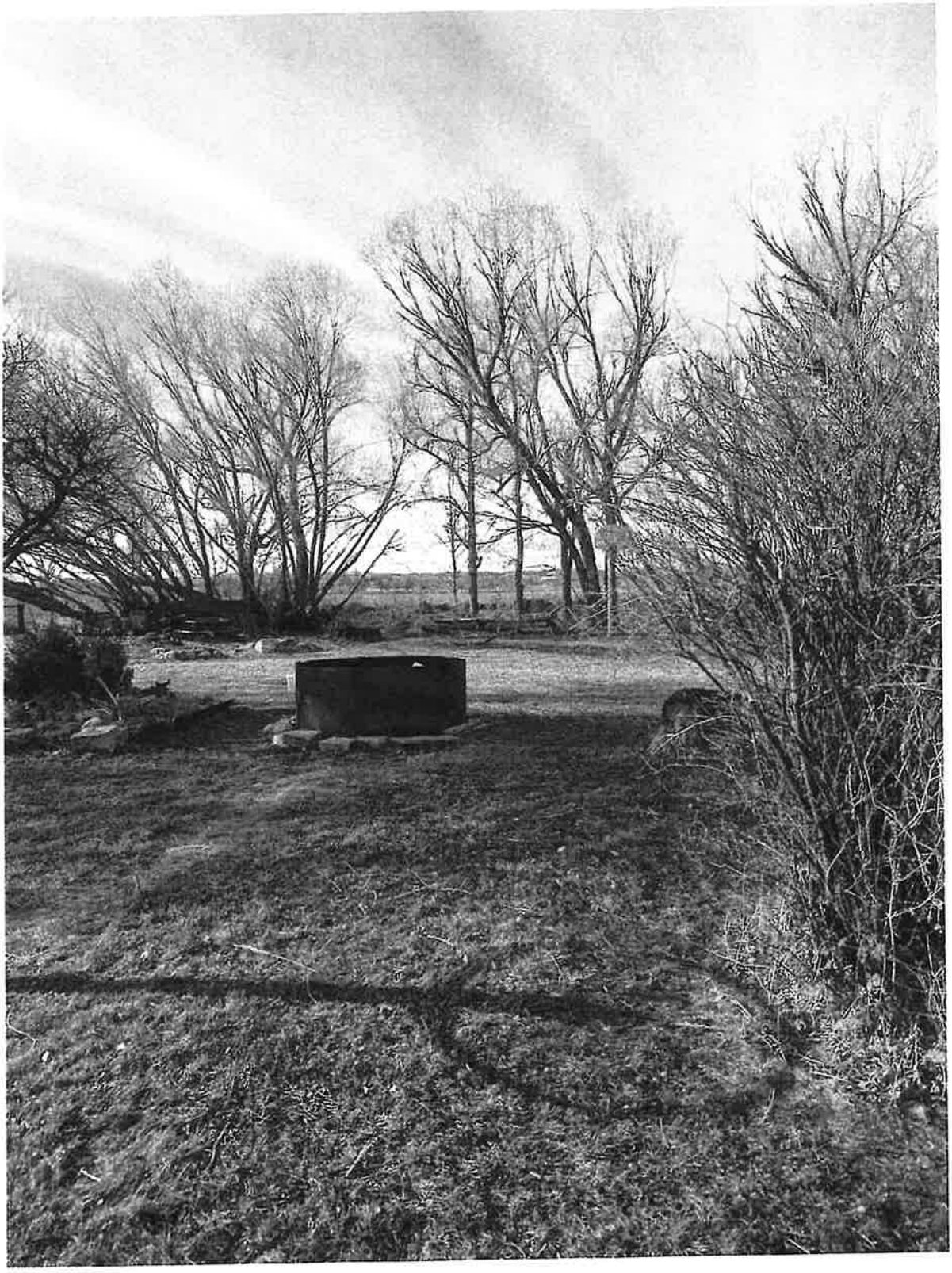
The property circled in blue is where we live. What would you do if it were you? How would you feel? We have two small children here. Their school is approximately four blocks away. This is absolutely terrifying.

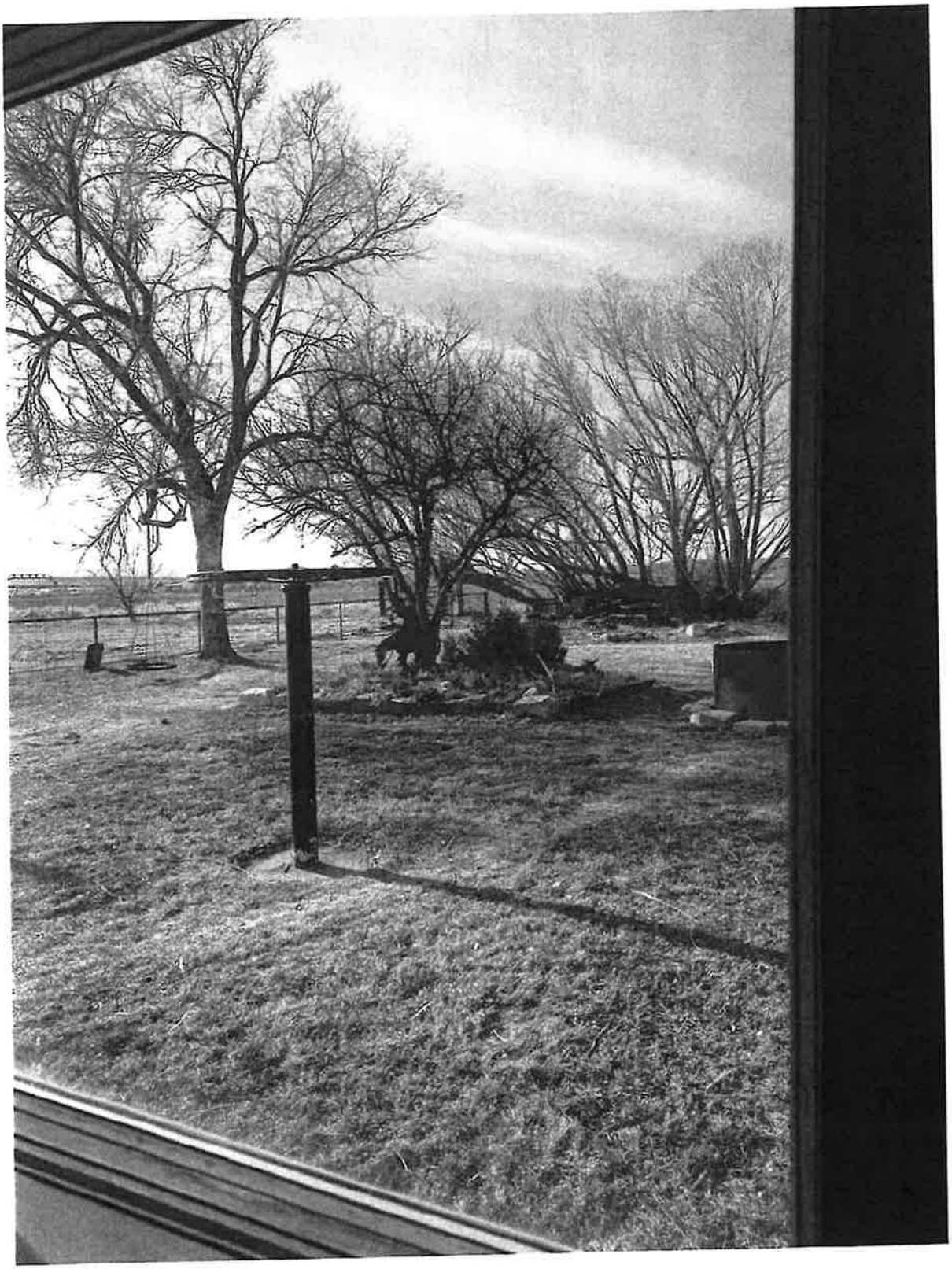
Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer

On Wed, Jan 21, 2026 at 1:33 PM, Amber Zahn <blondie_locks09@yahoo.com> wrote:

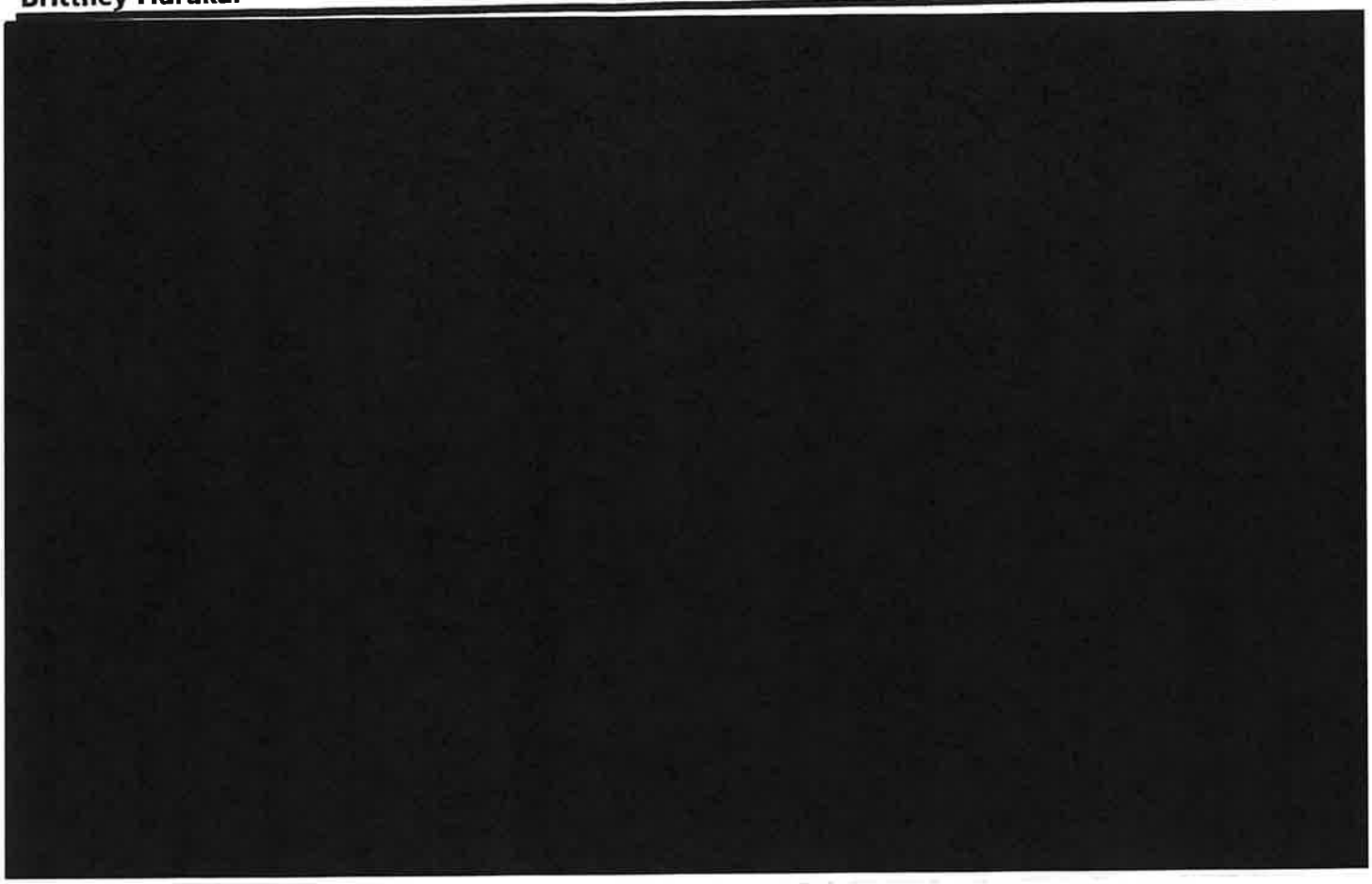
My name is Amber Zahn.
This is the view from my living room. The living room in the house where I raise my small children. Approximately four blocks east of here is their elementary school. Their dad was raised here. His mother was raised here. But the view that I show you in these pictures is a farmers field. The same farmers field in process of a buy/sell agreement for a psychiatric prison. I do not oppose the prison, what I oppose is the location. Developing a prison here will drive down our property values. Our neighbor's property values. Even with all of the security, it puts our family at risk. It puts the kids in the school at risk. It puts Laurel at risk. We don't even have the infrastructure to sustain such a facility. We don't have the emergency services. This was a poorly thought out plan only reaching for gain at the cost of the residents. We cannot afford to lose the value we have in our home, both monetary and memory.







**Brittney Harakal**



**From:** Amber Zahn <blondie_locks09@yahoo.com>
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 21, 2026 1:33 PM
**To:** Civil Attorney <civilattorney@laurel.mt.gov>
**Subject:** Psychiatric prison

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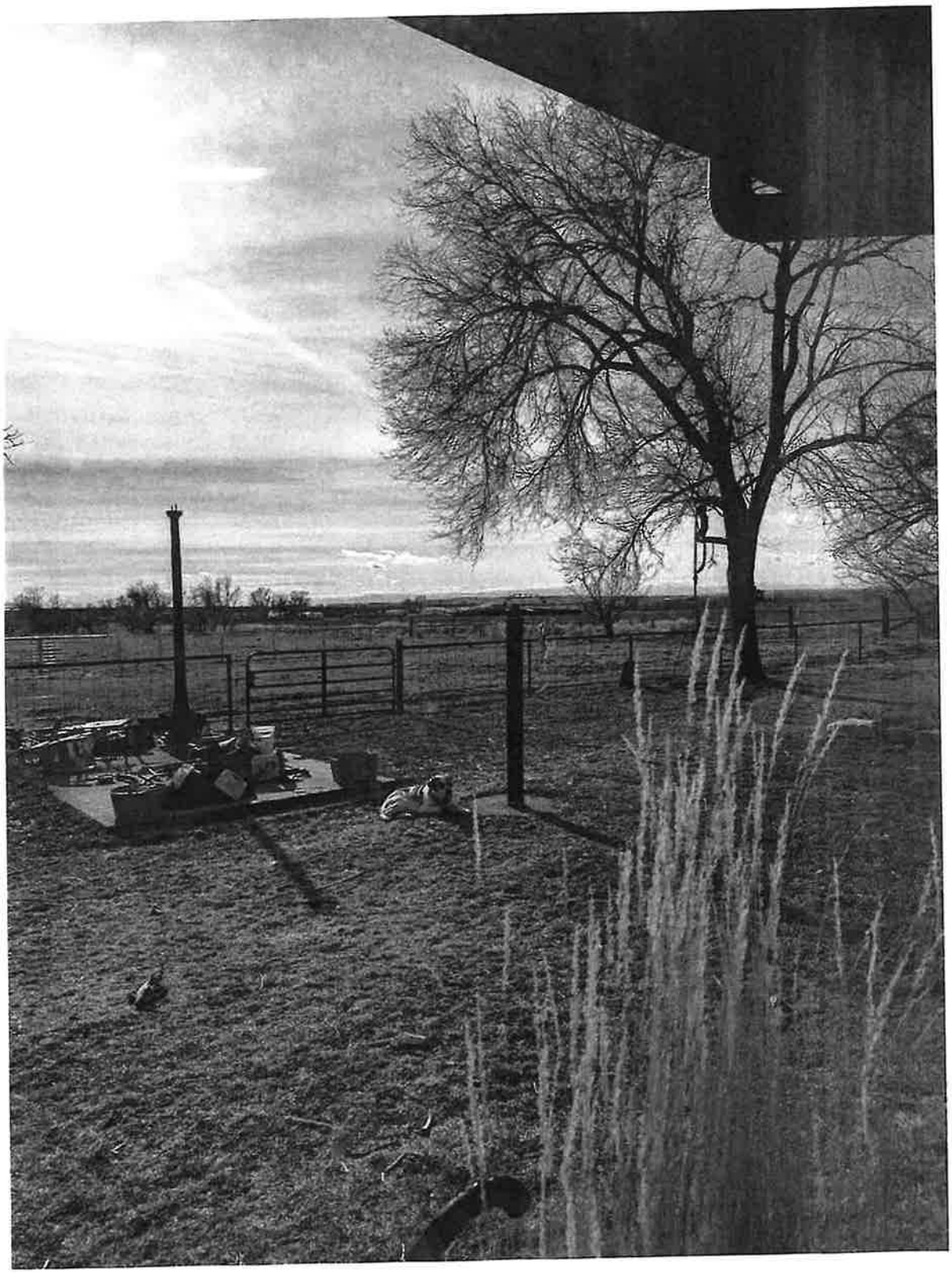

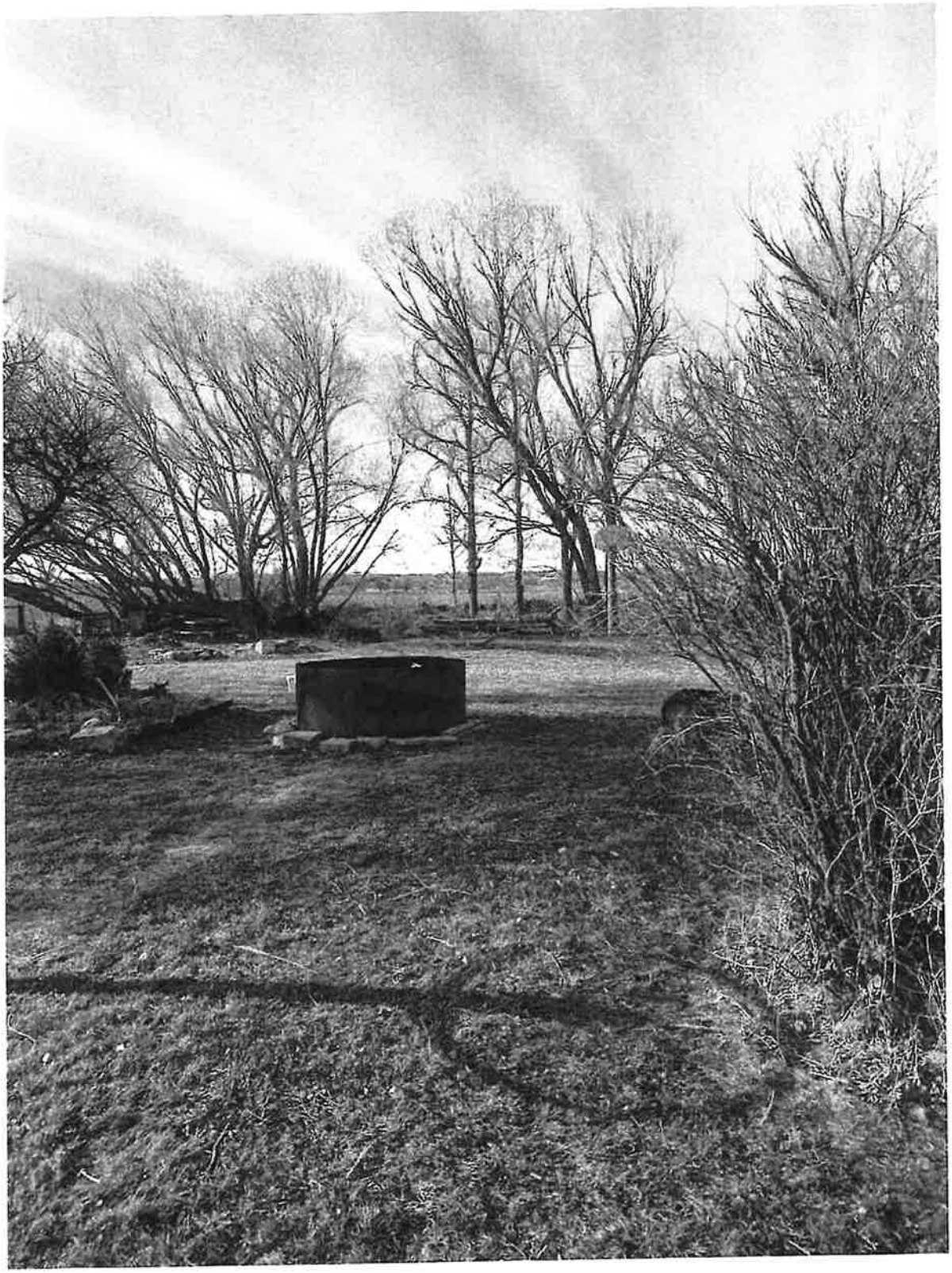

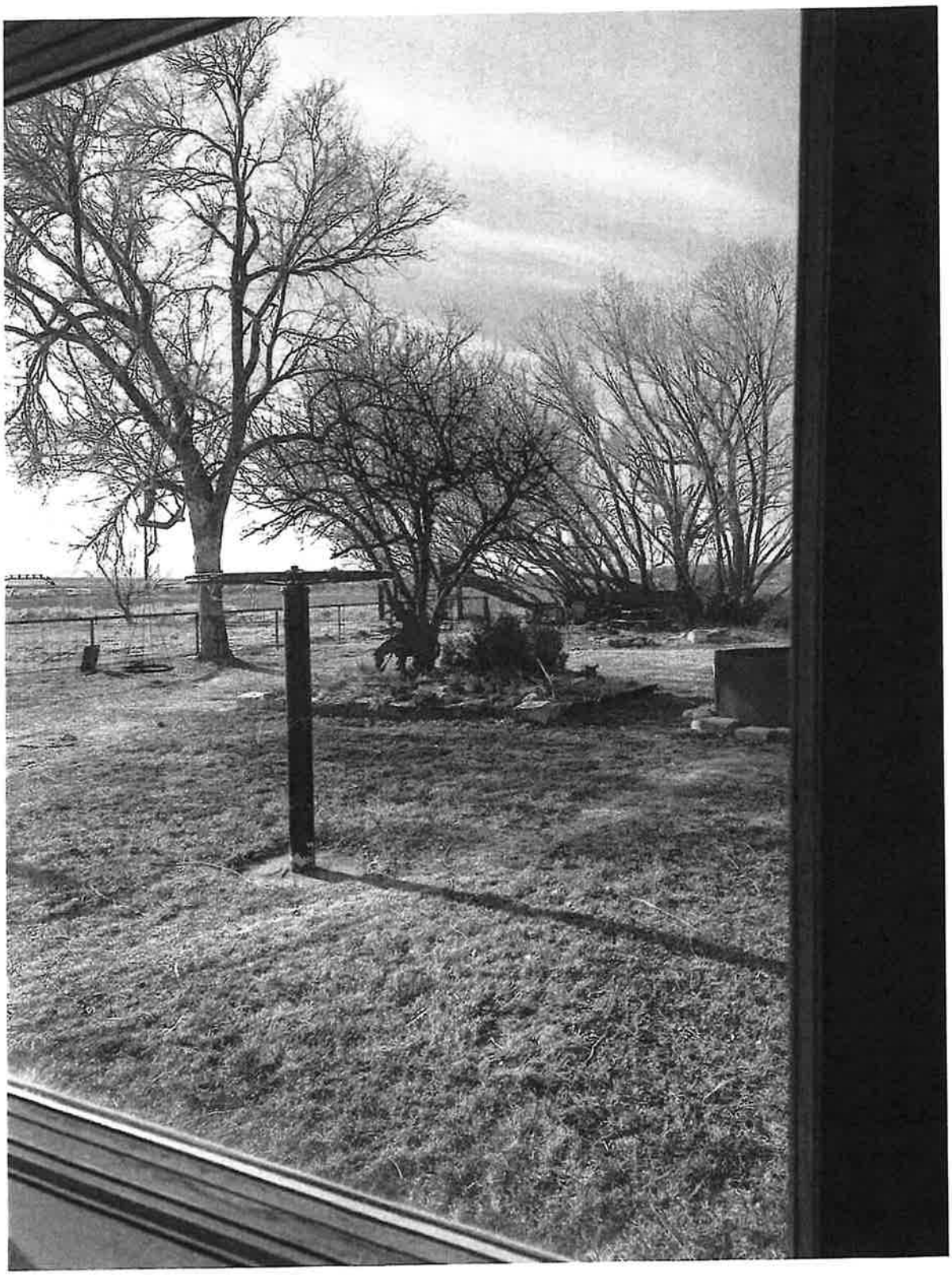

**Brittney Harakal**

**From:** Ward 2B
**Sent:** Monday, January 26, 2026 8:11 PM
**To:** Brittney Harakal
**Subject:** FW: Concerns regarding the proposed State Mental Facility

Hey Brittney;

Could I please ask you to deliver this to our city attorney?
Thank you,

Brent

**From:** Ward 2B
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 21, 2026 4:18 PM
**To:** 'Patrick Kimmet' <pat.kimmet@outlook.com>
**Subject:** RE: Concerns regarding the proposed State Mental Facility

Mr. Kimmet;

Good afternoon.

As far as the three Yellowstone County Commissioners and their opinions; nothing has been communicated.

Honestly, nothing has been presented to the City Counsel.

I appreciate your communication.

Sincerely,

Brent

**From:** Patrick Kimmet <pat.kimmet@outlook.com>
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 20, 2026 3:50 PM
**To:** Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3B <ward3b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4B <ward4b@laurel.mt.gov>
**Subject:** Concerns regarding the proposed State Mental Facility

Tom, Brent, Casey, and Richard

Today at Rotary the 3 County Commissioners expressed very strong opposition to the new State Mental Facility being discussed for Laurel. They indicated that the Laurel City Council has to approve the annexation so you folks are critical to whether the facility is built in Laurel. I am not familiar with all the pros and cons of the facility and don't know the issues enough to support or be opposed at this time. However, they were opposed so strongly that I wanted to encourage you to at least consider their input before a vote.

I live outside the City of Laurel so I am not in any of your Wards but since I know each of you (at least a little!) it seemed appropriate to give you this feedback.

My thanks to all of you for serving our community!

Pat Kimmet
406.860.3533

**Council Member Jodi Mackay**
**Ex Parte Communication Log**
**RE: Montana State Mental Health Hospital**

**December 2, 2025 (Tuesday)**

Call from Mara Silvers of the MT Free Press (406) 459 - 1807
I did not answer and she left a voicemail asking for comment on the proposed mental health hospital in Laurel. She noted the type and capacity of the facility and the fact that an annexation request had not been made. She noted "there's lots of moving pieces here."
I replied via text that same day saying, "Hi Mari. Thank you for reaching out. I'd like to hold comment until we have our Council meeting this evening. I'm hoping we receive more information. Thank you. Jodi Mackay."

**December 19, 2025 (Friday)**

Text from Mara Silvers of the MT Free Press
"Hi Jodi, hope you're doing well. This is Mara from Montana Free Press. Just wanted to see if the city council has received any notice of an annexation request from the state on this issue. I know they said they'd notify you if they made a purchase. Thank you!"
I replied via text on Sunday, 12/21/25 saying, "I have no new information to share. Please reach out to Mayor Waggoner, CAO Markegard or Attorney Braukmann for updates."

**January 15, 2026 (Thursday)**

I attended the Beartooth RC & D board meeting as a new member. When I introduced myself and shared some of the projects and happenings in Laurel, Zoey Stroop (Field Rep for Congressman Troy Downing), asked if there were any updates regarding the State Mental Health Hospital. I told her I could only speak to what was already public knowledge and that I could only speak for myself as a Council Member. I told the group that Council had received no further information and had largely been out of the loop with discussions and planning.
At the end of the meeting, Billings City Council Member, Dr. Mark Nicholson, approached me to discuss the MH Hospital. He said to note that it is the Board of Investments behind the hospital and they will want to ensure it turns a profit. He encouraged Laurel to make sure it gets what it needs through the process. He does not have concerns about public safety, but is concerned about providing housing for the influx of necessary staff. We discussed that DPHHS was not involved due to losing its certification at the other State MH hospital, hence the involvement of BOI. Dr. Nicholson noted the need for the facility and encouraged conversations with Mike Yakawich to further understand the intentions.
During either interaction, I did not express an opinion for or against the MH hospital. I did note that the lack of City Council and community involvement and information has soured community members and did not seem to be a good way to introduce such an undertaking.

**January 21, 2026 (Wednesday)**

I, along with City leadership and State representatives, received 2 emails regarding Tuesday's announcement from Dan Villa that property had been purchased west of Laurel for the MH hospital.
**From Ms. Mayes to:** City Mayor <citymayor@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1A <ward1a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2A <ward2a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3A <ward3a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3B <ward3b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4A <ward4a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4B ward4b@laurel.mt.gov
**My Response:** "Ms. Mayes,
Thank you for reaching out and expressing your concerns regarding the proposed Mental Health Facility in our community. I greatly appreciate your involvement and willingness to reach out to those that represent you.
As this process moves forward, there will hopefully be more opportunities to express your concerns not only to City leadership but to our State representatives and those championing this hospital. As

you know, each City Council meeting has an opportunity for public comment. When the annexation application is submitted, I believe it goes to the City County Planning Board first. Those meetings are public. When it moves to Council, there will be a Public Hearing with opportunity for public comment. Meeting dates, agendas and packets can be found here: https://cityoflaurelmontana.com/calendar. The State has developed a website with FAQ's and pertinent documents. It may be a good resource for further information - https://hb5.mt.gov/.
I encourage you to stay active, involved and informed.
Thank you for your concern and commitment to our city.
Sincerely,
Council Member Jodi Mackay
Ward 4a"

**From Ms. Hill to:** City Mayor <citymayor@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1A <ward1a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2A <ward2a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3A <ward3a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3B <ward3b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4A <ward4a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4B <ward4b@laurel.mt.gov>; Vince.Ricci@legmt.gov; Lee.Deming@legmt.gov; governor@mt.gov
**My Response:** "Ms. Hill,
Thank you for reaching out and expressing your concerns regarding the proposed Mental Health Facility in our community. I greatly appreciate your involvement and willingness to reach out to those that represent you.
As this process moves forward, there will hopefully be more opportunities to express your concerns not only to City leadership but to our State representatives and those championing this hospital. As you know, each City Council meeting has an opportunity for public comment. When the annexation application is submitted, I believe it goes to the City County Planning Board first. Those meetings are public. When it moves to Council, there will be a Public Hearing with opportunity for public comment. Meeting dates, agendas and packets can be found here: https://cityoflaurelmontana.com/calendar. The State has developed a website with FAQ's and pertinent documents. It may be a good resource for further information - https://hb5.mt.gov/.
I encourage you to stay active, involved and informed.
Thank you for your concern and commitment to our city.
Sincerely,
Council Member Jodi Mackay
Ward 4a"

**January 23, 2026 (Friday)**
Ms. Mayes replied to my response: "Thank you so much for your response. I am deeply frustrated with the lack of coordination here- it feels like the state, the county, the Mayor, the City Administrator, and the Council are all operating on separate spheres, and it makes it harder to get reliable information. That is by no means a criticism- I think in a lot of ways it is the Council that is receiving the brunt end of this deal. I have noticed that our Mayor is liking comments on Facebook in support of the facility- that makes me wonder if he and Markeegard are working with the state in ways that they have been less than forthcoming about. I also have heard from Rep. Demming that if the council chooses to vote against annexation, this whole plan will be stopped. In that case, if a vote for annexation comes to you, I respectfully ask that you consider a vote against annexation. I have yet to see an argument that clarifies what good this will bring to Laurel. The employees that work in a facility like this will not live in Laurel- we don't have the housing. This will not bring in any income tax to fund our schools or our public services. Additionally, I have yet to see a clear argument on why this land in particular, when there are multiple other plots of land in our area that could accomplish the same goals that are not so close to a school, a public library, our great Golf Course, a youth softball field, and in one of our higher-taxable residential areas. I plan to be at every meeting I can, and I also plan on continuing to contact all in our government that have any say in this decision.

From the bottom of my heart, I really appreciate all you and the council do for Laurel. I appreciate your time,

Samantha"

**January 22, 2026 (Thursday)**

Voicemail from Sidney Walton – 1102 Cherry Hills Drive. "I was interested in your take on the new forensic hospital and I wanted to give you my input as I hope that any and everything you can do to make sure it doesn't happen, I would appreciate it. I do not feel that it's a bedroom community to Billings that it's any, it would benefit us in any way, and I really feel that people would be reluctant to move here with that type of a facility. Um, I would gladly speak at a city meeting. I would do anything you need me to do. I feel that adamantly about it. Thank you and have a good day. Bye."

Responded via text message: "Hi Sidney. This is Jodi Mackay. Thank you for reaching out and sharing your concerns. Given that this will ultimately be a land use matter I'm not at liberty to discuss my personal opinion regarding the facility. However, I am listening to what the people of Laurel have to say and I appreciate their involvement in the process. Every City Council meeting has an opportunity for public comment. Council meetings are every Tuesday (except the 5th Tuesday) at 630 pm at City Hall. When the State applies for annexation to add the property to city limits, it will go to the City County Planning Board. Those meetings are public. After it goes through Planning, there will be a Public Hearing on the annexation. This will be another opportunity to comment. You can find meeting agendas and packets on the "calendar" tab of the City's website. You can also reach out to your local state representatives (Deming and Ricci) and / or Daines, Downing and Gianforte. Again, I appreciate you reaching out. I will ensure your comment is added to the public record.

**January 26, 2026 (Monday)**

Voicemail from Richard Swanson – "Uh, Richard Swanson, the, um, mental health facility coming to Laurel. Um, yes, this many message is for, uh, Jody. Um, city council ward number four. Concerning the mental forensics slash hospital, state of Montana hospital that's coming to Laurel. Um, expressing a desire that if the council has, um, has something in front of it, like annexing in the property, that would be very key into whether or not this facility does come to Laurel or not. that in that event, that, um, a lot of time and effort is spent in contacting and visiting with, having meetings with, of people inside your district, um, inside your ward, so that when you do cash your vote, that you will follow the general, the, I guess, the overall wishes of of your constituents. Thank you very much for your time and consideration. Bye."

Responded via text message: "Hello. This is Council Member Jodi Mackay. Thank you for reaching out and expressing your thoughts. I am very interested in hearing what the constituents have to say on this matter and I do intend on listening to their thoughts.
Thank you again for taking the time to contact me."

**January 26, 2026 (Monday)**

I, along with City Mayor <citymayor@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1A <ward1a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2A <ward2a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3A <ward3a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3B <ward3b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4A <ward4a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4B ward4b@laurel.mt.gov, received another email from Samantha Mayes

**January 27, 2026 (Tuesday)**

I, along with Ward 1A <ward1a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2A <ward2a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3A <ward3a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3B <ward3b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4A <ward4a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4B

ward4b@laurel.mt.gov; Kurt Markegard <kmarkegard@laurel.mt.gov>; City Mayor citymayor@laurel.mt.gov received an email from Kris Vogele.
**My response:** "Mr. Vogele,
Thank you for taking the time to reach out and express your concerns regarding the proposed State project. I appreciate the time you took in composing your thoughts and the extra documentation you provided.
I can assure you that I am listening to what our community has to say and I appreciate the engagement.
Sincerely,
CM Jodi Mackay
Ward 4a"

**January 27, 2026 (Tuesday)**

I, along with City Mayor <citymayor@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1A <ward1a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2A <ward2a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3A <ward3a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3B <ward3b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4A <ward4a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4B <ward4b@laurel.mt.gov>; Kurt Markegard kmarkegard@laurel.mt.gov received another email from Samantha Mayes.
**My response**: Ms. Mayes,
Thank you for sharing this information.
I wanted to send this link with the contact information for those that serve on the City County Planning Board (https://cityoflaurelmontana.com/bc-ccpb). Also, if you click the calendar link, it will take you to a monthly calendar that will have the next City County Planning Board meeting listed. They're last meeting was 1/21 and I think they are scheduled for the 3rd Wednesday of each month. Once the agenda is set, it should show up on 2/18.
Thank you,
CM Mackay

**January 27, 2026 (Tuesday)**

I, along with Richard Klose received an email from Robert Dupuis:
"In my opinion, this is a very bad idea to locate this facility in our little town of Laurel. My wife and I have been homeowners here since 2017. Laurel isn't perfect, but bringing all the problem people from all over the state here is not the kind of population growth that is beneficial to our community. Surely, there are other options available.....like expanding the existing facility at Warm Springs. Let's not ruin Laurel for the sake of whoever is benefitting from this decision.
Sincerely,
Robert Dupuis"
**My response:** Mr. Dupuis,
Thank you for taking the time to reach and share your concerns regarding this facility. I genuinely appreciate your engagement.
Sincerely,
CM Jodi Mackay
Ward 4a

**January 27, 2026 (Tuesday)**

I, along with Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4A <ward4a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1A <ward1a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2A <ward2a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3A <ward3a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3B ward3b@laurel.mt.gov, received an email from Samantha Mayes with a doc attached from a State records request with a letter to the State from Kurt regarding the listed Woods' property.
"Good afternoon-

I thought you all might find this public record email helpful in understanding what happened with the land proposal. Here you gave the city administrator, on behalf of land, offering up the woods land to the state. Despite claiming to the press that he had no idea why the state was looking at Laurel during the December 4th meeting.
Tuesday, Chief Administrative Officer Kurt Markegard said the city learned of the decision only after the public announcement was made.
"The state did not send me information on it. I had to go seek it once it went to the press," Markegard said during the meeting."

Attached letter:
**From:** Kurt Markegard <kmarkegard@laurel.mt.gov>
**Sent:** Friday, August 22, 2025 2:44 PM
**To:** Brereton, Charlie <Charles.Brereton@mt.gov>; Osmundson, Ryan <Ryan.Osmundson@mt.gov>; Villa, Dan <DVilla@mt.gov>
**Cc:** City Mayor <citymayor@laurel.mt.gov>
**Subject:** RE: Laurel property for new state facility D02801
To you all, forgive me for missing an L in the spelling of Laurel.
Kurt
**From:** Kurt Markegard
**Sent:** Friday, August 22, 2025 2:46 PM
**To:** 'charles.brereton@mt.gov' <charles.brereton@mt.gov>; 'Ryan.osmundson@mt.gov' <Ryan.osmundson@mt.gov>; 'dan@mt.gov' <dan@mt.gov>
**Cc:** City Mayor <citymayor@laurel.mt.gov>
**Subject:** Laurel property for new state facility D02801
Mr. Brereton, Mr. Osmundson, Mr. Villa,
On behalf of the City of Laure's Mayor, I am emailing you to let you know about a potential site for the new State of Montana mental health facility.
The property is just west of the Laurel city limits and with the start of the development of a Love's Truck Plaza just west of the city, there will be new
water and sewer services installed as part of the truck plaza. Love's is investing 2.4 million installing new water and sewer lines to their property
and the property depicted in the attached pictures and below in this email will benefit by having a 12-inch water main and an 8-inch sewer line run
past this proposed property.
As a certified building inspector, I know what the state will need for water and sewer services to develop a building that will meet current building
standards. Having a water line of 12 inches would allow any facility the ability to sprinkle the building to protect from fire spread. I believe that
Laurel will have the necessary infrastructure adjacent to this property including gas and electric services than the other sites that have been
considered. I realize that the state has limited funds to build such a facility but having all utilities close by would allow the state to purchase property
that is currently listed for sale.
This site also has the benefit of having the old interstate interchange that was deeded to the City of Laurel after the State DOT built a new on/off
interstate ramp further west. The city was granted this parcel from the Montana Department of Transportation and is 120 feet in width. The state
had plans to demolish the asphalt, and I requested they deed it to Laurel for access to our land that is just north of the interstate. This old interstate
on/off ramp would make an excellent access road for the new facility. Or the State could remove the asphalt and seek the property from city making
the parcel even larger for facility expansion.

I have researched the necessary zoning needed to allow for a facility of this type and with annexation into the City of Laurel, the state could request
a zoning designation of "Public" which would allow the facility to be built at this location. The property to the south is county zoning heavy industrial
and this property is currently zoned county highway commercial. Residential development is sparce in the surround area.
The Mayor of Laurel would like to invite you all to a teams meeting to further discuss the potential for the proposed site to become the home of a
new state facility. Please let me know if the state will consider discussing this site with us. Please look over the included information and pictures
and consider this site as the best site in Yellowstone County to build a facility. The property is currently on the market to be sold. I did check with
the listing agent yesterday and it is available.
The Mayor and I look forward to further discussions.
Kurt Markegard
Chief Administrative Officer
City of Laurel, Montana
406-628-4796 ext. 5305

Council Member Sara Naylor
Ex Parte Communication Log
RE: Montana State Mental Health Hospital

**January 21, 2026**

I, along with City leadership and State representatives, received 2 emails regarding Tuesday's announcement from Dan Villa that property had been purchased west of Laurel for the MH hospital.
**From Ms. Mayes to:** City Mayor <citymayor@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1A <ward1a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2A <ward2a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3A <ward3a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3B <ward3b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4A <ward4a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4B ward4b@laurel.mt.gov

Good Morning! I hope this email finds you well.

I am just reaching out to see what can be done by Laurel citizens to stop the state psychiatric facility from being built between Highway 10 and Golf Course Road. The buy-sell that was released last night at the Laurel City Council meeting has that facility right in the middle of a residential area, right by our houses, and near an Elementary school. I understand the need for a new mental hospital for the state, but does it really need to be there? Laurel would be losing 114 acres of taxable land while using city taxpayer-funded resources. This is a net negative for our small community. Instead of bringing in taxes to fund our schools and community, this gives the state land that they can use with little oversight from the Laurel City Council. I am so incredibly concerned about this plan, as it will drive down home values, drive down the value of the Laurel Golf Course, and is close to an elementary school! Is there anything we, as Laurel citizens, can do? Have you spoken to the state about this plan? Ryan and I are so worried about the long-term impacts that this could have on our family. I hope there is something you or we can do to at least get the facility built somewhere else in Laurel. It does not need to be in the middle of a residential neighborhood, near a school, and one of the economic drivers of our community.

Thanks for your time,

Samantha Mayes

I did not respond.

**From Ms. Hill to:** City Mayor <citymayor@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1A <ward1a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2A <ward2a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3A <ward3a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3B <ward3b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4A <ward4a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4B <ward4b@laurel.mt.gov>; Vince.Ricci@legmt.gov; Lee.Deming@legmt.gov; governor@mt.gov

Dear City Council Members and State Representatives,

I am writing as a concerned, tax-paying community member to strongly oppose the proposed annexation and placement of a state mental health facility in the middle of our town, surrounded by homes, schools, and other public buildings.

This proposal is neither a safe nor a cost-effective decision for our community. Placing a large-scale mental health facility in a densely populated residential area raises serious concerns about public safety, emergency response capacity, and the overall well-being of nearby families and children. Schools, neighborhoods, and public spaces should not be placed at risk due to poor site selection for a facility of this nature.

Additionally, this project provides little to no financial benefit to our city. The facility will not generate sufficient tax revenue to support or improve our local schools, roads, water systems, or other critical infrastructure. At a time when our community is already struggling to maintain and upgrade essential services, this proposal would place additional strain on local resources without providing meaningful financial support in return.

Equally troubling is the lack of long-term resources and funding commitments from the State of Montana to adequately sustain a facility of this scale. Without guaranteed staffing, funding, and ongoing operational support, the burden will inevitably fall on the city—our emergency services, law enforcement, healthcare providers, and taxpayers.

The lack of transparency from the state throughout this process raises even greater concern. Limited communication, unanswered questions, and vague assurances do nothing to build public trust. Instead, this absence of clear and open information creates the impression that critical details are being withheld. When decisions of this magnitude are made without full transparency, it undermines confidence and leaves community members feeling ignored and misled.

Furthermore, placing this facility in the heart of town will significantly impact current home and land values. Many residents have invested their life savings into their properties, and this decision threatens to devalue those investments and destabilize our community.

It is also important to note that other cities applied for this facility and have suitable land, appropriate zoning, and the capacity to house it in locations that are not directly in the middle of residential neighborhoods. Those locations are far better suited for a facility of this nature and would not place it in immediate proximity to homes, schools, and public spaces.

I strongly encourage the City Council and our State Representatives to listen to us—the tax-paying members of this community. We are the people who live here, raise our families here, and support this city through our taxes and civic involvement. We do not want this mental health facility placed in our community in this location.

For the safety, financial stability, and long-term well-being of our town, I urge you to **not vote to annex this property** and to reject this proposal. Please act in the best interest of our community and pursue alternative locations that are more appropriate and better equipped to support such a facility.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Cheryl Hill
Concerned Community Member

My response:

Thank you for your outreach and for taking the time to share your perspective. As a City Council Member, I value thoughtful public engagement and the role it plays in our civic process.

At this time, there is no formal matter related to this issue pending before the City Council, and therefore no action currently before me for consideration. That said, I will ensure your comments are shared with the Mayor and appropriate City staff and included for review as part of the public record.

Please note that public comment is most impactful during the designated comment period once an item is on the agenda. You are welcome and encouraged to participate and to attend all duly noticed City Council meetings should you wish to speak when the matter is presented.

Thank you again for your engagement and continued interest in the City's work.

Respectfully,

January 23, 2026

I along with Ward 1A <ward1a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2A <ward2a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3A <ward3a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3B <ward3b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4B ward4b@laurel.mt.gov received another email from Samantha Mayes.

Good Morning!
I am writing to follow up on my previous email regarding the proposed facility in Laurel. To date, I have not received a response, which is deeply concerning given the scale and impact of this project and the level of opposition and confusion within our community.
As I outlined previously, after speaking with Lee Deming, Vince Ricci, and our County Commissioners, it appears that no local representatives were consulted or gave approval for this plan. Our City Council and Mayor's office have all stated that this proposal moved forward without council discussion, without adequate research into Laurel's infrastructure capacity, and without engagement with the community. This stands in stark contrast to other communities—such as Hardin, Miles City, and Columbus—that have offered land and services for this facility. Even Rep. Deming has said that he has been kept in the dark and cannot get answers on any of this.
There are also serious concerns about the site itself. The proposed location is in a residential area, adjacent to a school, youth softball fields, a golf course, and a public library. Given what I understand about recent land values, it raises legitimate questions about whether the state is overpaying for land that is poorly suited for this purpose. There are plenty of plots of land that are not so close to these areas, and I just need to know why this land.
I would like to know why this land- what are the benefits of this placement, what are the benefits of bringing this facility to Laurel at all? Have water tables been studied? Have we done traffic studies? Reviews on environmental impact or neighborhood compatibility?
I am again requesting clarification on your committee's role in this decision, how Laurel was selected over other willing communities, and—most importantly—how the voices of local residents and elected officials are intended to be heard. The continued lack of response only reinforces the perception that this process has excluded the community most directly affected. Furthermore, as of last night, Mayor Waggoner was liking comments on Facebook critical of those opposing this proposal. Does that mean he is in support of the plan? If so, why has the community of Laurel not heard from him? What are his reasons?
I respectfully request a response addressing these concerns.
Thank you for your time and attention.

I did not respond.

**January 26, 2026**

Voicemail from Richard Swanson – Hello, Sarah, this is Richard Swanson. I'm calling in regards to your um, position on the council membership. It's in regards o the, uh, forensics mental hospital for the state that coming in New York potentially is coming into, um, coming into Laurel. Um, been visiting with a lot of people over in the um, quote unquote, uh, you know, golf course road area. Not getting a lot of reception. Um, so I guess what I would wish that you would do is talk to your constituents in your ward, uh, your ward one. Um, not exactly sure where world one lays in Laurel. I haven't don't that research, just pulling up members. And, you know, spend a little time talking with them in regards to whether or not they would like it. Um, from my understanding. The city has annexing, um, to make. And if it doesn't get annexed, um, the facility will have to go to a community,

um, that has expressed an interest. For this facility .Anyway, food for thought,. Thank you very much for your time and consideration. Bye.

I did not respond.

**January 26, 2026**

I, along with City Mayor <citymayor@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1A <ward1a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2A <ward2a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3A <ward3a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3B <ward3b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4A <ward4a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4B ward4b@laurel.mt.gov, received another email from Samantha Mayes

Good morning,

I am writing again to follow up on my previous email regarding the proposed facility in Laurel. To date, I have received a response from a few of you, and for that I am very grateful. I know you are all just doing your best, but after more thinking about this, I have some more questions. **With such little information we have, I urge the City Council to stop this facility from proceeding as soon as possible.**

As I outlined previously, after speaking with Lee Deming, and our County Commissioners, it appears that no local representatives were consulted or gave approval for this plan. What role did Kurt Markeegard and Mayor Waggoner play in bringing this to Laurel?

There are also serious concerns about the proposed site itself. The location is in a residential area, adjacent to a school, youth softball fields, a golf course, and a public library. It is also within a mile of the CHS refinery. Given current land values, this raises legitimate questions about whether the state may be overpaying for property that appears poorly suited for this purpose.

In addition, I am requesting clarification regarding the site's proximity to nearby oil refineries or related industrial facilities. Specifically, I would appreciate information on:

- Whether the proximity to schools, an oil refinery, and public facilities was considered during site selection, and will be considered when it comes to annexation.
- Why did you not loop Rep. Deming into the decision-making process on this plan? Why not listen to our County Commissioners?
- Do you have an evacuation plan in place if something were to happen at the refinery? How will you safely remove 32 criminally insane people from the facility without posing a danger to the community? Have you even spoken to CHS about this?
- Have you been in contact with our school board or superintendent about the placement so close to the school? If not, why? Wouldn't protecting our children be the primary question to be asked here?
- Whether any environmental, air quality, or health impact assessments have been conducted in relation to this site. Have you studied water tables? Have you reviewed safety concerns related to the proximity of the refinery? Have you done traffic studies?
- Have you done tax studies? Exactly how many dollars will this pull from our already struggling schools? What will happen to the real estate values in the area?
- Have you done economic studies? What will this do to expansion in our city? We are limited geographically on where we, as a town, can expand- residentially or commercially. Have you researched whether this will impact future expansion?

Most troubling is the apparent breakdown of the local governmental process. The majority of residents oppose this plan, and our city does not have the tax base to absorb the infrastructure demands this facility would create. Backdoor deals have been made without consulting the Laurel community. We deserve answers.

I am again requesting clarification on the city's role in this decision, how Laurel was selected over other willing communities, and—most importantly—how the voices of residents and elected officials are intended to be heard. The continued lack of response only reinforces the perception that this process has excluded the community most directly affected. At this point, because of the lack of

information coming from the state and the city, but with the information I do have from the County, **I can only see negatives to the placement of this facility and I urge you to oppose annexation.**
I respectfully request a response addressing these concerns.
Thank you for your time and attention.

I did not respond.

**January 27, 2026**

I, along with Ward 1A <ward1a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2A <ward2a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3A <ward3a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3B <ward3b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4A <ward4a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4B ward4b@laurel.mt.gov; Kurt Markegard <kmarkegard@laurel.mt.gov>; City Mayor citymayor@laurel.mt.gov received an email from Kris Vogele.

Dear Mayor and Members of the Laurel City Council,
My name is **Kris Vogele**, and I am a resident of Laurel living at **306 E 4th Street, Laurel, MT 59044** and I also own property in the downtown district. I am writing to formally oppose the anticipated annexation and siting of a **32-bed forensic psychiatric facility** on the approximately **114-acre property** near the City of Laurel.
Annexation is a discretionary decision of the City Council. The fact that the State may acquire or control this property does not obligate the City to annex it, nor does it justify annexation of the entire 114-acre tract. Any annexation request should be evaluated on its merits and limited to the minimum acreage necessary, if approved at all.
A forensic psychiatric facility is a secure institutional use involving individuals in the criminal legal system. Local police, fire, and emergency medical services are the first responders to incidents, regardless of state ownership. Annexation would therefore impose increased public safety, infrastructure, and fiscal burdens on the City without sufficient guarantees that the State will fully and permanently cover those costs.
This facility will place a significant long term burden on the current water and sewer system at local taxpayer expense without reimbursement from the State of Montana and it's proposed location in very close proximity to residential properties and the Laurel Primary Elementary school is of significant concern. I am including an attachment regarding proximity to the school (less than 500 yds from property line to property line).
I am also disappointed to learn that Laurel City staff have been involved in talks with the state about this facility documented as far back as August of 2025 per state records. That is at least six months of time that we as a community could have come up with so much better options without operating in a vacuum as has been the case.
The Letter from Mr Markegard to Mr Villa at the State of Montana Board of Investments (November 17, 2025) was nothing less than an application for consideration regardless of how staff frame it. Given the chronolgical timing of this letter, it begs the question if the state did not initiate and call for the letter. The Letter reads more like a document written up by a consultant or agent for a land search placing Mr. Markegard and the city in a precarious situation. It is upsetting that a task force of community members were not assembled by the mayor to involve stakeholders from the community in the process along with city council members.
It is also incomprehensible that the city council was apparently kept in the dark about the city staff intentions of making application through a letter versus making an outright application that may have required city council approval through a prescribed process.
One of the Mayor's primary duties is to maintain safety for our community. The Montana State Legislature feels so strongly about safety that private facilities holding incarcerated Individuals were required per MCA to be located no closer than 1 mile from school property. The same philosophy on safety applies to any facility regardless of being public or private. The land the state wants to purchase is less than 500 yard from the property line of the school. Please see attachments.

There are many questions that need to be answered as to how this process took place, what state and local influences played a part in moving this forward without city council knowledge, and if there have been any quid pro quo dealings in the process.

I respectfully request that the Mayor and City Council:

1. Stop allowing city staff to act as a liaison for the State of Montana which places the City of Laurel in a precarious situation with potential liability. Staff, in particular the CAO, has made suggestions and inferences that may not align with current zoning, general safety, intended use, emergency services, and impacts on economic development and long term growth that actually benefit the state over the negative impacts to the city. Does the city have fully vetted impact studies on the short and long term costs to our city and infrastructure for the location Mr. Markeguard is recommending to the state? Also, what are the benefits for Laurel? These are two pivotal questions that should have been answered prior to inviting the state to move into our community.
2. Deny any annexation petition related to this facility; or
3. At a minimum, strictly limit annexation to the smallest feasible footprint (ie; 10 acres adjacent to the highway to accomodate a facility approximately 1 acre in size) and exclude the remainder of the 114 acres; **AND**
4. Require binding, enforceable agreements ensuring the State bears 100% of all incremental public safety and infrastructure costs.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for placing the safety, fiscal health, and long-term interests of Laurel residents first.

Respectfully,

**Kris Vogele**

306 E 4th Street

Laurel, MT 59044

Attachments: BOI Notice, Map School Distance, Nov 17 letter to BOI, School Safety and proximity for annexation, draft psych facility, Reasons to oppose psychiatric facility on hwy 10 in Laurel.

My response:

Thank you for your outreach and for taking the time to share your perspective. As a City Council Member, I value thoughtful public engagement and the role it plays in our civic process.

At this time, there is no formal matter related to this issue pending before the City Council, and therefore no action currently before me for consideration. That said, I will ensure your comments are shared with the Mayor and appropriate City staff and included for review as part of the public record.

Please note that public comment is most impactful during the designated comment period once an item is on the agenda. You are welcome and encouraged to participate and to attend all duly noticed City Council meetings should you wish to speak when the matter is presented.

Thank you again for your engagement and continued interest in the City's work.

Respectfully,

**January 27, 2026**

I, along with City Mayor <citymayor@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1A <ward1a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2A <ward2a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3A <ward3a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3B <ward3b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4A <ward4a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4B ward4b@laurel.mt.gov, received another email from Samantha Mayes

Good Morning-

As I am sure you each know, the school board last night came out in opposition to the plot of land for the proposed mental health prison, as did County Commissioner Mark Morse. I encourage each of you to watch the video to hear the opposition from our elected school board members, the commissioner, and the community. I understand it has to go to the planning board first, but since we do not have public contact information for the planning board, I will urge each of you to oppose this plan and vote against the placement of a prison within yards of an elementary school.

Thank you,

Samantha Mayes

My response:
Thank you for your outreach and for taking the time to share your perspective. As a City Council Member, I value thoughtful public engagement and the role it plays in our civic process.

At this time, there is no formal matter related to this issue pending before the City Council, and therefore no action currently before me for consideration. That said, I will ensure your comments are shared with the Mayor and appropriate City staff and included for review as part of the public record.

Please note that public comment is most impactful during the designated comment period once an item is on the agenda. You are welcome and encouraged to participate and to attend all duly noticed City Council meetings should you wish to speak when the matter is presented.

Thank you again for your engagement and continued interest in the City's work.

Respectfully,

**January 27, 2026**

I received a response email from Samantha Mayes.

I appreciate your reply. I understand that this is not officially on the agenda, but since it is going to the planning board and this directly impacts my family and our community, I will not wait until it is on the agenda to reach out and will continue reaching out. Thank you for sharing my comments with the Mayor, as he has yet to respond to any of my concerns or emails.

I did not respond.

**Brittney Harakal**

**From:** Ward 1A
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 27, 2026 2:55 PM
**To:** Brittney Harakal
**Subject:** FW: Letter of Concern of the Possible State Mental Facility in Laurel

Sara B. Naylor

Council Member City of Laurel Ward 1

✦ 406 598 9499

✦ Ward1@laurel.mt.gov


**From:** The Front Porch <thefrontporchmt@gmail.com>
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 21, 2026 12:18 PM
**To:** City Mayor <citymayor@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1A <ward1a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2A <ward2a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3A <ward3a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3B <ward3b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4A <ward4a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4B <ward4b@laurel.mt.gov>; Vince.Ricci@legmt.gov; Lee.Deming@legmt.gov; governor@mt.gov
**Subject:** Letter of Concern of the Possible State Mental Facility in Laurel

Dear City Council Members and State Representatives,

I am writing as a concerned, tax-paying community member to strongly oppose the proposed annexation and placement of a state mental health facility in the middle of our town, surrounded by homes, schools, and other public buildings.

This proposal is neither a safe nor a cost-effective decision for our community. Placing a large-scale mental health facility in a densely populated residential area raises serious concerns about public safety, emergency response capacity, and the overall well-being of nearby families and children. Schools, neighborhoods, and public spaces should not be placed at risk due to poor site selection for a facility of this nature.

Additionally, this project provides little to no financial benefit to our city. The facility will not generate sufficient tax revenue to support or improve our local schools, roads, water systems, or other critical infrastructure. At a time when our community is already struggling to maintain and upgrade essential

services, this proposal would place additional strain on local resources without providing meaningful financial support in return.

Equally troubling is the lack of long-term resources and funding commitments from the State of Montana to adequately sustain a facility of this scale. Without guaranteed staffing, funding, and ongoing operational support, the burden will inevitably fall on the city—our emergency services, law enforcement, healthcare providers, and taxpayers.

The lack of transparency from the state throughout this process raises even greater concern. Limited communication, unanswered questions, and vague assurances do nothing to build public trust. Instead, this absence of clear and open information creates the impression that critical details are being withheld. When decisions of this magnitude are made without full transparency, it undermines confidence and leaves community members feeling ignored and misled.

Furthermore, placing this facility in the heart of town will significantly impact current home and land values. Many residents have invested their life savings into their properties, and this decision threatens to devalue those investments and destabilize our community.

It is also important to note that other cities applied for this facility and have suitable land, appropriate zoning, and the capacity to house it in locations that are not directly in the middle of residential neighborhoods. Those locations are far better suited for a facility of this nature and would not place it in immediate proximity to homes, schools, and public spaces.

I strongly encourage the City Council and our State Representatives to listen to us—the tax-paying members of this community. We are the people who live here, raise our families here, and support this city through our taxes and civic involvement. We do not want this mental health facility placed in our community in this location.

For the safety, financial stability, and long-term well-being of our town, I urge you to **not vote to annex this property** and to reject this proposal. Please act in the best interest of our community and pursue alternative locations that are more appropriate and better equipped to support such a facility.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Cheryl Hill
Concerned Community Member

**Brittney Harakal**

**From:** Ward 1A
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 27, 2026 2:55 PM
**To:** Brittney Harakal
**Subject:** FW: Forensic Psychiatric Facility
**Attachments:** 1000018959.jpg; 1000018970.jpg; Annexation_Denial_Prison_School_Buffer_Montana_260126_161820.pdf; Full_Draft_With_Statutory_References (1)_260126_185708.pdf; Psychiatric Facility Laurel_260126_185436.pdf; Screenshot_20260121_171931_Facebook.jpg; Screenshot_20260121_171954_Facebook.jpg

Sara B. Naylor

Council Member City of Laurel Ward 1

✦ 406 598 9499

✦ Ward1@laurel.mt.gov


**From:** Kris Vogele <threepeat43@gmail.com>
**Sent:** Monday, January 26, 2026 7:08 PM
**To:** City Mayor <citymayor@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1A <ward1a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2A <ward2a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3A <ward3a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3B <ward3b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4A <ward4a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4B <ward4b@laurel.mt.gov>
**Subject:** Forensic Psychiatric Facility

Dear Mayor and Members of the Laurel City Council,

My name is **Kris Vogele**, and I am a resident of Laurel living at **306 E 4th Street, Laurel, MT 59044** and I also own property in the downtown district. I am writing to formally oppose the anticipated annexation and siting of a **32-bed forensic psychiatric facility** on the approximately **114-acre property** near the City of Laurel.

Annexation is a discretionary decision of the City Council. The fact that the State may acquire or control this property does not obligate the City to annex it, nor does it justify annexation of the entire 114-acre tract. Any annexation request should be evaluated on its merits and limited to the minimum acreage necessary, if approved at all.

A forensic psychiatric facility is a secure institutional use involving individuals in the criminal legal system. Local police, fire, and emergency medical services are the first responders to incidents,

regardless of state ownership. Annexation would therefore impose increased public safety, infrastructure, and fiscal burdens on the City without sufficient guarantees that the State will fully and permanently cover those costs.

This facility will place a significant long term burden on the current water and sewer system at local taxpayer expense without reimbursement from the State of Montana and it's proposed location in very close proximity to residential properties and the Laurel Primary Elementary school is of significant concern. I am including an attachment regarding proximity to the school (less than 500 yds from property line to property line).

I am also disappointed to learn that Laurel City staff have been involved in talks with the state about this facility documented as far back as August of 2025 per state records. That is at least six months of time that we as a community could have come up with so much better options without operating in a vacuum as has been the case.

The Letter from Mr Markegard to Mr Villa at the State of Montana Board of Investments (November 17, 2025) was nothing less than an application for consideration regardless of how staff frame it. Given the chronolgical timing of this letter, it begs the question if the state did not initiate and call for the letter. The Letter reads more like a document written up by a consultant or agent for a land search placing Mr. Markegard and the city in a precarious situation. It is upsetting that a task force of community members were not assembled by the mayor to involve stakeholders from the community in the process along with city council members.

It is also incomprehensible that the city council was apparently kept in the dark about the city staff intentions of making application through a letter versus making an outright application that may have required city council approval through a prescribed process.

One of the Mayor's primary duties is to maintain safety for our community. The Montana State Legislature feels so strongly about safety that private facilities holding incarcerated individuals were required per MCA to be located no closer than 1 mile from school property. The same philosophy on safety applies to any facility regardless of being public or private. The land the state wants to purchase is less than 500 yard from the property line of the school. Please see attachments.

There are many questions that need to be answered as to how this process took place, what state and local influences played a part in moving this forward without city council knowledge, and if there have been any quid pro quo dealings in the process.

I respectfully request that the Mayor and City Council:

1. Stop allowing city staff to act as a liaison for the State of Montana which places the City of Laurel in a precarious situation with potential liability. Staff, in particular the CAO, has made suggestions and inferences that may not align with current zoning, general safety, intended use, emergency services, and impacts on economic development and long term growth that actually benefit the state over the negative impacts to the city. Does the city have fully vetted impact studies on the short and long term costs to our city and infrastructure for the location Mr. Markeguard is recommending to the state? Also, what are the benefits for Laurel? These are two pivotal questions that should have been answered prior to inviting the state to move into our community.

2. Deny any annexation petition related to this facility; or
3. At a minimum, strictly limit annexation to the smallest feasible footprint (ie; 10 acres adjacent to the highway to accomodate a facility approximately 1 acre in size) and exclude the remainder of the 114 acres; **AND**
4. Require binding, enforceable agreements ensuring the State bears 100% of all incremental public safety and infrastructure costs.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for placing the safety, fiscal health, and long-term interests of Laurel residents first.

Respectfully,
**Kris Vogele**
306 E 4th Street
Laurel, MT 59044

Attachments: BOI Notice, Map School Distance, Nov 17 letter to BOI, School Safety and proximity for annexation, draft psych facility, Reasons to oppose psychiatric facility on hwy 10 in Laurel.

# LEGAL BASIS FOR ANNEXATION DENIAL BASED ON STATEWIDE POLICY REGARDING PRISON SITING NEAR SCHOOLS

## I. Statewide Public Policy Disfavors Prison Siting Near Schools

Montana law expressly requires that private correctional facilities be located no less than one mile from any school. While this statute applies by its terms to private prisons, it reflects a clear and deliberate statewide public policy determination: correctional facilities are incompatible land uses in close proximity to schools and children.

The Legislature's adoption of a fixed, objective buffer demonstrates that proximity between incarceration facilities and schools presents unacceptable land-use, safety, and planning conflicts, regardless of whether a specific incident has occurred. The statute embodies a precautionary principle, recognizing that the severity of potential harm—not merely the likelihood—justifies spatial separation.

Local governments are entitled, and in fact obligated, to give weight to this expressed policy when making discretionary land-use decisions, including annexation.

## II. Annexation Must Be Evaluated in Light of State Policy, Not in Isolation

Annexation under Montana law is not automatic, even when requested by a governmental entity. A municipality must determine whether annexation is reasonable and necessary, consistent with the local growth policy, compatible with surrounding land uses, and in the public interest.

In making that determination, the City may—and should—consider statewide land-use policies adopted by the Legislature. The one-mile prison-school buffer statute constitutes persuasive evidence that Montana disfavors prison siting near educational facilities as a matter of public policy. Approving annexation for the express purpose of facilitating a prison within close proximity to Laurel Elementary School would place the City in direct tension with that policy.

## III. The Legislature's Policy Applies by Analogy to State-Run Facilities

Although the statute expressly governs private prisons, its underlying rationale is not ownership-dependent. The concerns motivating the Legislature—child safety, land-use incompatibility, emergency response risk, and irreversible community impacts—exist

regardless of whether a prison is privately or publicly operated.

Nothing in Montana law suggests that the presence of incarcerated populations, secure transport, perimeter security, or emergency response activity becomes benign merely because the operator is the State rather than a contractor. The Legislature's decision to impose a bright-line distance requirement reflects a judgment that schools are uniquely sensitive land uses warranting protection from proximity to correctional facilities of any kind.

**IV. Annexation to Enable a Disfavored Use Is Arbitrary and Capricious**

Annexation is a discretionary governmental act. When annexation is sought solely to enable a land use that is disfavored under statewide policy, approval becomes legally vulnerable.

Here, annexation would enable a correctional facility in close proximity to an elementary school, contradict a clearly articulated legislative policy favoring separation, undermine land-use compatibility principles reflected in both state law and local planning, and expose the City to claims of arbitrary and capricious decision-making.

Where the Legislature has already determined that a one-mile buffer is appropriate to protect schools, approving annexation to defeat that policy in practice would be unreasonable and inconsistent with sound planning.

**V. Growth Policy Consistency and Community Character**

Montana growth policies emphasize protection of established residential neighborhoods, compatibility of adjacent land uses, public safety and quality of life, and predictable, orderly development.

A prison sited near Laurel Elementary School conflicts with these objectives. The statewide prison-school buffer statute reinforces that educational environments are incompatible with correctional uses, and that such incompatibility is recognized at the highest level of state policymaking. Annexation that facilitates this conflict cannot be found consistent with the growth policy, nor with the intent of Montana land-use law.

**VI. Proper Remedy: Denial or Limitation of Annexation**

Given the Legislature's expressed policy, the City has a legally defensible basis to deny annexation outright, limit annexation to exclude areas whose inclusion would enable a prison

proximate to a school, or postpone annexation pending alternative siting that respects statewide policy.

Failure to do so would elevate administrative convenience over legislative judgment and community protection.

## VII. Conclusion

Montana law does not treat prison siting near schools as a neutral planning choice. By enacting a one-mile separation requirement, the Legislature has declared that schools warrant heightened protection from proximity to correctional facilities.

That policy must inform annexation decisions. Annexation sought to facilitate a prison near Laurel Elementary School is therefore contrary to statewide public policy, inconsistent with growth planning principles, and an improper exercise of municipal discretion.

# Reasons the State of Montana should not build a 32-bed forensic psychiatric unit in Laurel, Montana

**Purpose.** This document outlines public-safety, financial, governance, and land-use concerns associated with the State of Montana's planned **32-bed forensic mental health facility** near Laurel, and proposes **lawful, process-based methods** residents and local officials can use to oppose **annexation and siting**.

**Note:** This is general information and advocacy drafting—not legal advice. If you want to pursue a formal challenge (annexation/zoning/permits), you'll likely want a Montana municipal/land-use attorney.

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## 1) Background and current status

- Montana DPHHS has proposed constructing and operating a **32-bed forensic mental health facility**, and the State selected **Laurel** as the location.
- Reporting indicates the State purchased (or is pursuing) a roughly **114-acre site** in west Laurel for the facility, and the City expects an **annexation application** and says it must hold public hearings and accept public comment.
- State planning materials acknowledge the **$26.5 million** legislative allocation may be **insufficient** for a "hardened" forensic facility, implying potential future cost escalation or additional funding requests.

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## 2) Public safety and community risk concerns

A forensic psychiatric facility is not a typical treatment clinic. It is designed for people involved in the criminal legal system who are detained for competency evaluation/treatment, and it requires secure operations, staffing, and transport.

### A. Increased demands on local law enforcement and emergency services

- A secure forensic facility requires **frequent coordination with law enforcement** for transports, perimeter incidents, mutual aid, and emergency response planning. Local agencies may face higher call volumes, training requirements, and specialized incident response needs—often without guaranteed, long-term reimbursement arrangements.
- Even if the facility is "state-run," the immediate **first responders** in a crisis are local.

### B. Operational risks: staffing shortages, turnover, and security failures

- Secure behavioral health facilities are highly sensitive to staffing levels and training. Understaffing increases risks of assaults, contraband, elopement attempts, and lockdown events.
- Montana's existing state psychiatric system has faced repeated public concerns about staffing, leadership turnover, and safety conditions (see Warm Springs section below), raising credible doubts about whether a new facility can be operated safely and consistently over time.

### C. Site-specific community impacts

Common local safety issues that should be addressed *before* siting:

- Proximity to neighborhoods, schools, parks, and commercial corridors
- Traffic patterns (secure transports and staff commutes)
- Perimeter security design and lighting
- Mutual-aid agreements and who pays for training/equipment
- Emergency planning: lockdowns, missing-person protocols, evacuation and shelter-in-place coordination

**Key point:** If the State cannot demonstrate a fully funded, enforceable plan for staffing, security, and emergency coordination, the project poses avoidable risk to Laurel residents.

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## 3) Financial impacts on Laurel and the surrounding community

### A. Cost shifting to local taxpayers

Even when the State builds the facility, annexation and development typically create ongoing local costs:

- Road impacts, intersection upgrades, snow removal, traffic enforcement
- Increased police/fire/EMS readiness and training
- Utility capacity planning (water/sewer), stormwater, and maintenance

DPHHS planning documents explicitly state that BOI/DPHHS will pursue "permits, **annexations, zoning, and other local approvals**." That is the stage where Laurel can demand binding commitments and cost coverage.

### B. Property value and insurance-market concerns

For some buyers and insurers, proximity to a secure forensic facility can be perceived as a negative externality, potentially affecting:

- Residential desirability and property values (especially nearest the facility)
- Insurance underwriting perceptions
- Commercial development patterns

### C. Long-term uncertainty and budget escalation

The State's own plan signals possible **cost overruns** (the "$26.5 million may be insufficient" language), which can lead to:

- Phased construction pressure
- Later requests for additional appropriations
- "Temporary" operational compromises becoming permanent (e.g., staffing models, bed use, security hardening)

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## 4) Poor stewardship concerns: Track record of state behavioral health management

Opposition to a new facility is strengthened when tied to the State's demonstrated ability (or inability) to safely operate comparable institutions.

### A. Problems associated with Warm Springs (Montana State Hospital) and oversight alarms

Recent reporting and public oversight have described serious, recurring problems at Montana State Hospital in Warm Springs—particularly around staffing instability, leadership disruption, and safety/care concerns.

Additionally, Montana's Board of Visitors produces formal inspection reports for state facilities (including forensic components), showing ongoing oversight concerns that should be weighed before expanding the State's institutional footprint into a new host community.

**Argument frame:** *If the State has struggled to safely and effectively run the existing system, Laurel should not be asked to absorb the operational risk of a new secure forensic institution—especially without enforceable guarantees, transparent performance metrics, and independent oversight conditions.*

### B. Accountability and transparency deficits

Key stewardship questions Laurel should demand answers to *before* any annexation/zoning approval:

- Staffing ratios, recruitment plans, and contingency staffing
- Incident reporting commitments and public transparency

- Independent oversight, auditability, and corrective action timelines
- Clear boundaries preventing mission creep (e.g., expansion beyond 32 beds, civil-bed "temporary" conversions)

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# 5) Land-use, annexation, and lawful methods to block or slow annexation into the City of Laurel

## First principle: Annexation is a local approval choke point

DPHHS/BOI documents anticipate local **annexation and zoning** approvals.
Local residents and officials can lawfully use procedural and substantive standards to oppose annexation or impose strict conditions.

## A. Understand which annexation pathway is being used (and use its requirements)

Montana law provides multiple annexation methods. Two common frameworks relevant here:

1. **Annexation by petition (Title 7, Ch. 2, Part 46).**
   A petition with certain signature thresholds can trigger either an election or council action:

   - Petition signed by ≥ **33 1/3% of registered electors** in the area generally requires submission to electors (with exceptions).
   - If signed by **>50% of resident electors owning real property** *or* owners representing ≥ **50% of total area**, the governing body **may approve or disapprove the petition on its merits.**

2. **Annexation with provision of services (Title 7, Ch. 2, Part 47).**
   A petition may require signatures of **51% of real property owners** in the area sought to be annexed, after which the municipality follows the statutory procedure.

**Practical blocking strategy:**
If the State needs a petition pathway, organize affected landowners/resident freeholders to **refuse signatures** and document opposition early.

## B. Use public hearings and the record: build an administrative file

Local reporting indicates Laurel expects annexation filings and confirms the City Council must hear public comment.

Action steps:

- Submit written comments with specific concerns (safety, cost shifting, stewardship, zoning incompatibility)
- Request the City require: traffic study, utility capacity study, public safety impact plan, and a fiscal impact report
- Demand all conditions be memorialized in enforceable agreements (development agreement / annexation conditions / service plan)

## C. Zoning and land-use tools

Even if annexation is pursued, zoning and conditional approvals can be decisive:

- Argue the proposed zoning is incompatible with surrounding uses
- Insist on strict conditional-use standards (hours, security perimeter, lighting, access control, emergency response commitments)
- Push for buffering requirements, setbacks, and design standards that may make the site infeasible or require substantial redesign

## D. Service-plan and cost-allocation leverage

Montana planning materials and model annexation guidance emphasize that annexation generally involves specifying **services** (water/sewer/roads, etc.) and how they are funded.

Negotiation position for Laurel:

- No annexation without a binding plan that the State pays **100% of incremental infrastructure and public safety costs**
- Require reimbursement mechanisms and periodic true-ups
- Require mutual aid and emergency response training funding

## E. County jurisdiction and "stay out of city limits" options

If the project site is currently outside city limits, one approach is to:

- Press the City to **deny annexation** and keep the facility in county jurisdiction (where applicable)
- Work with Yellowstone County officials on land-use controls, access permits, and service extensions that may be necessary for development (depending on utilities/roads)

## F. Political and legislative options (non-annexation)

- Petition local electeds for resolutions opposing the site
- Request state legislators pursue budget conditions, reporting requirements, or siting alternatives
- Demand independent oversight and performance triggers (e.g., operations paused if safety metrics breached)

## 6) Recommended talking points (ready-to-use)

1. **Public safety:** Laurel should not accept elevated risk without enforceable staffing/security/incident-reporting standards and fully funded emergency response coordination.
2. **Cost shifting:** The State must not externalize policing, EMS readiness, road impacts, and utility capacity costs onto local taxpayers.
3. **Stewardship:** The State's documented struggles operating Warm Springs undermine confidence in safe long-term operations of a new secure facility.
4. **Process:** Annexation and zoning are discretionary local actions; Laurel can require studies, conditions, and agreements—or deny approvals where standards are not met.
5. **Better alternatives:** Site the facility in a location that is already appropriate for high-security institutional use, with existing infrastructure and distance buffers, and proven operational oversight.

## 7) Attachments you may want to include (if you're submitting a packet)

- Timeline of key state actions and public statements (purchase/BOI/DPHHS milestones)
- News coverage summary showing pending annexation process and public hearings
- Warm Springs accountability and safety concern summaries from reputable reporting
- Statutory excerpts showing annexation thresholds and discretionary approval

# Reasons the State of Montana Should Not Build a 32-Bed Forensic Psychiatric Facility in Laurel, Montana

This document outlines public safety, fiscal, land-use, and governance concerns regarding the proposed forensic psychiatric facility.

## Public Safety Concerns

Forensic psychiatric facilities serve justice-involved individuals and require heightened security. Local police, fire, and emergency medical services are the first responders to incidents, despite having no control over facility operations.

Relevant law: MCA § 7-1-111 (municipal police powers to protect public health and safety).

## Financial Impacts on the Community

Annexation creates long-term service and infrastructure obligations and exposes Laurel to financial risk.

Relevant law: MCA § 7-2-4601–4635 (annexation statutes); MCA § 7-6-4001 (municipal fiscal responsibility).

## Poor State Stewardship

Montana has experienced chronic staffing, safety, and compliance issues at existing psychiatric facilities.

Relevant authority: Legislative audit and oversight under MCA § 5-13-201.

## Problems at Montana State Hospital – Warm Springs

The Montana State Hospital at Warm Springs has been subject to repeated oversight, staffing shortages, and safety concerns documented in public reports.

## Annexation Authority and Limiting the 114-Acre Parcel

Annexation is discretionary. The City may deny annexation or limit it to the minimum footprint required.

Relevant law: MCA § 7-2-4601–4635; MCA § 76-1-601 (growth policy consistency).

## Public Methods to Oppose Annexation

Citizens may submit comments, testify at hearings, and request analyses under Montana open meeting laws.

Relevant law: MCA § 2-3-203 (public participation).

## Conclusion

The proposed facility should not be sited in Laurel. At minimum, annexation should be denied or strictly limited.

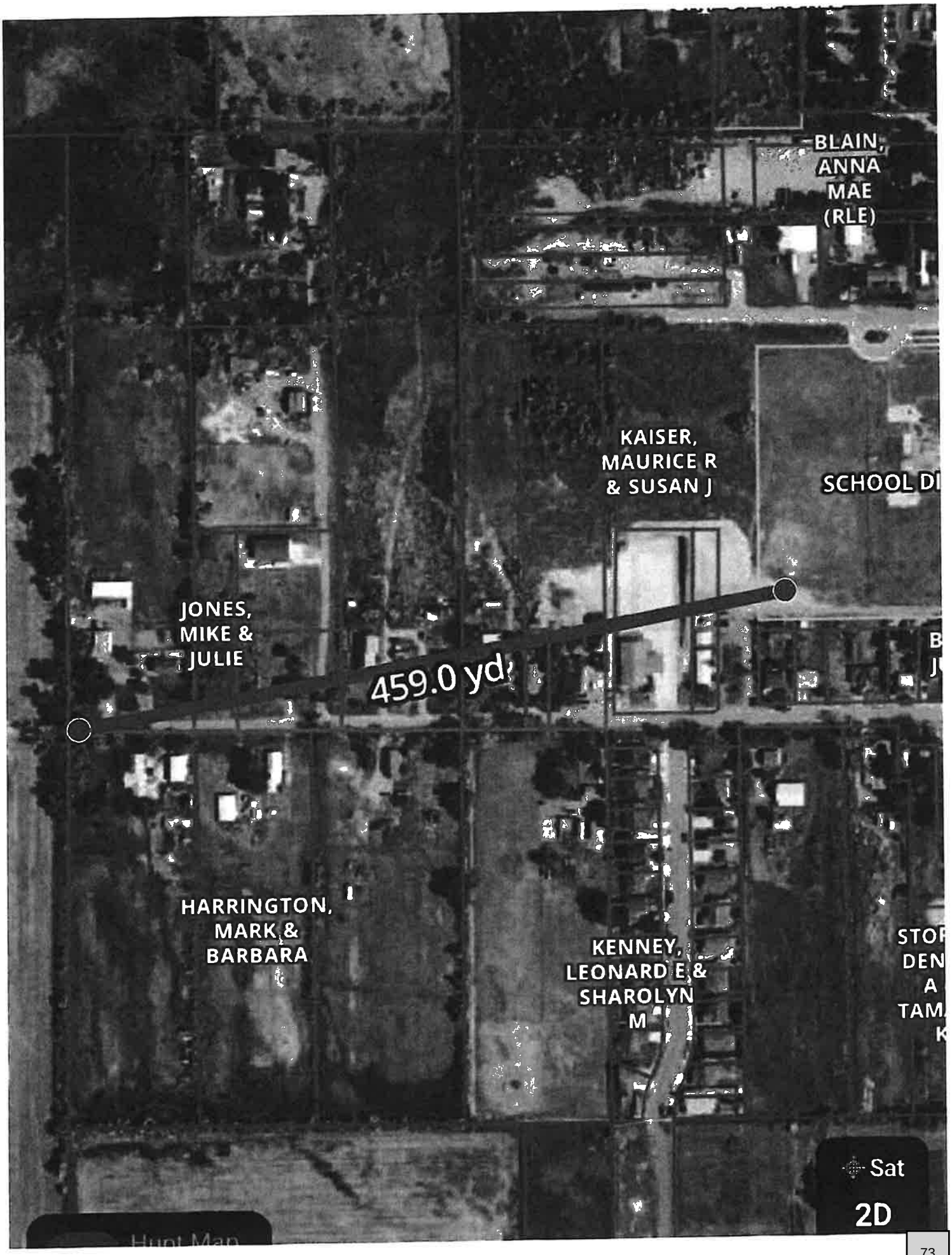
# MONTANA
## BOARD OF INVESTMENTS

## Statement of Board of Investments
## Executive Director Dan Villa
## August 20, 2025, Meeting

*"I received a call Monday from the Executive that, in my opinion, necessitates a pause by the Board. The Executive and Legislative branches currently hold differing interpretations of the Board's authority under Section 17 of House Bill 5 relating to the construction of a Behavioral Health Facility. In respect of both branches, in compliance with the Act, and to avoid acting without clear direction, I recommend the Board suspend any further consideration and forgo further implementation of House Bill 5 until we receive written guidance specifying services to be provided at the facility, the general location desired for the facility, and confirmation that the facility is to be built as an investment security held in trust for the State. The Board must avoid being placed between coequal branches to which we owe legal and fiduciary duties.*

*I thank local leaders of Billings and Laurel for their candid input, especially Councilmen Aspenlieder and Kennedy, Billings City Administrator Chris Kukulski, Laurel City Administrator Kurt Markegard, Director Brereton and staff at DPHHS, Budget Director Osmundson and staff at OBPP, as well as Senators Esp, Yakawich, Lenz, Ricci, and Representatives Etchart, Brewster and Schomer. Their efforts reflect a shared commitment to expanding behavioral health service capacity while protecting community safety and interests.*

*If due diligence resumes upon receipt of written guidance, no previously reviewed sites—including those on Skyway Drive—are viable, given local feedback, infrastructure costs, local zoning regulations, impacts on targeted economic development districts, and state land leasing processes. If BOI is to engage further, our future work must begin with clarity on services and siting from our partners, while still meeting our obligations to secure profits and cost savings for Montanans."*


BLAIN, ANNA MAE (RLE)
KAISER, MAURICE R & SUSAN J
SCHOOL DI
JONES, MIKE & JULIE
459.0 yd
HARRINGTON, MARK & BARBARA
KENNEY, LEONARD E & SHAROLYN M
Sat
2D

CITY HALL
115 W. 1ST ST.
PUB. WORKS: 628-4796
WATER OFC.: 628-7431
COURT: 628-1964
FAX 628-2241

# City Of Laurel

P.O. Box 10
Laurel, Montana 59044

Office of the CAO

November 17, 2025

Mr. Dan Villa
Executive Director
Board of Investments

I would like to explain why the City of Laurel did not nominate itself for the potential location for a new Forensic Mental Health Facility the State of Montana intends to build. Inside the city of Laurel limits there is no location that would be suitable for the facility and so therefore I cannot ask the Laurel City Council to consider applying.

Laurel's Mayor David Waggoner and I have described to you a location just outside Laurel's city limits that has most of the criteria that would make building the facility remarkably successful. The land has adjacent water and sewer lines that are currently being installed. The area also has natural gas, an electrical power line, cable tv, fire hydrants and I believe fiber optic lines. These necessary elements are crucial in providing all the needs a mental health facility development would need. This location would lower the initial cost to construct such a facility versus lands that do not have some or any of the infrastructure to build out such a facility.

As I stated, this location is just outside the city limits and therefore must go through the legal process to be considered for any city services. The City Council passed an annexation resolution in 2008 that set the criteria for receiving city services. To annex any property the City relies on Montana Code Annotated Title 7, Chapter 2, part 42 through 47. If the City of Laurel were to consider any type of annexation from parts 42 through 47, we would need to follow those Montana laws, and this includes the right for public participation and public hearing. Due to the requirements in City Council resolution R08-22, land outside city limits must be annexed to receive city services and this is why Laurel could not apply during the recent process for consideration for the state's facility.

The process city staff has always followed with regards to annexation is a pre-application meeting with owners or potential owners of land to be considered for annexation. This meeting will discuss all the necessary steps Laurel will require and annexation requirements in Montana Code Annotated (MCA). MCA 7-2-44 is the process for annexation of contiguous government land if the state would like to consider the location just outside city limits. In the past, buy/sell agreements could be made until the public process has taken place and a favorable vote for annexation is complete by Laurel's City Council.

If the State is considering any City for the location of the Forensic Mental Health Faility, I would hope that those cities follow their ordinances and resolutions as I have advised our elected officials on following Laurel's ordinances and resolutions.

The right to have the public speak on the benefits or concerns they may have about any annexation or provision of local services is well documented in Laurel. I applaud the efforts to get community involvement in choosing the location for the facility, but I believe the process did not allow the location I pointed out to you during the summer tour to be nominated.

If anyone from the State would like to speak to Laurel's Mayor or city staff, I am sure that we could arrange a meeting to discuss this letter in more detail or what policies we have for the Laurel community.

Sincerely,

Kurt Markegard,
Chief Administrative Officer
City of Laurel

Cc. Mayor David Waggoner

**Kelly Strecker**

**From:** Ward 2B
**Sent:** Monday, January 26, 2026 8:17 PM
**To:** Kelly Strecker
**Subject:** FW: Letter of Concern of the Possible State Mental Facility in Laurel

Hey there.

Good evening.

Here is another communication.

Thank you,

Brent

**From:** The Front Porch <thefrontporchmt@gmail.com>
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 21, 2026 12:18 PM
**To:** City Mayor <citymayor@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1A <ward1a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2A <ward2a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3A <ward3a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3B <ward3b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4A <ward4a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4B <ward4b@laurel.mt.gov>; Vince.Ricci@legmt.gov; Lee.Deming@legmt.gov; governor@mt.gov
**Subject:** Letter of Concern of the Possible State Mental Facility in Laurel

Dear City Council Members and State Representatives,

I am writing as a concerned, tax-paying community member to strongly oppose the proposed annexation and placement of a state mental health facility in the middle of our town, surrounded by homes, schools, and other public buildings.

This proposal is neither a safe nor a cost-effective decision for our community. Placing a large-scale mental health facility in a densely populated residential area raises serious concerns about public safety, emergency response capacity, and the overall well-being of nearby families and children. Schools, neighborhoods, and public spaces should not be placed at risk due to poor site selection for a facility of this nature.

Additionally, this project provides little to no financial benefit to our city. The facility will not generate sufficient tax revenue to support or improve our local schools, roads, water systems, or other critical infrastructure. At a time when our community is already struggling to maintain and upgrade essential services, this proposal would place additional strain on local resources without providing meaningful financial support in return.

Equally troubling is the lack of long-term resources and funding commitments from the State of Montana to adequately sustain a facility of this scale. Without guaranteed staffing, funding, and ongoing operational support, the burden will inevitably fall on the city—our emergency services, law enforcement, healthcare providers, and taxpayers.

The lack of transparency from the state throughout this process raises even greater concern. Limited communication, unanswered questions, and vague assurances do nothing to build public trust. Instead, this absence of clear and open information creates the impression that critical details are being withheld. When decisions of this magnitude are made without full transparency, it undermines confidence and leaves community members feeling ignored and misled.

Furthermore, placing this facility in the heart of town will significantly impact current home and land values. Many residents have invested their life savings into their properties, and this decision threatens to devalue those investments and destabilize our community.

It is also important to note that other cities applied for this facility and have suitable land, appropriate zoning, and the capacity to house it in locations that are not directly in the middle of residential neighborhoods. Those locations are far better suited for a facility of this nature and would not place it in immediate proximity to homes, schools, and public spaces.

I strongly encourage the City Council and our State Representatives to listen to us—the tax-paying members of this community. We are the people who live here, raise our families here, and support this city through our taxes and civic involvement. We do not want this mental health facility placed in our community in this location.

For the safety, financial stability, and long-term well-being of our town, I urge you to **not vote to annex this property** and to reject this proposal. Please act in the best interest of our community and pursue alternative locations that are more appropriate and better equipped to support such a facility.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Cheryl Hill
Concerned Community Member

**Brittney Harakal**

[redacted]

[redacted]

**From:** Monna Rae Adickes <monnarae@cbthebrokers.com>
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 27, 2026 2:24 PM
**To:** Ward 2A <ward2a@laurel.mt.gov>
**Subject:** Planning Board

Hi Tom,
I am sorry you have been thrown to the wolves your first year in office.
Please note, I agree with our Governor that a mental hospital is needed on the eastern half of Montana.

BUT not at the site that has been selected. This is site is surrounded by homes, one of them is my son Jay Dempster's home.
This site is less than 500 yards from West / Laurel Elementary, and even closer to the softball fields use by the youth of Laurel.
This facility should be located on land in an industrial park, or near our two hospitals in Billings.
I sell real estate, our home values will drop. Look at Warm Springs, no one wants to live there...why??
The workers will commute from Billings. What value does this bring to Laurel, **NONE**!
Our roads, water and sewer are already failing.
The City is hop scotching in their annexation process.
Please **VOTE NO** to the annexation of the annexation of this 114 acre parcel.
Thank you for listening.

MONNA RAE ADICKES
*Real Estate Broker*

406-860-4284
monnarae@cbthebrokers.com
3135 Meadow View Drive
Billings, MT 59102
www.mra406.com

COLDWELL BANKER | THE BROKERS

| Print Name | Adress |
|---|---|
| Jacob Schreiner | 201 1st Ave |
| Jennifer Lorenz | 916 5th Ave |
| Cal Renner | 606 10th Ave |
| BRIAN LUBINSKI | 320 7th Ave |
| SHAWNA Hopper | 504 Roundhouse |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

| Print Name | Adress |
| --- | --- |
| Laura Kirschenmann | 939 W. 4th St. |
| B Marshall | 7518 W 9th St |
| B Hunter | 2607 Willowwood Rd. |
| Hilary Anderson | 943 W. 4th St. |
| Christine Willis | 760 Discus Cir. |
| Heather Safford | 1103 Milwaukee Rd |
| [illegible] | 415 8th Ave. |
| ~~Daniel Hughes~~ | ~~50 figgins circle~~ |
| Rich Holstein | 712 8th |

| Print Name | Adress |
|---|---|
| Neta Bare | 1113 W. 4th St. Laurel |
| David Lee | 1213 W 4th Street Laurel |
| Jean Kerr | 1128 Ninth Avenue, Laurel |
| Christy Fend | 609 2nd Ave Laurel |
| Darby Gerdtzle | 2633 Meadows Dr Laurel |
| SHAUNA FETTIG | 1019 DUVAL DR. LAUREL |
| Casey Britton | 1021 W. 4th St Laurel |
| | |
| | |

| Print Name | Adress |
|---|---|
| Mark Morse | 2825 3rd Ave North<br>Billings MT 59101 |
| Chris Lorash | 1805 Duval Dr<br>Laurel |
| Matt Torix | 5635 Mountain Front Ave<br>Billings |
| Devan Rutledge | 715 W 6th St |
| Julie Jones | 1201 4th St. West |
| Bailey Dempster | 209 golf course rd |
| Pam Trostle | 1310 Saddlehorn Dr. |
| Kris Vgh | 306 E 4th St, Laurel |
| Vicki Walton - Miles Walton | 419 8th Ave Laurel |

# Condensed 1-Page Council Script

My comments tonight are focused on governance, transparency, and fiscal responsibility.

1. Who authorized the Chief Administrative Officer to work with the State of Montana on siting a forensic psychiatric facility in Laurel?
2. Why was City Council not informed of staff communications with the state beginning in August 2025?
3. Does identifying sites, utilities, and annexation potential constitute facilitation of this project?
4. Why were feasibility, fiscal impact, and public safety studies not completed before sites were offered?
5. What is the projected net fiscal impact to the City over the next 10, 20, and 30 years?
6. How will police, fire, and emergency services be funded for a tax-exempt state facility?
7. What infrastructure upgrades will be required, and who will pay for them?
8. Why were residents and City Council told the City had no involvement when documentation shows staff engagement?
9. Will the City pause cooperation with the State until independent studies are completed and reviewed publicly?
10. What steps will Council take to ensure staff cannot unilaterally facilitate major projects without Council approval?

I am submitting a written document containing 120 detailed questions for the public record and request written responses.

# City of Laurel, Montana

# 120 Questions Regarding the Montana Forensic Psychiatric Facility

## I. Authority & Governance (Questions 1–20)

1. What specific authority does the Chief Administrative Officer have to communicate with state agencies regarding siting major state facilities within city limits?

2. Was the City Council ever asked to authorize the CAO to engage in discussions with the State of Montana regarding a forensic psychiatric facility?

3. If no authorization was given, under what legal authority did the CAO proceed?

4. Does the City have a written policy governing when staff may negotiate or coordinate with outside governmental entities?

5. Was the Mayor aware of the CAO's communications with the Board of Investments at the time they occurred?

6. Did the Mayor approve or direct the CAO to send the letter identifying potential sites?

7. Was the City Attorney consulted before the letter was sent to the Board of Investments?

8. If not, why was legal counsel excluded from a decision with major legal and financial implications?

9. Did the CAO brief the City Council after the letter was sent?

10. If not, why was the Council not informed?

11. Does the City consider identifying sites and utility availability to be an application or facilitation of a project?

12. If not, how does the City define an application?

13. Has the City ever taken the position that providing site-selection assistance is not participation?

14. Would the City accept that same definition if it were applied to a private developer?

15. Did the CAO exceed the scope of administrative authority by influencing site selection?

16. Has the City Council reviewed the CAO's job description in relation to this matter?

17. Is there any precedent for staff independently offering land options to outside entities without Council approval?

18. If this is precedent-setting, why was Council not involved?

19. Has any disciplinary or review process been initiated regarding this conduct?

20. If not, why not?

## II. Transparency & Public Process (Questions 21–40)

21. Why were these discussions not disclosed during public City Council meetings?
22. Were any executive sessions held regarding this facility?
23. If so, under what statutory exemption?
24. Were meeting notes, emails, or calendars related to this project made available to the public?
25. Has the City conducted a public records review of communications with the state?
26. Were citizens intentionally excluded from early discussions?
27. Was the public ever given the opportunity to comment before the state selected Laurel?
28. Why was the first public notice the state's announcement?
29. Does the City believe this meets standards of transparent governance?
30. Would the City consider this process acceptable if roles were reversed?
31. Did the CAO or Mayor correct the public record when they stated the City had no involvement?
32. If not, why?
33. Were City staff instructed not to discuss the project publicly?
34. Who made that instruction?
35. Did the City consider issuing a clarification once documents became public?
36. Does the City believe omission of material facts is consistent with public trust?
37. Has the City Council reviewed the letter sent to the Board of Investments?
38. When did Council first become aware of its contents?
39. Why was Council blindsided if staff had been working on this since August 2025?
40. What safeguards exist to prevent this from happening again?

## III. Feasibility & Due Diligence (Questions 41–65)

41. Did the CAO conduct any feasibility study before identifying sites?
42. Was a cost-benefit analysis performed?
43. Was a fiscal impact study conducted?
44. Was a long-term operating cost analysis done?
45. Were emergency service impacts evaluated?
46. Was traffic impact on Highway 10 analyzed?
47. Was proximity to schools evaluated?
48. Was public safety staffing analyzed?
49. Was police overtime cost estimated?
50. Was fire and EMS capacity evaluated?
51. Was water demand modeling performed?
52. Was sewer capacity evaluated?
53. Were capital upgrades identified?
54. Who would pay for those upgrades?
55. Was lifecycle infrastructure cost considered?
56. Was insurance or liability exposure evaluated?
57. Were mutual aid agreements considered?
58. Was an annexation fiscal analysis completed?
59. Was a facilities compatibility study done?
60. Were alternative locations outside Laurel evaluated?
61. Did the CAO consider declining to participate?
62. Did the CAO consider the City Council's stated opposition?
63. Did the CAO document any risks?
64. Where is that documentation?
65. If no studies exist, why not?

## IV. Financial Impact & Taxation (Questions 66–85)

66. Is the facility exempt from property taxes?
67. If so, how will the City recover service costs?
68. Has the City calculated the net fiscal impact?
69. Has the City requested a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT)?
70. If not, why?
71. Will the City subsidize state operations?
72. Has the City evaluated bond rating impacts?
73. Will utility rates increase for residents?
74. Will capital improvement plans change?
75. Has the City identified unfunded mandates?
76. Has the City budgeted for increased calls for service?
77. Has the City negotiated reimbursement with the state?
78. Has the City evaluated long-term maintenance costs?
79. Who pays if infrastructure fails?
80. Has the City identified opportunity costs?
81. What city projects will be delayed or displaced?
82. Has the City modeled worst-case cost scenarios?
83. Has the City disclosed these risks to residents?
84. Will taxpayers be asked to subsidize this facility?
85. Why was Council not given this information beforehand?

## V. Annexation & Land Use (Questions 86–105)

86. Who initiated annexation discussions?
87. Was annexation conditioned on Council approval?
88. Was annexation analyzed independently of the project?
89. Does annexation primarily benefit the state?
90. Was limited annexation considered?
91. Why was a 114-acre parcel proposed?
92. Does the facility require that much land?
93. What future uses are contemplated?
94. Does annexation create future development pressure?
95. Has zoning compatibility been evaluated?
96. Was a growth policy consistency review done?
97. Were statutory annexation findings prepared?
98. Has Council reviewed those findings?
99. Does annexation obligate the City to future costs?
100. Was annexation discussed in public?
101. Was annexation leveraged as an incentive?
102. Is the City exposed if annexation is denied?
103. Has the City considered rescinding annexation support?
104. Can the City withdraw cooperation?
105. What is the City's exit strategy?

## VI. Accountability & Next Steps (Questions 106–120)

106. Does the City Council believe staff acted appropriately?
107. Should staff have sought Council direction?
108. Should feasibility studies have been mandatory?
109. Will Council require those studies now?
110. Will Council pause cooperation until studies are complete?
111. Will Council request an independent audit?
112. Will Council request a third-party fiscal analysis?
113. Will Council formally clarify staff authority limits?
114. Will Council correct public statements?
115. Will Council require disclosure of all communications?
116. Will Council consider censure or reprimand?
117. Will Council adopt a policy preventing unilateral facilitation?
118. Will Council commit to public engagement before future siting?
119. Who is accountable if this harms Laurel?
120. How will Council restore public trust?

# Reasons the State of Montana Should Not Build a 32-Bed Forensic Psychiatric Facility in Laurel, Montana

This document outlines public safety, fiscal, land-use, and governance concerns regarding the proposed forensic psychiatric facility.

## Public Safety Concerns

Forensic psychiatric facilities serve justice-involved individuals and require heightened security. Local police, fire, and emergency medical services are the first responders to incidents, despite having no control over facility operations.

Relevant law: MCA § 7-1-111 (municipal police powers to protect public health and safety).

## Financial Impacts on the Community

Annexation creates long-term service and infrastructure obligations and exposes Laurel to financial risk.

Relevant law: MCA § 7-2-4601–4635 (annexation statutes); MCA § 7-6-4001 (municipal fiscal responsibility).

## Poor State Stewardship

Montana has experienced chronic staffing, safety, and compliance issues at existing psychiatric facilities.

Relevant authority: Legislative audit and oversight under MCA § 5-13-201.

## Problems at Montana State Hospital – Warm Springs

The Montana State Hospital at Warm Springs has been subject to repeated oversight, staffing shortages, and safety concerns documented in public reports.

## Annexation Authority and Limiting the 114-Acre Parcel

Annexation is discretionary. The City may deny annexation or limit it to the minimum footprint required.

Relevant law: MCA § 7-2-4601–4635; MCA § 76-1-601 (growth policy consistency).

## Public Methods to Oppose Annexation

Citizens may submit comments, testify at hearings, and request analyses under Montana open meeting laws.

Relevant law: MCA § 2-3-203 (public participation).

## Conclusion

The proposed facility should not be sited in Laurel. At minimum, annexation should be denied or strictly limited.

# LEGAL BASIS FOR ANNEXATION DENIAL BASED ON STATEWIDE POLICY REGARDING PRISON SITING NEAR SCHOOLS

## I. Statewide Public Policy Disfavors Prison Siting Near Schools

Montana law expressly requires that private correctional facilities be located no less than one mile from any school. While this statute applies by its terms to private prisons, it reflects a clear and deliberate statewide public policy determination: correctional facilities are incompatible land uses in close proximity to schools and children.

The Legislature's adoption of a fixed, objective buffer demonstrates that proximity between incarceration facilities and schools presents unacceptable land-use, safety, and planning conflicts, regardless of whether a specific incident has occurred. The statute embodies a precautionary principle, recognizing that the severity of potential harm—not merely the likelihood—justifies spatial separation.

Local governments are entitled, and in fact obligated, to give weight to this expressed policy when making discretionary land-use decisions, including annexation.

## II. Annexation Must Be Evaluated in Light of State Policy, Not in Isolation

Annexation under Montana law is not automatic, even when requested by a governmental entity. A municipality must determine whether annexation is reasonable and necessary, consistent with the local growth policy, compatible with surrounding land uses, and in the public interest.

In making that determination, the City may—and should—consider statewide land-use policies adopted by the Legislature. The one-mile prison-school buffer statute constitutes persuasive evidence that Montana disfavors prison siting near educational facilities as a matter of public policy. Approving annexation for the express purpose of facilitating a prison within close proximity to Laurel Elementary School would place the City in direct tension with that policy.

## III. The Legislature's Policy Applies by Analogy to State-Run Facilities

Although the statute expressly governs private prisons, its underlying rationale is not ownership-dependent. The concerns motivating the Legislature—child safety, land-use incompatibility, emergency response risk, and irreversible community impacts—exist

regardless of whether a prison is privately or publicly operated.

Nothing in Montana law suggests that the presence of incarcerated populations, secure transport, perimeter security, or emergency response activity becomes benign merely because the operator is the State rather than a contractor. The Legislature's decision to impose a bright-line distance requirement reflects a judgment that schools are uniquely sensitive land uses warranting protection from proximity to correctional facilities of any kind.

**IV. Annexation to Enable a Disfavored Use Is Arbitrary and Capricious**

Annexation is a discretionary governmental act. When annexation is sought solely to enable a land use that is disfavored under statewide policy, approval becomes legally vulnerable.

Here, annexation would enable a correctional facility in close proximity to an elementary school, contradict a clearly articulated legislative policy favoring separation, undermine land-use compatibility principles reflected in both state law and local planning, and expose the City to claims of arbitrary and capricious decision-making.

Where the Legislature has already determined that a one-mile buffer is appropriate to protect schools, approving annexation to defeat that policy in practice would be unreasonable and inconsistent with sound planning.

**V. Growth Policy Consistency and Community Character**

Montana growth policies emphasize protection of established residential neighborhoods, compatibility of adjacent land uses, public safety and quality of life, and predictable, orderly development.

A prison sited near Laurel Elementary School conflicts with these objectives. The statewide prison-school buffer statute reinforces that educational environments are incompatible with correctional uses, and that such incompatibility is recognized at the highest level of state policymaking. Annexation that facilitates this conflict cannot be found consistent with the growth policy, nor with the intent of Montana land-use law.

**VI. Proper Remedy: Denial or Limitation of Annexation**

Given the Legislature's expressed policy, the City has a legally defensible basis to deny annexation outright, limit annexation to exclude areas whose inclusion would enable a prison

proximate to a school, or postpone annexation pending alternative siting that respects statewide policy.

Failure to do so would elevate administrative convenience over legislative judgment and community protection.

## VII. Conclusion

Montana law does not treat prison siting near schools as a neutral planning choice. By enacting a one-mile separation requirement, the Legislature has declared that schools warrant heightened protection from proximity to correctional facilities.

That policy must inform annexation decisions. Annexation sought to facilitate a prison near Laurel Elementary School is therefore contrary to statewide public policy, inconsistent with growth planning principles, and an improper exercise of municipal discretion.

**File Attachments for Item:**

2. Hurd Letter of Resignation from Cemetery Commission.

## Brittney Harakal

**From:** Ward 1B
**Sent:** Friday, January 23, 2026 4:49 PM
**To:** Brittney Harakal
**Cc:** Kelly Gauslow; Kelly Strecker
**Subject:** FW: Cemetery Board

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**From:** Hurd, Steve <Steve.Hurd@mt.gov>
**Sent:** Thursday, January 22, 2026 3:18 PM
**To:** Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>
**Subject:** Cemetery Board

Please let this email serve as notice of my resignation from the City of Laurel board position.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Steven K. Hurd**
Parole Board Chair

**1002 Hollenbeck Rd**
**Deer Lodge, MT 59722**
(406) 846-1404 Office
(406) 846-3512 Fax

Steve.hurd@mt.gov

**MONTANA BOARD OF PARDONS AND PAROLE**

**File Attachments for Item:**

3. County Correspondence Appointing Mike Waters to the Laurel City County Planning.

**YELLOWSTONE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

Resolution No. 26-07

**A RESOLUTION APPOINTING MICHAEL J. WATERS TO THE CITY OF LAUREL / YELLOWSTONE COUNTY JOINT CITY–COUNTY PLANNING BOARD**

WHEREAS, pursuant to § 76-1-112, MCA, and the Interlocal Agreement between the City of Laurel and Yellowstone County, approved November 3, 2014, the City of Laurel / Yellowstone County Joint City–County Planning Board was established; and

WHEREAS, the Interlocal Agreement provides that vacancies on the Board shall be filled by the entity that made the original appointment, with the appointee serving the remainder of the unexpired term; and

WHEREAS, a vacancy currently exists on the City of Laurel / Yellowstone County Joint City–County Planning Board in a position appointed by the Yellowstone County Board of County Commissioners; and

WHEREAS, Michael J. Waters is qualified to serve and is willing to accept appointment to the Board.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Yellowstone County, Montana, that Michael J. Waters is hereby appointed to the City of Laurel / Yellowstone County Joint City–County Planning Board to fill the existing vacancy, for the remainder of the term ending June 30, 2026.

Passed and Adopted on the 27th day of January 2026.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
YELLOWSTONE COUNTY, MONTANA.

Mark Morse, Chair

Chris White, Member

Jeff Martin, Clerk and Recorder

**File Attachments for Item:**

4. Police Monthly Report - January 2026

# Laurel Police Department

215 W. 1st Street Laurel, Mt. 59044 ▪ Phone 406-628-8737 ▪ Fax 406-628-4641


Total Calls City Council

Printed on February 1, 2026

[CFS Date/Time] is between '2026-01-01 00:00:00' and '2026-01-31 23:59:59' and
[Primary Incident Code->Code : Description] All

| Code : Description | | Totals |
|---|---|---|
| 10-15 : With Prisoner | 1 | 1 |
| : Abandoned Vehicle | 18 | 18 |
| : Agency Assist | 69 | 69 |
| : Alarm - Burglary | 34 | 34 |
| : Alarm - Fire | 8 | 8 |
| AMB : Ambulance | 95 | 95 |
| : Animal Complaint | 6 | 6 |
| : Area Check | 14 | 14 |
| : Assault | 1 | 1 |
| : Bad Checks | 0 | 0 |
| : Barking Dog | 0 | 0 |
| : Bomb Threat | 0 | 0 |
| : Burglary | 0 | 0 |
| : Child Abuse/Neglect | 4 | 4 |
| : Civil Complaint | 8 | 8 |
| : Code Enforcment Violation | 2 | 2 |
| : Community Integrated Health | 0 | 0 |

| Code : Description | | Totals |
|---|---|---|
| : Counterfeiting | 0 | 0 |
| : Criminal Mischief | 3 | 3 |
| : Criminal Trespass | 8 | 8 |
| : Cruelty to Animals | 2 | 2 |
| : Curfew Violation | 5 | 5 |
| : Discharge Firearm | 1 | 1 |
| : Disorderly Conduct | 12 | 12 |
| : Dog at Large | 17 | 17 |
| : Dog Bite | 0 | 0 |
| DUI : DUI Driver | 7 | 7 |
| : Duplicate Call | 3 | 3 |
| : Escape | 0 | 0 |
| : Family Disturbance | 6 | 6 |
| : Fight | 0 | 0 |
| FIRE : Fire or Smoke | 14 | 14 |
| : Fireworks | 0 | 0 |
| : Forgery | 0 | 0 |
| : Found Property | 6 | 6 |
| : Fraud | 4 | 4 |
| : Harassment | 4 | 4 |
| : Hit & Run | 3 | 3 |

| Code : Description | | Totals |
|---|---|---|
| : ICAC | 0 | 0 |
| : Identity Theft | 0 | 0 |
| : Indecent Exposure | 0 | 0 |
| : Insecure Premises | 5 | 5 |
| : Intoxicated Pedestrian | 0 | 0 |
| : Kidnapping | 0 | 0 |
| : Littering | 0 | 0 |
| : Loitering | 1 | 1 |
| : Lost or Stray Animal | 8 | 8 |
| : Lost Property | 5 | 5 |
| : Mental Health | 6 | 6 |
| : Missing Person | 2 | 2 |
| : Noise Complaint | 2 | 2 |
| : Open Container | 0 | 0 |
| : Order of Protection Violation | 1 | 1 |
| : Parking Complaint | 9 | 9 |
| : Possession of Alcohol | 1 | 1 |
| : Possession of Drugs | 0 | 0 |
| : Possession of Tobacco | 0 | 0 |
| : Privacy in Communications | 0 | 0 |
| : Prowler | 0 | 0 |

| Code : Description | | Totals |
|---|---|---|
| : Public Assist | 44 | 44 |
| : Public Safety Complaint | 12 | 12 |
| : Public Works Call | 9 | 9 |
| : Report Not Needed | 2 | 2 |
| : Robbery | 0 | 0 |
| : Runaway Juvenile | 5 | 5 |
| : Sexual Assault | 3 | 3 |
| : Suicide | 0 | 0 |
| : Suicide - Attempt | 1 | 1 |
| : Suicide - Threat | 5 | 5 |
| : Suspicious Activity | 53 | 53 |
| : Suspicious Person | 13 | 13 |
| : Theft | 29 | 29 |
| : Threats | 3 | 3 |
| : Tow Call | 0 | 0 |
| : Traffic Accident | 18 | 18 |
| : Traffic Hazard | 9 | 9 |
| : Traffic Incident | 10 | 10 |
| : TRO Violation | 0 | 0 |
| : Truancy | 1 | 1 |
| T/S : Traffic Stop | 173 | 173 |

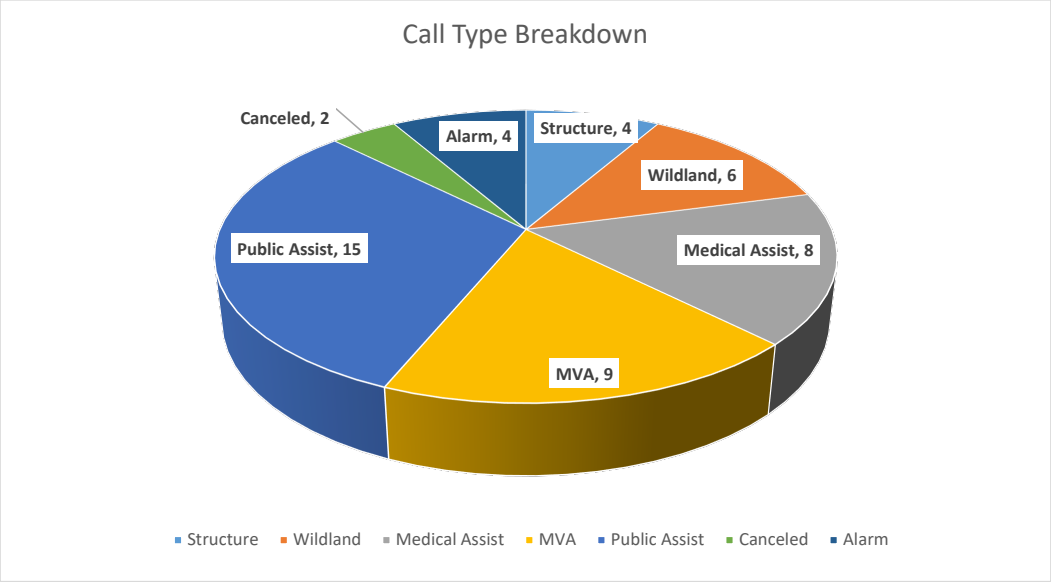
| Code : Description | | Totals |
|---|---|---|
| : Unattended Death | 2 | 2 |
| : Unknown - Converted | 0 | 0 |
| : Unlawful Transactions w/Minors | 0 | 0 |
| : Unlawful Use of Motor Vehicle | 0 | 0 |
| : Vicious Dog | 0 | 0 |
| : Warrant | 8 | 8 |
| : Welfare Check | 17 | 17 |
| **Totals** | 812 | 812 |

**File Attachments for Item:**

5. Fire Monthly Report - December 2025.

# Laurel Fire Rescue

**For the Month of:** Dec-25




| | CALLS * | HOURS ** |
|---|---|---|
| **Total** | **48** | **381** |
| **Other Activities** | Training | **200** |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| **Total Hours for the Month** | | **581** |

## Announcements:

**We are switching to Emergency Networking vs Emergency Reporting to support the change from NFIRS(National Fire Information Reporting System) to NERIS (National Emergency Response Information System)**

**Calls *** The total number of fire calls we received and responded to for the month

**Hours **** The total number of man hours put in by the personnel for the number of calls responded to for the month

### Definitions

| | |
|---|---|
| **Structure** | Fire calls relating to structures (civil or otherwise) |
| **MVA** | Fire calls relating to Motor Vehicle Accidents (MVA), and other calls that relate to modes of transportation (extrications, rescues, traffic control, etc..) |
| **Wildland** | Fire relating to grass, brush, crops, or any vegetation. Would also include outdoor trash fire |
| **Medical Assist** | Calls for Lift Assist and any assitance provided to EMS |
| **Public Assist** | Calls relating to any public safety (power lines, downed trees, hazmat, gas/water/oil line breaks, etc.. |
| **Canceled** | Calls that got canceled while enroute to the scene of call |
| **Alarm** | Calls in response to fire alarms, whether false or real |

**File Attachments for Item:**

6. FY27 CDS Application Correspondence

U.S. SENATOR *for* MONTANA

# TIM SHEEHY

**Congressionally Directed Spending Requests (or "earmarks")**

- Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) is the Senate term for earmarks, while Community Project Funding (CPF) is the House term
- Accounts accepting CDS/CPF projects are determined by the Appropriations subcommittee and can change year to year
- They are funding *opportunities* for a specific recipient, in a specific location, for a specific purpose
    - "$825,000 for the City of Columbus to replace a sewer main"
    - "$2,500,000 for the Milk River Irrigation Project Joint Board of Control to modernize canal infrastructure"
    - "$100,000 for the Treasure County Sheriff's office to purchase new search and rescue equipment"

**Typical Timeline**

- While each year's timeline varies depending on Committee guidelines and past years' funding (or Continuing Resolutions), we anticipate the Office of Senator Sheehy to release applications in early spring, with an early-March deadline.
    - Each project application will then undergo extensive review and consideration.
    - We will notify applicants in the late spring if your project was submitted by Senator Sheehy to the Senate Appropriations Committee.
    - *The Committee then determines which projects will be funded. Not all requests submitted by Senator Sheehy will receive funding.*
- Applicants are encouraged to contact the office (Appropriations@sheehy.senate.gov) as early as possible for their mandatory, 15-minute project consultation call.

**Things to Remember**

- Only **non-profit** organizations and local, state, and Tribal governments are eligible to submit projects.
    - For-profit companies and corporations are not eligible.
- CDS is intended to be a **one-time** funding source.
- Successful projects will not receive funds for **up to a year (or more)** after the appropriations bills are signed into law.
- Once a successful project is included in a final spending package, you will have to complete a grant application with the agency before the funds are disbursed.
- Projects must comply with permitting and regulatory hurdles in order to receive funds.
- CDS funds *cannot* be used to reimburse expenses completed before final agency approval.
- Every year the fiscal situation is different. We will help you adjust your funding request to an appropriate level.
- Some subcommittees require matching funds – please read the guidance.
- Applicants are discouraged from applying for projects that
    - Cover salaries and benefits for employees
    - Are for beautification purposes
    - Provide construction for jails, detention facilities, election facilities, or buildings to conduct local government services
- Projects should have broad community support
    - Applicants will be required to submit a minimum of 5 letters of community support with their application
- **CDS is a funding opportunity, not a guarantee.**

**Resources**

- To view projects submitted by Senator Sheehy in FY26, please visit our website: https://www.sheehy.senate.gov/services/appropriations-cds-requests/
- To view general guidance and projects approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee, please visit the Senate Appropriations website: https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/fy-2026-appropriations-requests-and-congressionally-directed-spending

**Questions or Interest in Applying?**

Please contact Meredith Moore at Appropriations@sheehy.senate.gov

*All deadlines, guidance, and requirements are subject to change in accordance with the Senate Appropriations FY27 Guidance*

U.S. SENATOR for MONTANA
TIM SHEEHY

# FY27 CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING REQUEST FORM

***Please be on the lookout for emails from Appropriations@sheehy.senate.gov regarding guidelines, information, and submission dates as they are made available.***

**Overview:**

The office of Senator Tim Sheehy will only consider Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) proposals that:

1. Support the constituents, industries, and resources of Montana
2. Are submitted by 501(c)(3) organizations and local, state, and Tribal governments. **Requests made by for-profit entities are NOT permitted.**

Congressionally Directed Spending Requests **MUST** meet all guidelines established by the Senate Appropriations Committee to be accepted, in addition to:

- Requestor must submit **FIVE letters of community support** to the office of Senator Sheehy for the request to be considered.
- The project and requesting entity must have **NO financial ties** to the Senator or his family.
- Funding must be for **FY27** only.
- Requestor must understand that CDS funds are one-time funding sources and the project should be sustainable beyond this funding.
- If the project would normally require a funding match or cost share by a non-federal entity, then the requesting entity will need to demonstrate that it can provide this match if it makes a CDS request.

**Please schedule your mandatory consultation call with Meredith Moore at Appropriations@sheehy.senate.gov to discuss your project(s) before submitting this application.**

# REQUEST FORM

## Requesting Organization Info

**Name of Requesting Organization/Entity:**

**Are you a non-profit or government entity? (You must be a 501(c)(3) or government entity to be eligible for CDS funds)**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**Address of Organization:**

**Requesting Entity Employer Identification Number (EIN):**

**Project Point of Contact for Request (This cannot be a registered lobbyist)**

*Please note that our staff may need to contact this person outside of normal business hours.*

**Name:**

**Title:**

**Organization:**

**Address:**

**Phone:**

**Email Address:**

**Second Project Point of Contact for Request**

*Please note that our staff may need to contact this person outside of normal business hours.*

**Name:**

**Title:**

**Organization:**

**Address:**

**Phone:**

**Email Address:**

## Project Information

**Project Name:**

**Website for project or entity:**

**Purpose of Project (please keep to 1-2 paragraphs):**

**Please list other organizations or partners you are working with on this project:**

**Requested FY27 Funding Amount:**

**Was your project included in an FY26 Appropriations bill?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**Have you submitted a request from this organization before? If so, for which funding year?**

**Have you submitted a request for this project before? If so, for which funding year?**

## Project Location

**Is the project statewide?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**Postal Address of Project (If no address available, please provide detailed description of location of project):**

## Congressionally Directed Spending Request

*Based off the FY25 and FY26 Senate Appropriations Committee guidance, we **anticipate** the Committee will accept CDS Requests for the following Accounts (FY26 guidance for reference):*

**Select the appropriations bill that you are requesting funds from:**

- ☐ Agriculture
- ☐ Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
- ☐ Energy and Water Development
- ☐ Financial Services and General Government
- ☐ Homeland Security
- ☐ Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
- ☐ Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
- ☐ Military Construction and Veterans Affairs
- ☐ Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies

**Subcommittee (refer to guidance):**

**Agency (refer to guidance):**

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

*The Build America, Buy America Act requires that all infrastructure projects funded with federal assistance use only iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials produced in the United States. This requirement applies to articles, materials, and supplies that are consumed in, incorporated into, or affixed to an infrastructure project. If you are submitting a CDS request for funding for an infrastructure project, please take this requirement into account.*

1. **Total funding request:**

2. **Total project cost:**

3. **Will the project, if funded, become self-sustaining after a defined period of time?**
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

4. **How would this project benefit the public and why is it a responsible use of taxpayer dollars?**

5. **Why should this request be considered a priority for the people of Montana?**

6. **List any stakeholders that support this request.**
   *Five letters of support should be attached to the email in which you submit this application.*

7. **Is this a new or ongoing project?**

8. **Is this project an eligible purpose under the relevant federal program?**

9. **If yes, please justify the project's eligibility. Include the appropriate statutory, CFR, or other agency guidance citation, including the relevant language justifying eligibility.** *This information is found in the Committee's guidance packets for each subcommittee.*

10. **Estimated Start Date for the Project (if applicable):**

11. **Estimated Completion Date for the Project (if applicable):**

## FY27 Project Cost Breakdown

1. **Please provide a description of how this funding would be utilized:**

2. **Construction/Renovation Costs (please state dollar amounts numerically and how the funds will be spent):**

3. **Supplies and Equipment Costs (please state dollar amounts numerically and how the funds will be spent):**

4. **Travel Costs (please state dollar amounts numerically and how the funds will be spent):**

5. **Other Costs- including salaries and benefits (please state dollar amounts numerically and how the funds will be spent):**

6. **Please indicate how current these budget estimates are (month/date/year):**

7. **Can the project proceed if the Appropriations Committee cannot fully fund the request?**
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

8. **Will this project require additional federal dollars in later fiscal years?**

9. **Has this project been submitted to a congressional office in prior fiscal years?**

**10. Has this project received Congressional Directed Spending funds in the past?**

**11. Is your project included in a state plan?**

**12. Is this project currently authorized in law? If so, where? If not applicable, please write "N/A".**

**13. If this project has received any funding in the past, from either a public or private source, please detail that here:**

**14. If this project is awaiting federal or state grant funding from another program or source, please detail that here:**

**15. Please list any additional sources of funding the program has already received and the status of the funding (e.g. application submitted, funding awarded, funding received):**

**16. Can the receiving entity meet a 50% cost-share (or match) of the total project cost?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**17. Can the receiving entity meet a 25% cost-share (or match) of the total project cost?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

## Other Information

1. **Are there any local concerns or existing derogatory information that would render the entity or project potentially unsuitable for receiving congressionally directed spending funds? Please explain if applicable.**

2. **If submitting multiple requests, please rank this request in terms of priority:**
   *Organizations are limited to three requests for FY27.*
   - ☐ 1
   - ☐ 2
   - ☐ 3

3. **Please list all Members of both the United States House of Representatives and United States Senate who are receiving this request:**

4. **Letters of Support Contact Information:**

5. **Please list all the attachments you are submitting with your request:**
   *Please only submit PDF documents containing letters of support, maps, photos of the project, and supplemental information.*

**File Attachments for Item:**

9. Budget/Finance Committee Minutes of January 13, 2026.

**Minutes of City of Laurel**
**Budget/Finance Committee**
**Tuesday, January 27, 2026**

**Members' Present: Jessica Banks, Tom Canape, Richard Klose, Casey Wheeler**

**Others Present: Kelly Strecker, David Waggoner, Kelly Gauslow**

The meeting was called to order by the Committee Chair at 5:30 pm.

**Public Input**: There was no public comment.

Chairman Richard Klose asked for nominations for the Vice Chairman of this committee, Jessica Banks nominated Tom Canape. Casey Wheeler seconded this nomination. With no objection, Tom Canape will be the new Vice Chairman.

**General Items –**

1. Review and approve January 13, 2026, Budget and Finance Committee meeting minutes. Tom Canape moved to approve the minutes of January 13, 2026. Jessica Banks seconded the motion. With no objection, the minutes of January 13, 2026, were approved. There was no public comment or committee discussion.
2. Review and approve purchase requisitions. Kelly presented a purchase requisition, as Matt Wheeler could not be present at the meeting. The purchase requisition is for a new gas compressor for the digestor at the sewer plant. Kelly stated that Matt knew the compressor was going to be needed this year, as the current compressor is getting worn out. Kelly said that this compressor was put into the budget for this fiscal year. Tom Canape moved to approve the purchase requisition for the new gas compressor for the sewer plant digestor. Jessica Banks seconded the motion. With no objection, the purchase requisition was approved.
3. Review and recommend approval to Council; claims entered through January 23, 2026. Tom Canape moved to approve the claims and check register for claims entered through January 23, 2026. Casey Wheeler seconded the motion. With no objection, the claims and check register of January 23, 2026, were approved. There was no public comment.
4. Review and approve Payroll Register for the pay period ending January 18, 2026, totaling $254,217.79 Jessica Banks motioned to approve the payroll register for the pay period ending January 18, 2026, totaling $254,217.79. Tom Canape seconded the motion. With no objection, the payroll register for January 18, 2026, was approved. There was no public comment.
5. Review and approve December 2025 Monthly Financial Statement. Tom Canape moved to approve December 2025 Monthly Financial Statement. Jessica Banks seconded the motion. With no objection, the December Monthly Financial Statement was approved. There was no public comment.

**New Business** – Jessica Banks asked if water bottles, or a water cooler could be placed in the council chambers area, at some point. With the longer meetings occurring it would be nice to be able to get something to drink.

**Old Business** – None

**Other Items –**

1. Review Comp/OT reports for the pay period ending January 18, 2026.
2. Mayor Update – The mayor had no updates at this time.
3. Clerk/Treasurer Financial Update-Kelly that she received the check from the Laurel Community Foundation in lieu of the EMS donations for the new ambulance. The amount of the check was

$17,457.75. Kelly also stated that she is working on the Laurel Transit Grant for fiscal year 26-27, that is due March 1, 2026.

**Announcements** –

1. The next Budget and Finance Committee meeting will be held on February 10, 2026, at 5:30 pm.
2. Casey Wheeler is scheduled to review the claims for the next meeting.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Strecker

Kelly Strecker

**NOTE: This meeting is open to the public. This meeting is for information and discussion of the Council for the listed workshop agenda items.**

**File Attachments for Item:**

10. Library Board Minutes of September 9, 2025.

MINUTES
CITY OF LAUREL
09/09 /2025 06:05 PM
Laurel Public Library

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

X Katie Fjelstad
X Kate Manley – Board Chair
X Nancy Schmidt, Secretary
X Clair Killebrew – Foundation Liaison
Vacant
X Paige Farmer - online
Mary Nelson

**OTHERS PRESENT:** None

1. Public Input
   *Citizens may address the committee regarding any item of city business not on the agenda. The duration for an individual speaking under Public Comment is limited to three minutes. While all comments are welcome, the committee will not take action on any item not on the agenda.*
   a. Addressing the Board – None

2. General Items
   a. The library board minutes from June, July, and August 2025 were presented to the members for approval. Katie motioned to approve the minutes as presented, Paige seconded the motion. Motion carried.
   b. Circulation Report – (compared to the same time period as last year) *Traffic*: down 10.2%; *circulation*: all items circulated totaled 4,943 (including 762 eBooks), book circulation was down 1.7%, media circulation was up 29%, eBook checkouts for this month was 17.5% of total book circulation, we circulated 1,053 items to partners and 260 items from other libraries; *computers*: internet use was up 16.9%, children's use was down 108.7%, wi-fi use was down 4.5%; *patron cards*: city patrons make up 61.2% of our registered users, county is 28.8%, and state/out of county has 10% of our registered patrons. There were 36 tech assists in August.

3. Old Business
   a. The LPL Internet Use Policy and Library Use Rules Policy still need some revision. Kate suggested that library staff give input on these policies before we review them and vote on approval.
   b. The Summer Reading Program was once again a success at the library. We had 360 children and 166 adults attending the programming put on by both the school librarians and public library staff members. Final count: 526 attendees over an 8-week period.

4. New Business
    a. The fall South Central Federation meeting will be held Saturday, September 13th in Lewistown. Kate and Nancy are planning on attending. They will share highlights from the meeting at the next board meeting.
    b. Montana State Library will be presenting a Trustee Director Training in Great Falls next week, September 15th & 16th, 2025. Nancy is planning to attend and will share information at the next board meeting.
    c. Nancy will also be attending the Montana Arbitration & Labor Relations Training in Bozeman September 29th through October 2nd, 2025. Again, she will share information that may be important to the library and its staff members.
    d. The Fall Retreat at Chico Hot Springs is being held Sunday, October 5th and Monday, October 6th, 2025. Nancy will attend the retreat and then travel directly to Bozeman for the Federation Coordinator and MSL Commission meetings.
    e. A Memorandum of Understanding needs to be created for the Laurel Public Library Board of Trustees and the Laurel Public Library Foundation Board of Directors to make sure that we have definitive guidelines to follow for future projects and funds dispersal. This item was tabled until a later date.

5. Other Items
    a. Board concerns: Kate asked if we had a new board member yet. Nancy stated that she should be joining us next month after she is approved by the Council tonight. Nancy shared the latest budget update with board members.

6. Announcements
    a. The next regular meeting is October 14th, 2025, at 6:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Nancy L Schmidt*

Nancy L Schmidt
Library Director
Secretary for the Board

**NOTE: This meeting is open to the public. This meeting is for information and discussion of listed agenda items.**

**File Attachments for Item:**

11. Library Board Minutes of October 14, 2025.

MINUTES
CITY OF LAUREL
10/14 /2025 06:02 PM
Laurel Public Library

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Katie Fjelstad
X Kate Manley – Board Chair
X Nancy Schmidt, Secretary
X Clair Killebrew – Foundation Liaison
X Mary Nelson
X Paige Farmer
X Kay Wilcox

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Kelly Strecker – City of Laurel Clerk/Treasurer; Cara Orban – Montana State Library

1. Public Input

   *Citizens may address the committee regarding any item of city business not on the agenda. The duration for an individual speaking under Public Comment is limited to three minutes. While all comments are welcome, the committee will not take action on any item not on the agenda.*

   a. Addressing the Board – Kelly Strecker attended the meeting to explain in-depth the library cash account to the trustees. She gave a comprehensive explanation for how the funds accumulated so quickly and how they are being disbursed into the library account for the FY26 budget. Board members asked about the creation of a depreciation reserve account for the library. Cara Orban stated that this is something the trustees can request the Council to create for the library.

2. General Items
   a. The library board minutes from September 2025 were presented to the members for approval. Paige motioned to approve the minutes as presented, Mary seconded the motion. Motion carried.
   b. Circulation Report – (compared to the same time period as last year) *Traffic*: up 11.34%; *circulation*: all items circulated totaled 5,431 (including 660 eBooks), book circulation was up 9.9%, media circulation was up 81.2%, eBook checkouts for this month was 13.76% of total book circulation, we circulated 1,030 items to partners and 217 items from other libraries; *computers*: internet use was up 38.1%, children's use was down 77%, wi-fi use was down 41%; *patron cards*: city patrons make up 59.8% of our registered users, county is 28.9%, and state/out of county has 9.9% of our registered patrons. There were 80 tech-assists in September.

3. Old Business
   a. Kate and Nancy reported on their attendance at the South Central Federation meeting on Saturday, September 13th in Lewistown. We are pleased that every library in the

Federation has someone in attendance. Cara Orban and Corey Sloan presented training at the meeting. They were strategic and facility planning for libraries.

b. Nancy reported that she attended the Fall Workshop in Great Falls. Since she forgot her notes at the Coordinator/Commission meeting in Belgrade, she will share them with the Board members at the next meeting or send them via email.
c. The Arbitration & Labor Relations training in Bozeman was centered on AI and identity fraud as well as at the Fall Retreat in Chico. The Keynote speaker was very intense. His information centered around today's government and how the library could help with the positive aspect of

4. New Business
    a. Board members welcomed a new trustee to the board: Kay Wilcox.
    b. Cara Orban, Montana State Library consultant, presented information to the Board about pursuing a mill levy campaign for the library for the next voting cycle. She passed out a guideline for help campaign decisions such as how much to ask for, who can help with getting information out to the voters, when to ask the City to place the mill levy on the ballot, cost of adding the library levy to the ballot, specific language requirements as per MCA 15-10-425, and fact sheets about the library's benefit to the community.
    c. Under Foundation business, Nancy reported that the foundation received funds from the estate of Virginia Gomer. The Foundation members will pursue moving the funds into a Money Market account for future growth and needs. Clair recommended Ryan Wittman with Carson Wealth. An accountant will also be contracted to do the bookkeeping part of the foundation funds. Board members asked if these funds were to be used for the daily operations of the library. Clair Killebrew, Foundation President, and Nancy Schmidt, Library Director, both stated that Virginia had wanted the funding to be used for materials and programming needs but not for wages and keeping the facility open.
    d. The fall book sale is scheduled for Monday, October 27th through Saturday, November 8th, 2025. Volunteer sign-up sheets will be available at the circulation desk if anyone wants to help with the book sale.

5. Other Items
    a. Board concerns: Kate asked if we are planning to have the elves visit us again this year. Paige suggested that we have the elves but not present a movie again since it is only a few days before Christmas. We will do the "Name the Elf" part of the program.
    b. The holiday schedules were discussed. Paige recommended that we close the library for 4-day weekends at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's. Kate motioned that we close those weekends, Paige seconded the motion. Motion passed.

6. Announcements

a. The next regular meeting is December 9th, 2025, at 6:00 pm. November 11th is a holiday and Board members felt that changing the day of the meeting would just be confusing to everyone. It was decided that we just wait until December for the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Nancy L Schmidt*

Nancy L Schmidt
Library Director
Secretary for the Board

**NOTE: This meeting is open to the public. This meeting is for information and discussion of listed agenda items.**

**File Attachments for Item:**

12. Library Board Minutes of November 11, 2025.

MINUTES
CITY OF LAUREL
11/11 /2025 06:00 PM
Laurel Public Library

# Meeting Canceled – Federal Holiday

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Katie Fjelstad
Kate Manley – Board Chair
Nancy Schmidt, Secretary
Clair Killebrew – Foundation Liaison
Vacant
Paige Farmer
Mary Nelson

**OTHERS PRESENT:** None

1. Public Input
   *Citizens may address the committee regarding any item of city business not on the agenda. The duration for an individual speaking under Public Comment is limited to three minutes. While all comments are welcome, the committee will not take action on any item not on the agenda.*
   a. None

2. General Items
   a. Circulation Report – (compared to the same time period as last year) *Traffic*: down 1.8%; *circulation*: all items circulated totaled 5,120 (including 529 eBooks), book circulation was up 4.3%, media circulation was up 33.9%, eBook checkouts for this month was 11.5% of total book circulation, we circulated 1,334 items to partners and 275 items from other libraries; *computers*: internet use was up 34.5%, children's use was down 75%, wi-fi use was down 3.8%; *patron cards*: city patrons make up 61.3% of our registered users, county is 28.9%, and state/out of county has 9.9% of our registered patrons. There were 45 tech assists in October.

3. Old Business
   a. None

4. New Business

a. None

5. Other Items
   a. Board concerns: None

6. Announcements
   a. The next regular meeting is December 9, 2025, at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L Schmidt

Nancy L Schmidt
Library Director
Secretary for the Board

**NOTE: This meeting is open to the public. This meeting is for information and discussion of listed agenda items.**

**File Attachments for Item:**

13. Laurel Airport Authority Minutes of January 20, 2026.

**Meeting Minutes - January 20, 2026**

**Roll Call**: Doug Myers, Jim Wise, Gary Blain, Joe Mutchler, Randy Hand (All members present)

**Public Members Present**: Jacob Schneller, Brad Sinclair, Fred Lee, Ed Taylor

**Approved without exception**: Minutes from previous meeting: 12/16/2025

**Financial Update:**

- **Balance Sheet** discussed (As of Dec 31 2025)
- **Profit & Loss** discussed (Jan thru Dec 2025)
- Per Joe Mutchler:
    - We are at a decision point where we need to develop a **path forward re financing**. Our current funding may accommodate GA activities, but will not cover growth enough to bring in corp. or jet traffic. We are really growth limited right now financially. Any expenses above normal will be a financial issue.
    - We should have an airport wide discussion with all users to get their opinions.
    - In the future, because we are "developed" (with regard to hangars) we will have to use our own funding to conduct taxilane work and not grant money. We will not be able to use main taxiway funds to do interior taxilane project work.
    - We need ideas regarding our financial path forward:
        - Should we charge transient landing fees? MT Aeronautics may encourage.
        - Montana Aeronautics have 3% interest loans available nut must be repaid. Consider loans to build hangars (commercial?) to raise revenue?
        - Consider charging frequent users of 6S8 like Rocky or Billings Flying Services? The Chinooks are about 50,000 # and doing RW damage?
        - Could Tim Sheehy's office be contacted and of help?
        - BLM was contacted but no commitment was made re firefighting staging.
        - Would DNRC be a possibility?

**Claims:** Reviewed & Approved (Joe / Doug): Summary of checks paid discussed

**Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items**: Please limit to 3 minutes

Discussions:

- **Brad Sinclair** has dropped off two sets of plans for his proposed building to be erected on 2615 Cory. He has requested a tan exterior color. Unanimous vote was taken (Joe / Ji) to require all new buildings on Cory to be white in color.
- **Ed Taylor** requests that (for 2405 DeFrance) he be given an opportunity to allow his own contractor (Brain Hein) to develop drainage plan rather than rely exclusively on KLJ (and be subject to their pricing). As bottom-most lot on that row, Ed should not have to bear cost of any "uphill" mis-handled hangar drainage issues. Brian Hein will examine system on 1/30.

**Public Comment on Agenda Items**: Please limit to 3 minutes

**Reports**: KLJ Engineering-Master Plan and Construction Report

- The LAA Board and Cory lot leasers need to decide on KLJ providing "full services" vs only lot a corner info.
- A motion was made and unanimously approved (Jim / Doug) to allow Joe Mutchler to sign lot leases for Cory projects.
- Bill Austin needs to affirm that he will be leasing a lot on Cory.
- We may be eligible for SRE and mowing equipment grant money (Based on KLJ calc's).

**KLJ WORK IN PROGRESS**

**Laurel Airport Master Plan Update**

**KLJ # 2105-00217 AIP 3-30-0047-024-2022**

KLJ has completed the Airport Master Plan (AMP) and Airport Layout Plan (ALP) updates, and the ALP has received FAA approval. KLJ will now proceed into the project closeout phase to finalize all activities associated with the grant.

**Laurel Pavement Maintenance**

**KLJ #2305-01826 AIG #3-30-0047-025-2024**

American Road Maintenance of Tucson, Arizona, served as the contractor for the project. The project has achieved full completion, and final acceptance has been executed by all parties. KLJ has prepared the project closeout report and submitted a draft to Helena ADO for review. In addition, the grant amendment letter, signed by the Airport Board Chair, was submitted in early October for approval and has since been approved. Pay Estimate No. 3 will serve as the final payment, thereby satisfying all remaining financial obligations to the contractor. KLJ will proceed with finalizing the final pay estimate, completing the closeout process, and compiling the final project closeout report.

**Laurel Access Road - Design and Construction**

**KLJ #2405-01024 AIG #3-30-0047-0026-2025**

The project is currently in the design phase, with construction anticipated for the summer of 2026 under a separate grant. The design is approximately 90 percent complete. A final survey is planned to obtain additional data on the existing access road to support completion of the final design. Upon receipt of this data, the plans will be finalized and prepared for final review and the engineer's stamp.
At this time, work is ongoing on the Final Design, Bidding, Construction Administration and Observation, and Closeout scopes of services. Once the solicitation for asphalt testing is issued, the scope of work can be fully completed, and it will be determined whether this phase will require an Independent Fee Estimate (IFE). Staff will continue advancing the design and FAA Grant Applications in order to be prepared for bidding in late winter or early spring.

**OTHER ITEMS**

- KLJ #2405-01024 Access Road Final Design & CACO for 2026. MDT Aero Draft grant application has been completed and submitted to the MDT Aeronautics Board.
- Cory Hangar – Task Order Agreements – Draft Agreement has been completed Signatures on January 26th 2026.
- DeFrance Hanger for Ed Taylor - Task Order Agreements – Draft Agreement has been completed Signatures on January 26th 2026.

**2 ITEMS REQUIRING ACTION BY CITY/AIRPORT**

- Completion of SF271 for RFR 3 (Design Grant – Access Road)
- Delphi Access Authorization Signature for Sheila
- KLJ Invoices

**ITEMS REQUIRING ACTION BY CITY/AIRPORT**

- Completion of SF271 for RFR 3 (Design Grant – Access Road)
- Delphi Access Authorization Signature for Sheila
- KLJ Invoices

## Maintenance Report:

- The smaller "little red" Case tractor was having starter issues and Murl transported it to Galvin Repair to be fixed. The cost of the repair was $175.
- Jim Wise is in contact with Mead Lumber about the garage door opener options for the three garage doors at the SRE building. They would be @$2,273 for three (estimate attached). Jim Wise and Ben Krause can install them. Voted (Gary / Randy) unanimously to approve installation. Approx. two weeks for delivery. Randy offered to run power to the openers.
- Murl ordered, received, and installed replacement blade edges for the large snow plow.

**New Business:**

a. **Airport entry gate operational concerns**: The gate is operating properly, but is deflected at the top of its open cycle (when the wind is strong) and it closes improperly then into its catch at the bottom. We discussed option of installing a kill switch to allow the gate to be operationally locked out and signage displayed to direct traffic into and out of the manually gate nearby (to the north). Randy will look into an option of a wind sensor. Maybe there is an internal shutoff which could be mounted externally(shutting down both AC power supply, as well as backup battery power).

b. **Perimeter Fence Integrity**: Jim Wise has communicated to Heath Olson that (following the high wind event which removed Heath's hangar roof) that he needs to repair sections of the fence where Heath's roofing panels blew into the fence and broke section of the fencing lose from the posts. Heath assured Jim that he had tuned the issue into his insurance company. If Heath or his insurance company do not take action, Jim Wise will call him again.

c. **Jacob Schneller Ag Spray Operation:** Jacob has provided copies of an operating plan and business summary with schematics of proposed loading area north of Jim Schaak's area. Jim is leasing his area from the FBO and Jacob will be leasing from the airport. Both at same cost rate. Jacob Schneller and Jim Schaak leases are identical with the exception of actual areas leased, and "owners" of the ramp spaces used (FBO vs Airport). A unanimous vote (Gary /Randy) was taken to approve Jacob's Ag Spray operation at 6S8.

d. **FBO and Airport Ramp Security Cameras**. Previous Bret McKenney and Doug Myers discussion: Maybe airport and FBO should share costs on security cameras installed to view FBO parking area, main entry gate area, FBO and airport ramps areas? We need to find an "expert" who could consult with us on cameras, motion sensors, connecting to internet etc.

e. **WX info for METAR publication**: Both John Roberts and Doug Myers contacted AWI and they activated our service to the METAR system so now our automated weather info is automatically published as a METAR for Garmin Pilot, Foreflight use etc.

**Old Business:**

a. **Airport webpage moving to the City of Laurel**: We can't use City servers. They are contract servers with another provider and there is no space for us on them.

b. **Airport webpage links for hangar development and registration**: Randy is in talks with Brock Williams and the City of Laurel.

c. **Abandoned aircraft on FBO ramp**: The Piper Tomahawk is owned by Bret Nd Tom and they have pledged to remove it. They are actively trying to sell it now. A sale fell trough recently to a buyer in Circle, MT. The Bonanza is owned by a man with medical problems and who is in a facility for care. Bret is in talks with his brother and making an active attempt to purchase the Bonanza from him. Bret will keep us apprised of the progress. He has informed the brother that the LAA Board is intent on have both airplanes removed, certainly by next snow season.

d. **FAA compliance**: Joe is in communication with Mandi in Seattle with the FAA. She is reviewing his latest edits of our Minimum Operating Standards revisions, and we hope to soon have her closure on the issue.

Laurel Airport Authority
P.O. Box 242 Laurel, MT 59044
406-628-0172

***Doug Myers***
**LAA Board Secretary**

**406-633-5299**

**File Attachments for Item:**

14. Emergency Services Committee Minutes of January 26, 2026.

**MINUTES**
**CITY OF LAUREL**
**EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMITTEE**
**MONDAY, JANUARY 26, 2026**

The Emergency Services Committee meeting was called to order at 6:00pm on Monday, January 26, 2026 by Vice Chair Jodi Mackay

**Members Present:** Jodi Mackay- Vice Chair, Irv Wilke, Brent Edgmond, Sara Naylor, Jamie Swecker, Bruce McGee, Shane Lacasse

**Others Present:** Ambulance Chief Lyndy Gurchiek, Police Chief Jarred Anglin, Fire Chief JW Hopper

**Public Input:**

**General Items:**

1. Approval of the Minutes from November 24, 2025. Irv made motion to approve, Bruce seconded. Motion carried 7-0

2. Update from Emergency Departments
   - FD Chief Hopper – report attached
   - Fire Department saw an increase of 100 calls for the year of 2025
   - Report shows a breakdown of calls / district with the city making up the majority
   - Firefighters rec'd 4469 hours of training in 2025 – this is all unpaid time
   - Switching to a new platform for reporting of incidents – Emergency Networking
   - CHS rec'd a site safety award and granted the FD $5000
   - Emergency Services fundraiser on 2/14 – a murder mystery dinner
   - Police Chief Jarred Anglin- report attached
   - Police Department saw an increase of 241 calls for the year of 2025
   - Recent homicide still under investigation – no official charges
   - Bill Brew has been acting Captain – leaving room for an inhouse promotion
   - Animal Control managed 646 calls for 2025 – grateful for Sauter's work
   - Dispatch continues to support and work well with officers
   - PD, FD and Amb will continue quarterly interagency training
   - PD received new vests with front and back armor plates – all officers fitted
   - Next purchase will be a rifle rated shield
   - Vests and shield purchased through fundraising and donations. PD will request city cover new officer gear should the need arise
   - Still in the running for a $70000 grant for 10 new tough books for officers
   - Regarding vehicle break ins – from summer issues, 48 suspects now incarcerated. Current suspects appear to be new and possibly adults. Officers continue to patrol. Residents advised to lock vehicles
   - Amb Chief Gurchiek – report attached

- Amb saw an increase of 100 calls for 2025
- Missed 3 calls during reporting period – were on another call – AMR responded
- No big staffing changes for reporting period
- Ambulance continues to see support of community in the purchase of a new ambulance. Ambulance has been striped and will be registered and licensed soon. Will be presented to the community soon.
- Lyndy serving on Rural Health Transformation Program Stakeholder Advisory Committee – MT awarded funds to stabilize rural health care – committee to advise on how to spend – hoping to figure out better ways to bill, recruitment and retention and provide equipment

**New Business:**

Nominations and Appointments of Committee Chair and Vice Chair

Irv nominated Jodi for Chair. Sara seconded. Passed 7 – 0

Jodi nominated Irv for Vice Chair. Bruce seconded. Passed 7 - 0

**Old Business:**

**Other Items:**

**Announcements:**

3. Next meeting will be Monday, February 23, 2026 at 6:00pm in Council Chambers

Meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Laurel Police Department
215 W. 1st Street Laurel, Mt. 59044 ▪ Phone 406-628-8737 ▪ Fax 406-628-4641

Emergency Services Report – FAP

Calendar Year 2025
During the 2025 calendar year, the FAP facility supported a total **of 9,903 calls for service across all emergency service disciplines**. This represents an increase from **9,662 calls for service in 2024**, reflecting a net **increase of 241 calls**, or approximately a 2.5% year-over-year increase.
The increase in calls for service highlights the continued demand placed on emergency services within the City of Laurel and emphasizes the importance of coordinated operations among police, fire, and ambulance personnel housed within the FAP facility.

Law Enforcement Activity
Law enforcement activity during the 2025 calendar year included a total of 1,130 reported crimes. Of those reported crimes:

- **551 cases resulted in charges being filed**
- **461 cases involved no suspect information or did not meet the criteria for charges**
- **61 cases resulted in warrant requests**
- **116 arrests were made**
- **527 citations were issued**

At the start of the new year, the FAP facility has already received 663 calls for service, indicating continued demand for emergency response services moving into the next reporting period. Of those calls for service:

- **82 crimes were reported**
- **51 cases resulted in charges being filed**
- **24 cases involved no suspect information and/or no charges being filed**
- **2 arrests were made**
- **51 citations were issued**
- **5 warrant requests were submitted**

---

Animal Control / Code Enforcement Activity – 2025
Animal Control Officer (ACO) Sauter
During the 2025 calendar year, Animal Control Officer Sauter responded to a total of **646 calls for service, broken down as follows:**

- **216 abandoned vehicle complaints**
- **97 parking complaints**
- **86 code enforcement complaints**
- **187 animal-related complaints**

The Animal Control / Code Enforcement Officer position continues to be a valuable asset to the Laurel Police Department and overall FAP operations. This position absorbs a significant number of calls for service that would otherwise require response by sworn patrol officers.

Without a dedicated Animal Control / Code Enforcement Officer, many abandoned vehicle complaints, parking issues, code enforcement matters, and animal-related calls would be handled by patrol officers, reducing their availability for priority calls, criminal investigations, and proactive enforcement activities.

By assigning these responsibilities to a specialized position, the department improves efficiency, ensures timely response to quality-of-life concerns, and allows sworn officers to remain focused on higher-priority public safety duties.

---

**Dispatch Operations**

Dispatch continued to play a critical role in emergency response throughout 2025, managing call intake, prioritization, and coordination for police, fire, and ambulance services. Dispatchers handled increased call volume while maintaining effective communication and providing consistent support to field units.

---

**Interagency Coordination**

Coordination between police, fire, ambulance, and dispatch staff remained strong throughout the year. Operating together out of the FAP facility allowed for efficient response, improved communication, and effective collaboration during both routine calls and critical incidents.

**Officer Safety Equipment Update**

At the beginning of January, all sworn officers received new ballistic vests through Shield616 in partnership with Angel Armor. In addition to the soft armor vests, officers were also issued Angel Armor rifle plates, providing enhanced protection during higher-risk incidents.

With the help of other donations the department has received, the next planned purchase is a rifle-rated ballistic shield for patrol use. This equipment will further enhance officer safety during high-risk incidents and improve overall preparedness.

In addition, Sergeant Booth and I are currently awaiting a decision on a grant application that was submitted for the purchase of new patrol laptops (Panasonic Toughbooks). If approved, these devices would replace aging equipment and improve reliability and efficiency for officers in the field.

---

**Training & Professional Development**

Throughout 2025, officers continued to complete required and ongoing training to maintain certifications, improve skills, and stay current with legal updates and best

practices. Training focused on officer safety, use of force, investigations, and overall operational readiness.

The department also recently implemented the PoliceOne Academy for both sworn officers and dispatchers. This platform provides expanded access to online training courses and allows for more flexible, consistent training delivery while ensuring staff remain current on required and specialized training topics.

Ongoing training and professional development remain a priority to support effective response, professionalism, accountability, and public safety.

**Looking Ahead**

I have begun reviewing and planning for the upcoming year's budget, taking into account current call volume, staffing demands, and equipment needs. As part of this process, priority is being placed on maintaining current service levels, supporting officer safety, addressing equipment replacement needs, and ensuring the department remains prepared to meet ongoing and future demands.

**Closing**

Overall, **2025** was a year of continued demand and steady operations across all areas of the FAP facility. Police, fire, ambulance, dispatch, and animal control personnel worked collaboratively to respond to calls for service, address community concerns, and maintain public safety.

The efforts of staff, along with the support of community partners and donors, have allowed the department to remain responsive while continuing to improve officer safety, training, and operational readiness. As we move forward, the department remains committed to using available resources responsibly while preparing for the ongoing needs of the Laurel community.

Respectfully,
Chief Anglin

# Laurel Police Department

215 W. 1st Street Laurel, Mt. 59044 • Phone 406-628-8737 • Fax 406-628-4641


Total Calls City Council

Printed on January 26, 2026

[CFS Date/Time] is between '2025-01-01 00:00:00' and '2025-12-31 23:59:59' and

[Primary Incident Code->Code : Description] All

| Code : Description | | Totals |
|---|---|---|
| 10-15 : With Prisoner | 4 | 4 |
| : Abandoned Vehicle | 245 | 245 |
| : Agency Assist | 733 | 733 |
| : Alarm - Burglary | 176 | 176 |
| : Alarm - Fire | 47 | 47 |
| AMB : Ambulance | 1190 | 1190 |
| : Animal Complaint | 85 | 85 |
| : Area Check | 44 | 44 |
| : Assault | 39 | 39 |
| : Bad Checks | 0 | 0 |
| : Barking Dog | 47 | 47 |
| : Bomb Threat | 0 | 0 |
| : Burglary | 9 | 9 |
| : Child Abuse/Neglect | 41 | 41 |
| : Civil Complaint | 152 | 152 |
| : Code Enforcment Violation | 97 | 97 |
| : Community Integrated Health | 27 | 27 |

| Code : Description | | Totals |
|---|---|---|
| : Counterfeiting | 4 | 4 |
| : Criminal Mischief | 87 | 87 |
| : Criminal Trespass | 133 | 133 |
| : Cruelty to Animals | 29 | 29 |
| : Curfew Violation | 67 | 67 |
| : Discharge Firearm | 23 | 23 |
| : Disorderly Conduct | 83 | 83 |
| : Dog at Large | 314 | 314 |
| : Dog Bite | 31 | 31 |
| DUI : DUI Driver | 90 | 90 |
| : Duplicate Call | 57 | 57 |
| : Escape | 0 | 0 |
| : Family Disturbance | 194 | 194 |
| : Fight | 25 | 25 |
| FIRE : Fire or Smoke | 199 | 199 |
| : Fireworks | 39 | 39 |
| : Forgery | 1 | 1 |
| : Found Property | 112 | 112 |
| : Fraud | 51 | 51 |
| : Harassment | 46 | 46 |
| : Hit & Run | 43 | 43 |

| Code : Description | | Totals |
|---|---|---|
| : ICAC | 11 | 11 |
| : Identity Theft | 15 | 15 |
| : Indecent Exposure | 5 | 5 |
| : Insecure Premises | 49 | 49 |
| : Intoxicated Pedestrian | 18 | 18 |
| : Kidnapping | 0 | 0 |
| : Littering | 5 | 5 |
| : Loitering | 23 | 23 |
| : Lost or Stray Animal | 123 | 123 |
| : Lost Property | 63 | 63 |
| : Mental Health | 54 | 54 |
| : Missing Person | 37 | 37 |
| : Noise Complaint | 28 | 28 |
| : Open Container | 0 | 0 |
| : Order of Protection Violation | 27 | 27 |
| : Parking Complaint | 157 | 157 |
| : Possession of Alcohol | 2 | 2 |
| : Possession of Drugs | 19 | 19 |
| : Possession of Tobacco | 9 | 9 |
| : Privacy in Communications | 15 | 15 |
| : Prowler | 2 | 2 |

| Code : Description | | Totals |
|---|---|---|
| : Public Assist | 672 | 672 |
| : Public Safety Complaint | 136 | 136 |
| : Public Works Call | 137 | 137 |
| : Report Not Needed | 39 | 39 |
| : Robbery | 1 | 1 |
| : Runaway Juvenile | 35 | 35 |
| : Sexual Assault | 23 | 23 |
| : Suicide | 1 | 1 |
| : Suicide - Attempt | 11 | 11 |
| : Suicide - Threat | 48 | 48 |
| : Suspicious Activity | 610 | 610 |
| : Suspicious Person | 144 | 144 |
| : Theft | 290 | 290 |
| : Threats | 68 | 68 |
| : Tow Call | 42 | 42 |
| : Traffic Accident | 262 | 262 |
| : Traffic Hazard | 109 | 109 |
| : Traffic Incident | 262 | 262 |
| : TRO Violation | 10 | 10 |
| : Truancy | 5 | 5 |
| T/S : Traffic Stop | 1396 | 1396 |

| Code : Description | | Totals |
|---|---|---|
| : Unattended Death | 11 | 11 |
| : Unknown - Converted | 0 | 0 |
| : Unlawful Transactions w/Minors | 0 | 0 |
| : Unlawful Use of Motor Vehicle | 2 | 2 |
| : Vicious Dog | 37 | 37 |
| : Warrant | 115 | 115 |
| : Welfare Check | 211 | 211 |
| **Totals** | 9903 | 9903 |

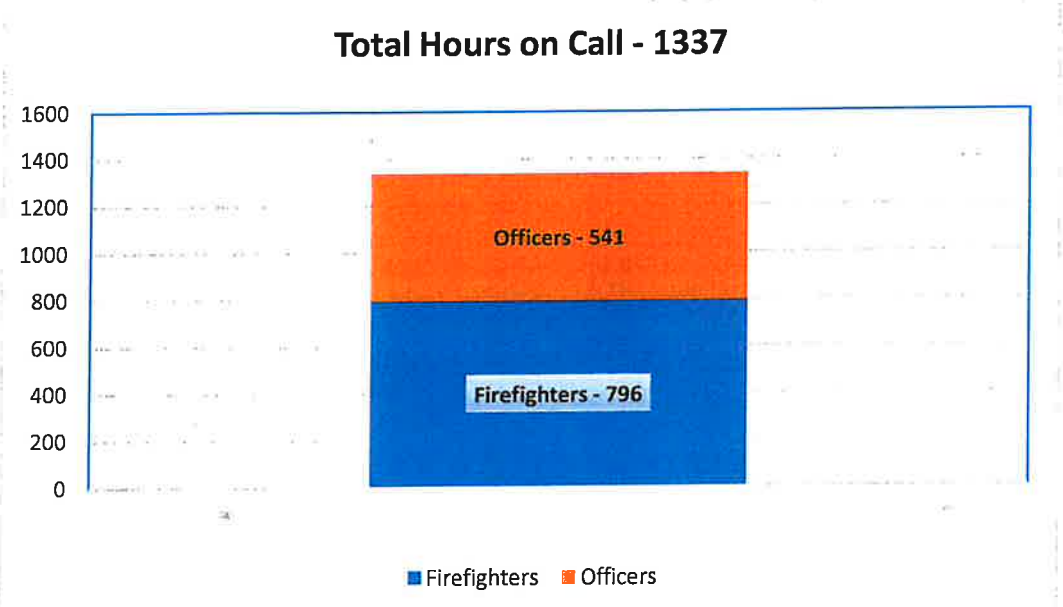
# LAUREL FIRE DEPARTMENT

215 West 1st Street • Laurel, Mt •59044•Office 406.628.4911 • Fax 406.628.2185

## *Emergency Services Meeting 11/24/2025 – 1/26/2026*

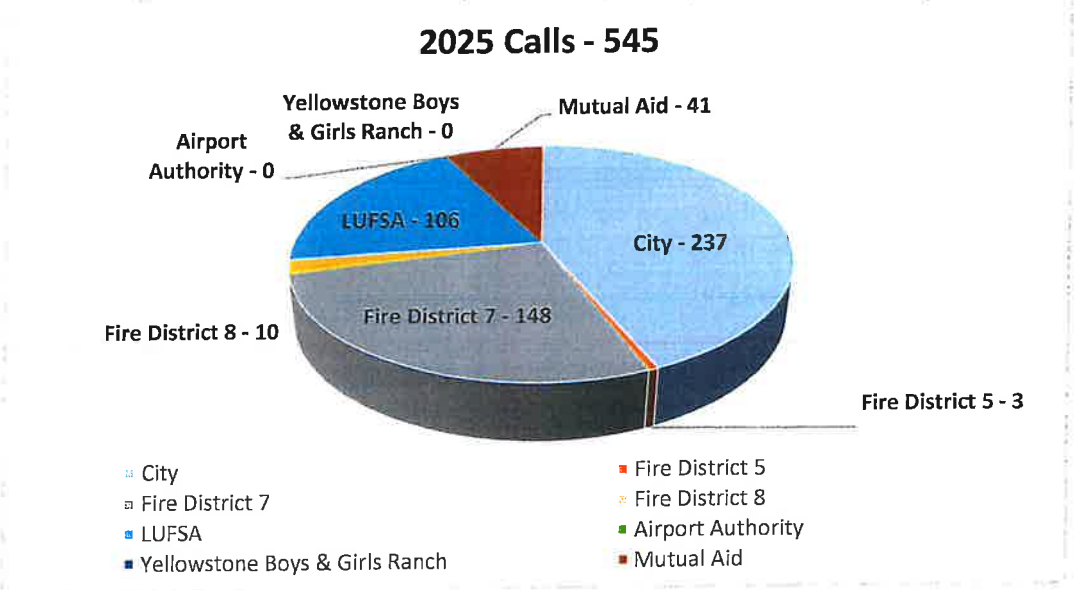
### Calls (11/24/2025 – 1/26/2026)

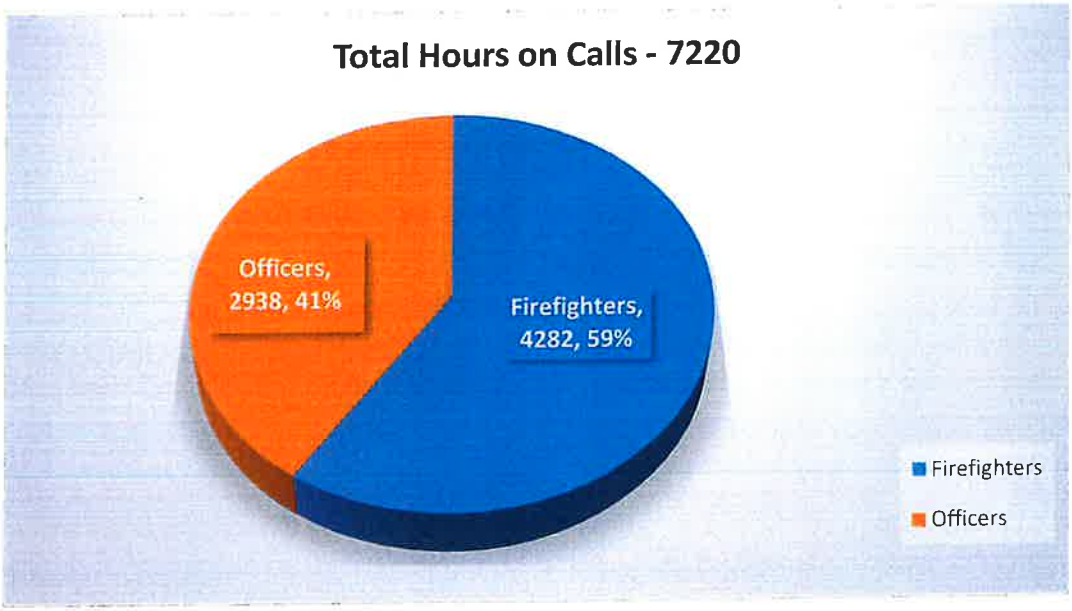
- Responded to 95 **Total** Calls




- Training Hours – **167 HRS YTD**

### 2025 Calls and Hours






- Training – 4469 hours

## Training

- Fire Science
- Traffic Incident Management
- Motor Vehicle Accident (MVA)
- Apparatus Maintenance

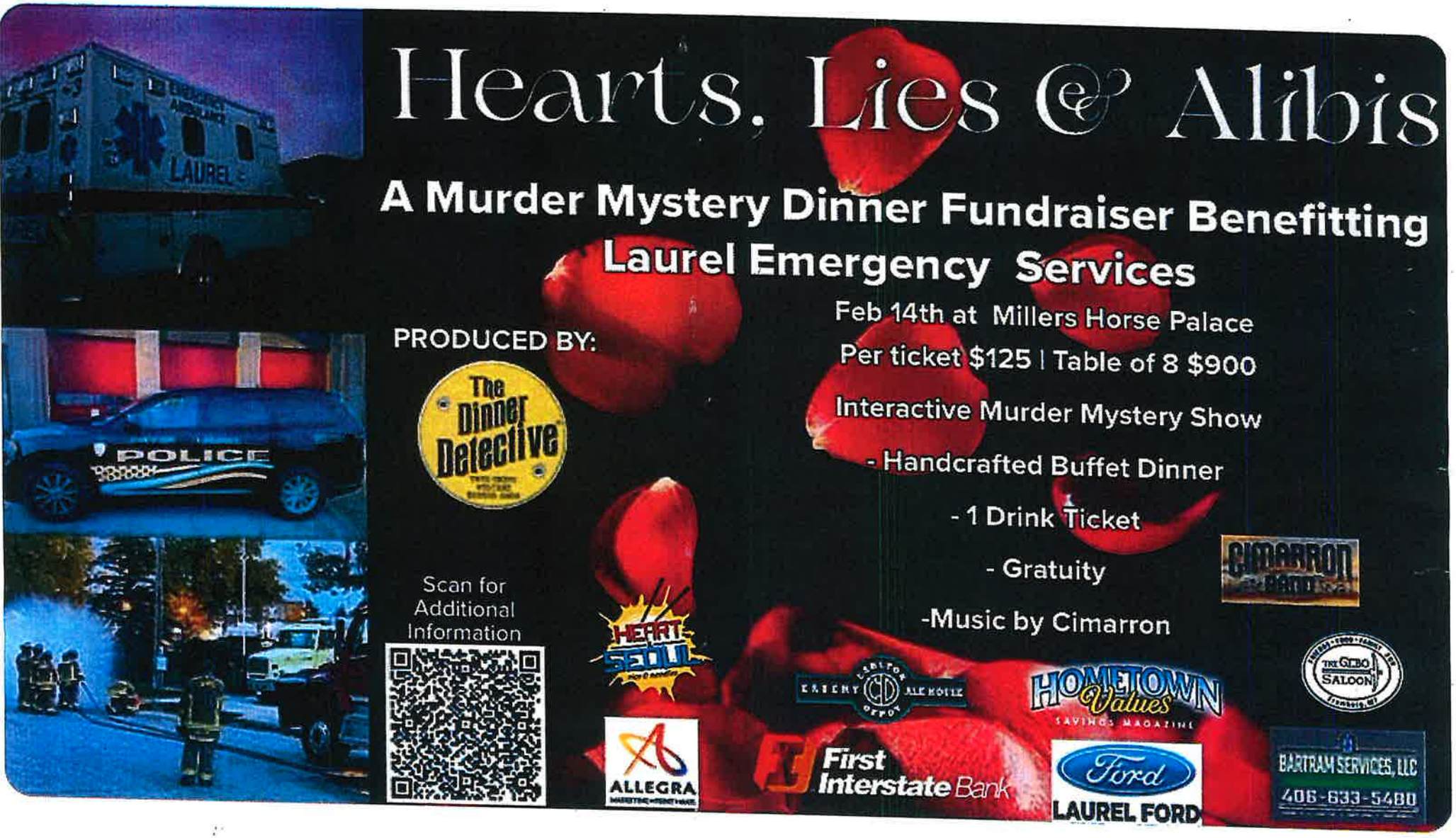
## Rookie School Training

- Driving
- Pump Operations
- Motor Vehicle Accident (MVA)
- Confined Spaces

## Department News

- Current Numbers
  - 30 Members
    - 3 firefighters in rookie school
- DNRC Staffing
  - Training will start in January

- Misc.-
  - Emergency Networking vs Emergency Reporting
    - National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS)
    - National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS)
  - Thank you to all firefighters for their continued dedication and thank you to city staff for their continued support


Hearts, Lies & Alibis
A Murder Mystery Dinner Fundraiser Benefitting
Laurel Emergency Services
Feb 14th at Millers Horse Palace
Per ticket $125 | Table of 8 $900
Interactive Murder Mystery Show
- Handcrafted Buffet Dinner
- 1 Drink Ticket
- Gratuity
-Music by Cimarron
PRODUCED BY:
The Dinner Detective
Scan for Additional Information
LAUREL
POLICE
HEART SEOUL
ALLEGRA
First Interstate Bank
HOMETOWN Values
SAVINGS MAGAZINE
Ford
LAUREL FORD
BARTRAM SERVICES, LLC
406-633-5480
CIMARRON
THE GEBO SALOON

**Laurel Emergency Services Report created 1/26/26:**

**2021**
1228 requests for service
135 times LEMS was unavailable
34 times AMR was unavailable
318 responses in Ward 5=26% of calls outside of the city of Laurel

**2022**
1238 requests for service
177 times LEMS was unavailable
48 times AMR was unavailable
351 responses in Ward 5=29% of calls outside of the city of Laurel

**2023**
1300 requests for service
171 times LEMS was unavailable
23 times AMR was unavailable
351 responses in Ward 5=27% of calls outside of the city of Laurel

**2024**
1363 requests for service
73 times LEMS was unavailable
14 times AMR was unavailable
373 responses in Ward 5=27% of calls outside of the city of Laurel

Recent Month Summary:

**December 2025:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Requests | 137 |
| Missed Calls | 3 = 5% |
| Shortest Delay | 24 minutes |
| Longest Delay | 44 minutes |
| Average Delay | 32 minutes |
| Fire Driver Available | 2 times |
| City Driver Available | 0 time |
| QRU Response With 1 Provider | 1 time ** |
| On A Previous Call | 3 times |
| 2 Units On A Call | 6 times |
| No Crew / Provider Available | 0 times |
| AMR Transported or Responded | 3 times* |
| Red Lodge Transported | 0 times |
| HELP Flight Transported | 0 times |
| HELP Amb Transported or Responded | 0 time |
| Columbus Transported or Responded | 0 times |
| Joliet Transported | 0 times |
| Park City Transported | 0 time |
| PD Assisted Pt or Transported | 0 times |
| FD Assisted Pt no transport | 0 times |
| POV Transport | 0 times |
| Refusal or no transport | 0 times |
| YCSO Transported | 0 times |
| MHP Transported | 0 times |

**0 times the QRU responded to begin patient care. 0 times the QRU responded and the patient refused / no transport to hospital or no patient found.

39 responses in Ward 5 = 28% of calls outside of the city of Laurel

1 LEMS response for mutual aid. 1 with Joliet. None of these responses resulted in LEMS not being available for another call.

**2025 Running Totals**

| | January | February | March | April | May | June | July | August | September | October | November | December | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Requests | 124 | 123 | 99 | 124 | 115 | 134 | 130 | 127 | 112 | 150 | 117 | 137 | 1492 |
| Missed Calls | 1 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 44 |
| Shortest Delay (minutes) | 38 | 12 | 18 | 26 | 27 | 18 | 24 | 4 | 38 | 18 | 16 | 24 | 4 |
| Longest Delay (minutes) | 38 | 40 | 38 | 38 | 27 | 26 | 24 | 53 | 39 | 37 | 21 | 44 | 53 |
| Average Delay (minutes) | 38 | 29 | 27 | 33 | 27 | 22 | 24 | 28 | 39 | 27 | 19 | 32 | 28 |
| Fire Driver Available | 2 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 31 |
| City Driver Available | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| QRU Response w 1 Provider | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 7 |
| On A Previous Call | 1 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 44 |
| 2 Units On A Call | 8 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 10 | 8 | 8 | 1 | 6 | 76 |
| No Crew / Provider Available | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| AMR Transported or Responded | 0 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 29 |
| Columbus Transported or Responded | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Joliet Transported | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Park City Transported | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Red Lodge Transported | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| HELP Flight Transported | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| HELP Amb Transported or Responded | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| POV Transport | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| PD Assisted Pt or **transported** | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| FD Assisted Pt no transport | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| YCSO Transported | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| MHP Transported | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| QRU/AMR, Refusal or No Patient | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Responses in Ward 5 | 28 | 36 | 29 | 33 | 33 | 39 | 35 | 30 | 36 | 32 | 34 | 39 | 404 |
| LEMS response for mutual aid | 1 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 17 |

**Other Reporting Information** *correction made after report given

-Staffing – no changes, working on training the new crew members and credentialing 2 of our new paramedics. 1 paramedic successfully completed the credentialing process in the middle of December and they are now approved to work on their own as a paramedic.

-Recertification for our individual EMS licenses is due March 31st, working on our continuing education hours and recertification classes will be attended in Billings. Approximately half of our staff is recertifying this year.

-We have been continuing to work on ambulance fund raising and have been blown away by the continued support of the community, the continued fundraisers and donations. We hope to have the new ambulance ready to go in the next couple of weeks. It is striped and we have moved everything we could retrofit from the 2004 ambulance to the new one.

-Mandi had 2 Safe Kids events and provided 10 car seats for November and 1 event and provided 2 seats for December.

-Tony presented and in house show and tell for us on January 22nd to the Laurel Chamber.

-I have been selected to sit on Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) Stakeholder Advisory Committee representing the DPHHS EMSAC Committee and EMS. The purpose of the RHTP Stakeholder Advisory Committee is to provide strategic guidance, statewide coordination, and stakeholder-informed input throughout Montana's five-year Rural Health Transformation Program. The Committee serves in an advisory, non-voting capacity. MT has been awarded $233 million investment from the federal government to stabilize and modernize rural health care delivery throughout Montana. These funds will support Montana's rural health care providers in delivering sustainable, high-quality affordable care. The 5 initiatives are Workforce Development, Sustainable Access, Innovative Care Models, Community Health & Prevention and Technology Innovation.

**File Attachments for Item:**

15. Laurel Urban Renewal Agency Minutes of December 22, 2025.

**MINUTES**
**CITY OF LAUREL**
**LAUREL URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY**
**MONDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2025**
**11:00 AM**
**CITY BOARDROOM**

A LAUREL URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY meeting was held in City Boardroom and called to order by Cami Story

at 11:00 a.m. on December 22, 2025

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| x | Judy Goldsby | x | Dean Rankin |
| x | Cami Story | x | Daniel Klein |
| | Cheryl Hill | x | Peggy Pollock |
| | | | |

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

| | |
|---|---|
| | Myrna Beartooth RC&D |
| x | Forrest Sanderson |
| x | Doug Whitney |
| x | Doug Tamcke |
| x | Diane Lehm |
| | Kurt Markegard |

**General Items:**

Roll Call

Approval of Minutes – All minutes were approved Judy and 2nd by Daniel – all in favor

**New Business:**

**Update on By-Laws and Board Positions:** Cami updated the members on the status of updating the By-laws. The changes have been presented to City Council and will be up for a vote at their next meeting. An update will be presented at our next meeting.

**Ditch Covering:** Contract with contractors was signed during the meeting. Doug Tamcke gave an update on this project status, we are on schedule and will be completed by April.

**SE 4th Lighting:** We will be holding an Open House for property owners on SE 4th to give information on lighting project, January 14th from 4-6pm at The Front Porch

Street lighting district still needs to be finalized and approved.

**Update on Project #1:** Doug Tamcke gave an update, project is on schedule and progressing nicely. 95% design on January 15th. Group discussed all updates Doug presented.

**Announcements:** Next meeting will be January 12, 2026

**Adjourn Meeting:** Judy made a motion to adjourn the meeting Daniel 2nd

Respectfully submitted,

Camilla Story - LURA Chair

*The city makes reasonable accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person's ability to participate in this meeting. Persons needing accommodation must notify the City Clerk's Office to make needed arrangements. To make your request known, please call 406-628-7431, Ext. 2, or write to City Clerk, PO Box 10, Laurel, MT 59044, or present your request at City Hall, 115 West First Street, Laurel, Montana.*

**File Attachments for Item:**

16. Laurel Urban Renewal Agency Minutes of January 12, 2026.

**MINUTES**
**CITY OF LAUREL**
**LAUREL RENEWAL AGENCY**
**MONDAY, JAN 12TH, 2026**
**11:00 AM**
**CITY BOARDROOM**

A LAUREL RENEWAL AGENCY meeting was held in City Boardroom and called to order by Cami Story

at 10:00 a.m. on Jan 12th, 2026

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| x | Judy Goldsby | x | Dean Rankin |
| x | Cami Story | x | Daniel Klein |
| x | Cheryl Hill | x | Peggy Pollock |
| | | | |

**OTHERS PRESENT**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| x | Diane Liem | | Gaurav Thakur |
| x | Forrest Sanderson | | Triple Tree Brad, Doug & Bruce |
| x | Doug Whitney | | |
| L | Kurt Markegard | | |

KEY CODE: x-present ☐ -absent L-late

**General Items:** Roll Call

Approval of Minutes – All minutes were approved Judy and 2nd by Dean– all in favor

**New Business:**

**Updated By Laws:** The Ordinance will go before city council 1/13/2026 for the 2nd ready and approval.

**Update on the Board:** Peggy Pollock was approved to the committee; Cheryl was approved for the advisory position.

Cheryl has sent over a letter to request to be added back onto the committee once the ordinance has been approved and we move from 5-7members. Judy will also be sending over a letter to the county commissioners to request to be the county representative.

**Election of Officers:** Judy made a motion to change the voting moved until after the council has had the opportunity to approve the ordinance. Dean made a 2nd and all was in favor.

**Old Business:**

**Project 1:** 95% will be provided by Triple Tree at our next meeting Jan 26th

**Ditch Covering Task #5** Jan 8th there was a meeting to go over pre-construction – Doug from Triple Tree said we are looking at just over a week before construction starts.

**E. Railroad Path** – The city has begun to do work on the shoulder.

**Lighting on SE 4th St. Task Order #6** –

- Forrest is updating the cost sheet to represent what will be the approx. costs for landowners. This letter needs to also include an invite to the Open house on Feb 4th 4-6pm at The Front Porch 109 W. 1st St Laurel Mt
- Forrest will contact Triple Tree to change Open house date and time.
- Judy made a motion, Peggy 2nd to exclude the following businesses in the lighting district. Wendy's, Napa & Fox lumber.
- Daniel makes a motion to leave Bernhart out of the lighting district as is and Judy made a 2nd – all was in favor. We will look at adding lighting to that street and others at a later project.

**Other updates:**

**Big Sky EDA & Beartooth RC&D** –

**Announcements:** Next meeting will be Jan 26th, 2026

**Adjourn Meeting:** Cheryl made a motion to adjourn the meeting Judy 2nd at 12:00

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Hill

Cheryl Hill - LURA Secretary

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**File Attachments for Item:**

17. Laurel Urban Renewal Agency Minutes of January 26, 2026.

**MINUTES**
**CITY OF LAUREL**
**LAUREL RENEWAL AGENCY**
**MONDAY, JAN 26TH, 2026**
**11:00 AM**
**CITY BOARDROOM**

A LAUREL RENEWAL AGENCY meeting was held in City Boardroom and called to order by Cami Story

at 10:00 a.m. on Jan 26th, 2026

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| x | Judy Goldsby | x | Dean Rankin |
| x | Cami Story | | Daniel Klein |
| x | Cheryl Hill | x | Peggy Pollock |
| | | | |

**OTHERS PRESENT**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Diane Liem | | Gaurav Thakur |
| x | Forrest Sanderson | | Triple Tree Brad, Doug & Bruce |
| | Doug Whitney | | Steve Solberg |
| | Kurt Markegard | | |

KEY CODE: x-present ☐ -absent L-late

**General Items:** Roll Call

Approval of Minutes – All minutes were approved Judy and 2nd by Dean– all in favor

**New Business:**

**Ditch Covering Task #5** – Construction has started. They will be having weekly meetings on Tuesdays.

**Lighting on SE 4th St. Task Order #6** –

- Forrest is waiting for the advised and updated lighting cost analysis for land owners
- March 11th 4-6pm will be an open house for landowners
- Forrest will have the letters out to landowners by Feb 23rd with the following included
  - Invitation
  - District Map
  - Cost Est

**Project 1:** Bids will be going out the end of Feb 2026. We are still waiting on MDT 100% design approval. Hoping for that by next meeting.

**Old Business:**

**Updated By Laws:** The ordinance will go before the council on Tuesday 27th for the 2nd reading. We will have one vacant spot that will need to be filled.

**E. Railroad Path** – Shoulder work has been completed by the city.

**Other updates:**

**Big Sky EDA & Beartooth RC&D** – Space to Place grants are open for submissions

**Announcements:** Next meeting will be Jan 26th, 2026

**Adjourn Meeting:** Cheryl made a motion to adjourn the meeting Judy 2nd at 11:19am

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Hill

Cheryl Hill - LURA Secretary

*The city makes reasonable accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person's ability to participate in this meeting. Persons needing accommodation must notify the City Clerk's Office to make needed arrangements. To make your request known, please call 406-628-7431, Ext. 2, or write to City Clerk, PO Box 10, Laurel, MT 59044, or present your request at City Hall, 115 West First Street, Laurel, Montana.*

**File Attachments for Item:**

18. Resolution No. R26-05: A Resolution Of The City Council Of The City Of Laurel, Montana Amending Resolution No. 25-75 And Affirming Continuation Of Services Under The Managed Service Agreement For Renamed Systems Technology Consultants.

**RESOLUTION NO. R26-05**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LAUREL, MONTANA AMENDING RESOLUTION NO. 25-75 AND AFFIRMING CONTINUATION OF SERVICES UNDER THE MANAGED SERVICE AGREEMENT FOR RENAMED SYSTEMS TECHNOLOGY CONSULTANTS.**

WHEREAS, the City Council approved a Managed Service Agreement with Morrison-Maierle Systems Technology Consultant on August 26, 2025;

WHEREAS, Morrison- Maierle Systems Technology Consultants has now changed its name to Systems Technology Consultants; and

WHEREAS, the City wishes to continue to work under the Managed Service Agreement approved by City Council, but under the new approved business name of Systems Technology Consultants.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Laurel, Montana, that the City amends Resolution No. 25-75 to reflect that the continuation of services is approved, and that the new name for the services contract is Systems Technology Consultants.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the City Council on the 10th day of February, 2026, by Council Member _____.

PASSED and APPROVED by the City Council of the City of Laurel the 10th day of February, 2026.

APPROVED by the Mayor the 10th day of February, 2026.

CITY OF LAUREL

_____
Dave Waggoner, Mayor

ATTEST:

_____
Kelly Strecker, Clerk-Treasurer

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

_____

Michele L. Braukmann, Civil City Attorney

**File Attachments for Item:**

19. Resolution No. R26-06: A Resolution Of The City Council Approving A Transportation Coordination Plan For The City Of Laurel Transit.

**RESOLUTION NO. R26-06**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVING A TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION PLAN FOR THE CITY OF LAUREL TRANSIT.**

BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Laurel, Montana,

Section 1: Approval. The Transportation Coordination Plan for the City of Laurel Transit (hereinafter "Transportation Coordination Plan"), a copy attached hereto and incorporated herein, is hereby approved.

Section 2: Execution. The Mayor is hereby given authority to execute the Transportation Coordination Plan on behalf of the City.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the City Council on the 10th day of February 2026, by Council Member _____.

PASSED and APPROVED by the City Council of the City of Laurel the 10th day of February 2025.

APPROVED by the Mayor the 10th day of February 2025.

CITY OF LAUREL

_____
Dave Waggoner, Mayor

ATTEST:

_____
Kelly Strecker, Clerk-Treasurer

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

_____
Michele L. Braukmann, Civil City Attorney

# TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION PLAN

# LAUREL TRANSIT

# MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

# FY-27

## Prepared by:

## City of Laurel

**Kelly Strecker, Clerk/Treasurer**

**Scheduled for City Council Adoption: February 10, 2026**

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# Montana Coordination Plan Outline

**Adoption by Transportation Advisory Committee:**

The relevant transportation providers and agencies are described in more detail.

**Laurel Transit:**

Laurel Transit (also referred to as the transit system) is working to provide a successful on-demand service for public transportation within the City limits of Laurel while offering regular service to Billings. Laurel Transit is looking to contract with as many agencies in the area as possible to provide expanded service. It is currently not feasible for Laurel to have a fixed route system; however, accommodations for such a system are being discussed such as bus benches and signs within the City.

**Laurel Transit Schedules:**

Laurel Transit operates Monday-Friday 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM. The Billings service route begins at 7:30 and in-town service begins at 10:00 am. Appointments are taken Monday-Friday 8:00 AM-5:00PM. Billings buses run only on Tuesday's.

**Laurel Transit Fleet:**

Laurel Transit has 3 vehicles in our fleet.

2009 Dodge Sprinter: 10 Passenger Van. Mileage is 98,000 and is ADA compliant.
2023 Transit Van: 13 Passenger Van. This is our newest Van. Mileage in under 6,000 and is ADA compliant.
2024 Endra Van: This is 14 Passenger Van. Mileage is 9,000 and is ADA compliant.

**Agencies Involved:**

- Allies in Aging (formally ARA of YC)-- has partnered with the City of Laurel to provide the drivers for the buses and the cell phones. Allies in Aging previously operated the senior bus in Laurel, which was absorbed with the formation of Laurel Transit. The City works

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very closely with Allies in Aging to ensure the level of service delivered through the senior bus program is continued in Laurel Transit.

- Tender Nest Assisted Living—Contact with Tender Nest Assisted Living continues, and the facility has contracted with the City for vouchers.
- COR – There is a plan to include COR in future TAC meetings.
- Riverstone Health – The transit system is working to contract demand/response service for Riverstone Health patients.
- Laurel Senior Center – The Ford Endura and the Transit buses currently stored in a garage at the Senior Center. The Dodge Springer is currently being stored at the City Shop garage. Frequent trips are taken to the senior center for rider visits.
- Laurel Health and Rehab- Continues to utilize the bus service for transportation purposes for their clients and residents.
- MET- contact with MET in Billings has been made in hopes to grow the Laurel Transit system and gain new ideas.

**Public Involvement:**

The Transportation Advisory Committee meets quarterly. Meetings notices are published on the City of Laurel website and at City Hall. Meetings are open to the general public. For more participation at TAC meetings, more community outreach will be done to involve public participation.

**Private Sector**:

The City of Laurel does not have any private transportation system available.

**Needs Assessment and Plan to Increase Ridership**:

Laurel Transit will be starting focus groups this fiscal year in order to determine the needs of the community and their transit provider. The focus groups will include current riding members, City staff, other transportation providers, healthcare employers, and other members from the community. The groups will focus on the current challenges the transit program faces and get a better idea of how to improve the system.

The Laurel Transit System has stepped up its advertising strategies by designing and distributing flyers with route information and publishing that flyer in the Yellowstone County News on a



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regular basis. There have been talks with Allies in Aging regarding placing advertisements on the new transit bus. This type of advertisement may be an option for other local businesses.

**Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Meetings:**

The Laurel TAC meets on a quarterly basis. The TAC is comprised of City staff, community interested members and representatives from Residential Support Services, Allies in Aging, and other interested parties. For more participation at TAC meetings, more community outreach will be done to involve public participation.

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