

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS,
COLUMBUS, MONTANA HELD April 20, 2026, AT 7:00 P.M.**

COUNCIL PRESENT OFFICERS PRESENT	The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Tim Mayo began the meeting with the pledge of allegiance. The council persons present were Rick White, Dennis Holten, Tim Mayo, Cole Waltner, Kelly Ault and Danen Johannes. Staff members present were Chief of Police Aaron Uecker, Public Works Director Peyton Brookshire (via zoom), City Attorney Ryan Addis, and Clerk-Treasurer Cherrie McAlexander.
SIDELINE IN PERSON	Andrew Lauckner, Mike & Nomie Ketterling, Madilynn Killgrove, Kisha Cornell, Charlie Denison, Joel Morantan
PUBLIC HEARING	NONE
REGULAR MINUTES APPROVED	Tim Mayo asked the council if they had reviewed the minutes of the April 6, 2026, regular meeting, and if there were any additions, deletions, or corrections. Cole Waltner made a motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting, seconded by Rick White; roll call for vote, Rick White, Dennis Holten, Cole Waltner, Kelly Ault and Danen Johannes, all yea votes. Motion passed.
SHUT OFF LIST	The shut-off list for the month of April 2026 was presented to the Council. Rick White made a motion to approve the list as presented, seconded by Kelly Ault; roll call for vote, Danen Johannes, Kelly Ault, Cole Waltner, Dennis Holten, and Rick White, all yea votes. Motion passed.
APPROVAL OF CLAIMS	The claims list for the 1 st half of April was presented to the Council. Cole Waltner made a motion to approve the claims as presented, seconded by Dennis Holten; roll call for vote, Rick White, Dennis Holten, Cole Waltner, Kelly Ault and Danen Johannes, all yea votes. Motion passed.
PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS	Andrew Lauckner expressed his concerns with city ordinance 17.96.070 and 17.116.070. Mike and Nomie Ketterling presented a bench concept that they would like to place along the city's walking path.
FIRE DEPT.	The Fire Chief was not present and did not provide a report.
POLICE	The Police Chief was present and provided a report.
PUBLIC WORKS	The Public Works Director was present and provided a report. Peyton asked the Solid Waste Committee members when they could meet again. The date and time was set.
ATTORNEY	The City Attorney was present and provided a report. Ryan stated that he had sent the ordinance revisions over to the Chief of Police for review that Cole was wanting for off-roading at Itch-Kep-Pe Park. Ryan gave a summary about the Nemont Franchise Committee meeting.
CITY JUDGE	The City Judge was not present and did not provide a report.
CLERK-TREASURER	The Clerk-Treasurer was present and provided a report.
DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND EX PARTE COMMUNICATION	Dennis Holten stated that he had a meeting with Peyton and Aaron about the employee health allowance that was on the agenda for tonight.

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PUBLIC COMMENT ON CURRENT AGENDA ITEMS:	NONE
COMMITTEE REPORTS-	The minutes from the Nemont Franchise Committee Meeting on April 13, 2026, were presented to the council.
UNFINISHED BUSINESS	<p>Approval of Employee Health Allowance for FY26/27 Option A \$1837.52 per month or Option B \$1708.00 per month. Dennis Holten made a motion to approve option A, Danen Johannes stated he would like to make a motion for option B because he feels it's the better option for the city. Ryan stated that there was already a motion so there couldn't be another. Rick White seconded the motion for option A. Danen stated that the city has been increasing the health allowance every year. Danen stated that he is a teacher and doesn't get full insurance paid for himself. Danen said it is unreasonable for the city to continue to pay full insurance for not only for the employee but also for children or spouse. He feels the city needs to be more financially responsible. Dennis Holten gave a history on how the employee benefit allowance has been handled in the last year and what last year's benefit was how it could be used. Dennis stated that the deductibles have increased this year for all plans offered. Dennis discussed the committee that was put together to look at wages and employee benefits and the history on the committee and read what was agreed upon and put into the personnel policy. Dennis stated that he can't even believe that we are talking about reducing employee benefits. Dennis said that we are at a 3% increase for employee benefit allowance per personnel policy and if we are not going to approve that then he doesn't know where we are at. Dennis said the city is still in good shape moneywise and the last thing he would ever want to do is take away employee benefits to balance the budget. Roll call for vote Rick White, Dennis Holten, Cole Walter and Kelly Ault all voted Yes. Danen Johannes voted no. Motion passed.</p>
NEW BUSINESS	<p>Approval of the Special Use Permit for the John Beer Memorial Fly in at the Wolterman Memorial Airport on May 30, 2026. Dennis Holten made a motion to approve the permit, seconded by Cole Waltner; roll call for vote, Danen Johannes, Kelly Ault, Cole Waltner, Dennis Holten and Rick White, all yea votes. Motion passed.</p> <p>Approval of Lease Agreement between the City and Early Bird Coffee House. Cole Waltner made a motion to approve the agreement, seconded by Kelly Ault. Rick asked where this coffee house was located. Cherrie stated it is across from Montana Silversmiths. Tim asked about the rent increase in the agreement. Cherrie explained that it is the agreement price of 5% per year. Roll call for vote, Rick White, Dennis Holten, Cole Waltner, Kelly Ault and Danen Johannes, all yea votes. Motion passed.</p> <p>AIRPORT *Approval of Pay Application No. 4 to Morrison Maierle in the amount of \$997.90. 95% FAA - \$948.00, City - \$24.95, County - \$24.95 sponsor share of 5%. Cole Waltner made a motion to approve the pay application, seconded by Dennis Holten. Kisha Cornell gave a brief explanation about the pay application. Roll call for vote, Danen Johannes, Kelly Ault, Cole Waltner, Dennis Holten and Rick White, all yea votes. Motion passed.</p> <p>Resume Work Order for CR Contracting - Pavement Maintenance. Kelly Ault made a motion to approve the work order, seconded by Rick White. Kisha</p>

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	<p>Cornell gave a brief explanation about the work order. Roll call for vote, Rick White, Dennis Holten, Cole Waltner, Kelly Ault and Danen Johannes, all yea votes. Motion passed.</p> <p>Natural Gas Request to move forward with construction agreement – city’s cost \$10,000. Dennis Holten made a motion to approve the agreement, seconded by Danen Johannes. Kisha Cornell gave a brief explanation about the agreement. Roll call for vote, Rick White, Dennis Holten, Cole Waltner, Kelly Ault and Danen Johannes, all yea votes. Motion passed.</p>
<p>COMMENTS NOT ON THE AGENDA</p>	<p>Cole asked when the city clean up week was scheduled. Cherrie responded May 4th-11th. Danen expressed his concerns about people potentially getting turned away because of a statement that was added to the notice. Peyton explained the reason and said if the bin is full, they will have to come back. Rick asked the city to send an email to BNSF thanking them for fixing the rough railroad crossing on third street. Cherrie said she would send an email. Joel Morantan gave an update of events happening with the Chamber of Commerce in the next few weeks.</p>
<p>ADJOURNMENT</p>	<p>Tim Mayo requested a Motion to Adjourn. Rick White made the motion to adjourn at 7:42 p.m. seconded by Dennis Holton, roll call all yea votes.</p>



 JOSEPH MORSE II, MAYOR



 CHERRIE L MCALEXANDER, CLERK-TREASURER

