

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING ----- FEBRUARY 2, 2026

The Regular Council Meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Mayor Karst. The following Council members were present: Austin, Ozark, Schindler, Heitman, Brabeck, and Koski. Candy Lagerquist, Bob Hanson, Sean Heavy, Lance and Karen Bender, Kyle Schultz, Trevor Waarvik, Scott Stanley, Curtis Leader, and John Bach from Interstate Engineering were also in attendance. City Clerk Amundson and City Attorney Pekovitch attended via Google Meets. There was no media representation.

Mayor Karst led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment on any Agenda Item: NONE

Council member Koski made a motion approving the consent agenda including the payment of claims for February 2, 2026 in the amount of \$98,870.47, the Valley Court Apartment claims in the amount of \$264.83, and the minutes of the January 20, 2026 Regular Council Meeting. The motion was seconded by Council member Brabeck, and carried unanimously.

Bob Hansen was in attendance from the Cherry Creek Subdivision to talk to the council about sewer options. He said they are having issues with their lagoon system. They have been working with Matt Knierim and Interstate Engineering on how to fix the problems. One of the options they suggested was installing a lift station at El Cor Del and installing a line to the FSA building which would eliminate the Cherry Creek Association from having a lagoon and it would make things easier for them. The estimated cost for them to install a lift station and sewer line was approximately \$1.3 million. In the initial talk a few months back they had discussed annexation into the city and the association felt it wasn't a good option for them. His suggestion would be to charge a user fee on a monthly basis that would be paid to the city. There are 56 houses in that subdivision with about 120 people that would connect to the system. Mayor Karst mentioned one of the concerns the previous DPW had was the current capacity at the lagoon was around 87% and if the city would allow them to connect, could possibly bring the lagoon to max capacity. One of the concerns City Attorney Pekovitch was that there is no benefit to the city, other than the city taxpayers would be covering the cost of operations. Another thing would be the maintenance of the line and who would be responsible if any repairs had to be completed. Mayor Karst said that the responsibility of each party involved would have to be worked out in an agreement before anything was started. John Bach mentioned when Interstate did the preliminary engineering report for Cherry Creek, the intent behind it was for the lift station and line to be constructed by Cherry Creek and maintained by them as well, with the connection at the manhole located by the FSA building. The only cost to the city would be the treatment of it at the wastewater facility. John did also say that Cherry Creek has formed a district, which allows them to be eligible for grants to construction the lift station and the line installation. Mayor Karst mentioned the other concern was the difference in the water quality, since Cherry Creek uses well water and what the impact for treatment would be. Bob stated one of the other things that Matt Knierim had mentioned was the treatment facility had been updated and improved since the Glasgow Air Force Base. There was discussion on the updated lagoon project that was completed in 2013. Council member Austin believes the city's position for years has been to not offer services outside the city limits. It states in the agreement between the city and Marco, that we are not allowed to sell water outside of the city. Council member Ozark inquired if there was any concern that the city has a lagoon that we still have 20 years to pay for and we are at 87% capacity. Mayor Karst said there is room for expansion at the lagoon, but the accuracy of the percentage used at this time is unclear, since he has been told different amounts. It was brought up that Malta, West Glendive, and Sidney have user agreements for situations like this. Council member Brabeck said those communities should be contacted to gather additional information. Council member Koski asked City Clerk Amundson how much debt is remaining on the lagoon project. City Clerk Amundson said the amount remaining is about \$2.3 million and the initial debt was about \$7 million. Mayor Karst asked City Attorney Pekovitch if she was familiar with the agreement in Malta. She is not, but will research it. Mayor Karst will contact Sidney and Glendive to get their agreements and then they can compare user agreements. Mayor Karst then asked Bob if their well water has to be tested and results sent to DEQ. Yes, they have to test and submit like the city does. Mayor Karst said a decision can't be made tonight, but the city will research the information and follow up on it.

Council member Koski made a motion reappointing Jill Page and Pete Helland to the Recreation Board for another three (3) year term effective February 3, 2026. The motion was seconded by Council member Schindler, and carried unanimously.

Council member Koski reported on the personnel committee meeting. She said currently Adam is making \$30.25 and that includes the interim supervisor wage. He had requested an increase to \$31.50, but the committee agreed that he would be making a higher wage than the previous supervisor did, when they left employment with the city. The recommendation from the committee is to increase his wage to \$30.80, but the city will be entering into negotiations with the union in the near future. He will also receive an additional \$.50 when he gets his third certification. Council member Ozark asked if that was the committee's recommendation to increase the wage to \$30.80. Mayor Karst said yes. The council discussed the amount of time Adam has been in the supervisor position and the two (2) out of three (3) certifications he has. Mayor Karst commented on the work that Adam has accomplished in the past three months to get things worked on and figured out. Council member Ozark made a motion to move Adam Morehouse into the permanent water supervisor position with a wage of \$30.25 per hour and

revisit the wage through the negotiation process. The motion was seconded by Council member Austin, and carried unanimously.

The updated job description for the Director of Public Works position has gone through three (3) personnel committee meetings and input from Jon Bengochea, Paul Skubinna, and the committee. Council member Koski stated that the requirement to have an engineering degree had been removed. And flipped the Bachelor's degree in Civil engineer construction technology with a minimum of three (3) year public works experience; including two (2) years in utilities, and supervisory experience. Other requirements that were added are to obtain water/wastewater certifications in two (2) years and certifications for commercial and residential building permit regulations within two (2) years. Council member Ozark asked what would happen if they didn't receive these certifications in the requested timeframe. Council member Brabeck said there is always job reviews. City Attorney Pekovitch said to remove the working knowledge and understanding of codes language in the job description. Council member Ozark made a motion to approve the revised job description with the revision. The motion was seconded by Council member Heitman, and carried unanimously. The council would like the position advertised for at least three (3) week to see what we receive for applications. If there are no qualified applicants, the position can remain open. City Clerk Amundson will make the job description revision and work on the advertisement. She also asked the council if they would like her to advertise in the same places, she advertised for the Chief of Police position. Council member Ozark inquired on the cost to advertise in the Billings Gazette and Great Falls Tribune. City Clerk Amundson said the advertisement in the Billings Gazette was over \$1,000.00, she doesn't know how much for the Tribune as she hasn't received that bill yet. He would recommend that the city doesn't advertise in those two (2) papers this time. He also asked if we have seen an impact in the number of applications for the chief position. City Clerk Amundson said as of today she had received thirteen (13) applications, but they are all from out of state and applications are due by Wednesday the 4th.

Mayor Karst explained that there were three (3) breakdowns of funding through DES from Great West and they recommended that the city apply for funding just for the levee closure project. This project is included in the updated SWIF plan. There is a match to this grant, but it's already included in the budget. Council member Koski said it's better to apply for just one project rather than multiple ones. Council member Schindler made a motion to allow Great West Engineering apply for the Montana Resiliency funding for the levee closure project. The motion was seconded by Council member Ozark, and carried unanimously.

Council member Ozark made a motion approving the amendment no. 3 to the Professional Services Agreement for Levee Accreditation in the amount not to exceed \$17,000.00. The motion was seconded by Council member Koski, and carried unanimously.

Mayor Karst explained that he had talked with Water Supervisor Morehouse and at the January 5th council meeting the council had approved the contract with Morrison-Maierle to come to town and perform a wastewater treatment facility evaluation and list recommendations on the maintenance that needs to be completed in the amount of \$28,500.00. The listing that was included in the initial proposal, the water department is already working on having repaired. Adam had suggested to the mayor that it would be more beneficial to pay Lemco to fix what needs done, instead of paying an engineer to come and tell the city what maintenance needs to be completed. Council member Austin made a motion to withdraw from the Morrison-Maierle contract for the wastewater facility evaluation. The motion was seconded by Council member Schindler. Council member Brabeck asked if there was a penalty fee for withdrawing from the contract. There is no penalty to do this. City Clerk Amundson explained that in the contract there is a clause that states either party in writing may withdraw from the contract with a 30-day notice. Motion carried. City Clerk Amundson will draft the letter to Morrison-Maierle, and then email it to City Attorney Pekovitch for her review before the mayor signs it.

Council member Koski reported on the progress on the electrical service at Smith Bike Park. She had met with Mattfeldt Electric, and they believe it's not feasible to install a solar panel, since it could be stolen or vandalized and a separate meter would be required. Both her and Rob will go talk with Mattfeldt this week to figure this out and it can be taken off the agenda, since the work won't be able to be completed until spring. She also said that TBID will pay for the electrical installation, they just don't want to pay a monthly service fee.

Unfinished Business – Levee Safety Committee Report – NONE

Committee Reports: There were no reports for Water, Cemetery or Grant. Mayor Karst asked if the due date for the Chief of Police applications is Friday. City Clerk Amundson said they are due on Wednesday. He then mentioned a committee will have to go through those applications that have been received, then an interview committee. Council member Ozark suggested having the full council review the applications, since it's an important position within the city. Mayor Karst asked the council when they wanted to meet to review the applications. City Clerk Amundson said she will compile all of the applications for each of the council members, along with a score sheet, and each council member can score them individually, and after the score sheets are returned, then interviews can start with the top three (3) candidates. If the top three (3) candidates don't qualify, then they can move to the next three (3) in line. She also told the council that she had spoke with Chief Weber and he was good with this process. She will put together packets and have them ready for the council to pick up early next week. Sean Heavy asked the council if they would be able to focus on which direction the police department is going to go, since there seems to be a lot of negative aspects within the department at this time. City Attorney Pekovitch mentioned Chief Weber is working on

removing vehicles off of the city streets. Mayor Karst said there is information included in the packets on the program that Malta has in place. City Clerk Amundson told the council that it was put in the packets as informational only at this time and if it's something the council decides they would like to implement, do it when the current rate increases "sunset" in September 2027, so there doesn't have to be multiple mass mailings to the residents to let them know the next rate increase.

Department Head Reports:

City Attorney Pekovitch mentioned she will be in Glasgow on Thursday for court and will meet with the police department in the afternoon.

City Clerk Amundson updated the council on the new website status that Matt Stevenson is working on.

John Bach told the council that he had put together a memo for irrigation options for Sullivan Park. Mayor Karst will make additional copies for the council to review. There were also a few questions for City Attorney Pekovitch to review on that memo.

Mayor Karst said the employees are keeping busy.

Public Comment: Sean Heavy was in attendance to talk to the council about snow removal downtown. He wanted to know if it was possible to get the downtown ice scraped away from the curb line. Mayor Karst said Street Foreman Runningen had talked with Candy about it and they should be there on Thursday of this week to take care of that. Sean talked about the section of 2nd Avenue South that the highway department graded on a warmer day to remove the ice that was along the curb. He wanted to know if that's something the city crew could do, since the area from Western Drug down to the Elks is all ice and someone had fallen because of it. Council member Brabeck made a comment about the state plows; they only grade their streets once a season. Candy said there is a handicapped ramp downtown that can't be used at this time because it's covered in water and ice. Council member Austin mentioned in the morning when there are no cars parked downtown, the ice is too hard to scrape, and by the afternoon when it warms up, there are too many parked vehicles to be able to bring the grader in to remove the ice. Candy asked if it was an issue having Drew Markle move the snow that was in front of her business since she had customers coming in early that morning. Mayor Karst said no, it was just where he dumped the snow off at, in front of Opportunity Bank, blocking the intersection. Council member Ozark said in the ordinance it states that the downtown area can move the snow into the street, but the issues come into play when the snow is being piled and blocking intersections. The city street department will continue to follow the snow removal plan that is in place, which has the downtown area listed towards the top. This winter has been different than previous ones and ice has become the issue all over town, not just in the downtown area.

Council member Koski made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Council member Austin the meeting adjourned at 6:11p.m.

ATTEST:

Stacey A. Amundson

Stacey Amundson
City Clerk-Treasurer

Rod Karst
Mayor