

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS,
COLUMBUS, MONTANA HELD May 18, 2026, AT 7:00 P.M.**

COUNCIL PRESENT OFFICERS PRESENT	The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. The mayor began the meeting with the pledge of allegiance. The council members present were 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, City Attorney Ryan Addis (via Zoom), and Clerk-Treasurer Cherrie McAlexander. Fire Chief Rich Cowger of the Columbus Fire District #3 was present.
SIDELINE IN PERSON	Kisha Cornell and Joel Morantan
PUBLIC HEARING	NONE
REGULAR MINUTES APPROVED	The mayor asked the council if they had reviewed the minutes of the May 4, 2026, regular meeting, and if there were any additions, deletions, or corrections. Dennis stated that there was a correction needed where he said that he would have a problem with the boat float, and it should have said he would NOT have a problem. Cole Waltner made a motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting with corrections, seconded by Tim Mayo; roll call for vote, Danen Johannes, Kelly Ault, Cole Waltner, Tim Mayo and Dennis Holten, all yea votes. Motion passed.
SHUT OFF LIST	The shut-off list for the month of May 2026 was presented to the Council. Tim Mayo made a motion to approve the list as presented, seconded by Dennis Holten; roll call for vote, Dennis Holten, Tim Mayo, Cole Waltner, Kelly Ault and Danen Johannes, all yea votes. Motion passed.
APPROVAL OF CLAIMS	The claims list for the 1 st half of May was presented to the Council. Cole Waltner made a motion to approve the claims as presented, seconded by Danen Johannes; roll call for vote, Danen Johannes, Kelly Ault, Cole Waltner, Tim Mayo and Dennis Holten, all yea votes. Motion passed.
PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS	NONE
FIRE DEPT. POLICE PUBLIC WORKS	<p>The Columbus Fire District #3 Chief was present and provided a report.</p> <p>The Police Chief was present and provided a report.</p> <p>The Public Works Director was present and provided a report. Peyton presented council with a report about the issues with the pool and advised that the pool not open this season due to the issues. There was discussion between the council and Peyton about the leak location, chemicals, lifeguard training and safety. Tim asked what year the backhoe was and if we would have to go out to bid for the repairs. Peyton said 2019 and no. There was discussion on the repairs, warranty and the cost of a new backhoe. Kelly asked if we needed to decide what needs to be done about the pool. Tim asked if it was something we could vote on, the mayor said he didn't know but hated to see it be closed. There was more discussion with council and Peyton about the issues at the pool. Peyton suggested letting the citizens know sooner than later and there was time to get something in the paper for Thursday. Dennis stated that he wanted the city to do everything they could to get it open. He said to put something in the paper that tells the issues and problems with the pool. Cherrie asked if the council wanted her to send all the lifeguards to training next week and spend thousands</p>

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<p>ATTORNEY</p> <p>CITY JUDGE</p> <p>CLERK-TREASURER</p>	<p>of dollars for nothing. Cole asked if we didn't open the pool how quickly the city could get started on the grant renovations. Cherrie stated that the task order for the pool renovations is on the agenda tonight. The plan is to go to bid as soon as the documents are ready. Originally the work was not going to be scheduled until after this pool season so the work can get started sooner if the pool is not open. Cole said he does not want to see the pool closed but with everything he has heard it makes sense to close the pool, go out to bid and get the renovations moving. Tim said he agrees with Cole. There was more discussion on lifeguards, leaks and renovations. Dennis said he doesn't like it. Tim said he understands that Dennis doesn't like it, but we have to weigh the pros and cons. Cherrie asked Ryan if we need to vote on this or if we even can because this is not an action item. Ryan said I would wait until next meeting. Dennis said if we wait, we might know more. Tim said that we are supposed to be opening the pool then and have all the guards trained. Ryan said that Peyton can make an operational decision based on what the council is collectively saying tonight but can make the official vote at the next council meeting.</p> <p>The City Attorney was present and provided a report. Ryan announced the birth of their new baby. Council and staff, all congratulated Ryan.</p> <p>The City Judge was not present and did not provide a report.</p> <p>The Clerk-Treasurer was present and provided a report.</p>
<p>DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND EX PARTE COMMUNICATION</p>	<p>NONE</p>
<p>PUBLIC COMMENT ON CURRENT AGENDA ITEMS:</p>	<p>NONE</p>
<p>COMMITTEE REPORTS-</p>	<p>Solid Waste Committee Meeting minutes from May 1, 2026 were presented to the council. Dennis stated that there was some language that still looks like we are charging people for something they are not using.</p>
<p>UNFINISHED BUSINESS</p>	<p>Second reading of Ordinance 373 – Changing the Regular Meeting time to 6:30pm. Cole made a motion to waive the reading, seconded by Dennis Holten; roll call for vote, Dennis Holten, Tim Mayo, Cole Waltner, Kelly Ault and Danen Johannes, all yea votes. Motion passed. Dennis Holten made a motion to approve the ordinance, seconded by Kelly Ault; roll call for vote, Danen Johannes, Kelly Ault, Cole Waltner, Tim Mayo and Dennis Holten, all yea votes. Motion passed.</p>
<p>NEW BUSINESS</p>	<p>Approval of the Interlocal Agreement between the City and Columbus Rural Fire District #3 in the amount of \$152,880.00. Tim Mayo made a motion to approve the agreement, seconded by Cole Waltner; roll call for vote, Dennis Holten, Tim Mayo, Cole Waltner, Kelly Ault and Danen Johannes, all yea votes. Motion passed.</p> <p>Approval of Resolution 895-2026 – Amending the Fixed Asset Policy for the City. Cole Waltner made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Dennis Holten; roll call for vote, Danen Johannes, Kelly Ault, Cole Waltner, Tim Mayo and Dennis Holten, all yea votes. Motion passed.</p>

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Approval of the School Resource Officer Agreement in the amount of \$40,000.00. Tim Mayo made a motion to approve the agreement, seconded by Kelly Ault. Dennis asked if the amount was the same as last year. Cherrie said yes. Roll call for vote, Dennis Holten, Tim Mayo, Cole Waltner, Kelly Ault and Danen Johannes, all yea votes. Motion passed.

Approval of the Special Use Permit for a Street Dance on Diamond Street on May 29th from 4pm to 11pm. Event is sponsored by Palladium Draughthaus. Kelly Ault made a motion to approve the permit, seconded by Cole Waltner; roll call for vote, Dennis Holten, Tim Mayo, Cole Waltner, Kelly Ault and Danen Johannes, all yea votes. Motion passed.

Approval of the Special Use Permit for Beartooth Days at Heritage Park on June 27th from 10am to 7pm. Event is sponsored by Beartooth Bible Church. Cole Waltner made a motion to approve the permit, seconded by Kelly Ault; roll call for vote, Danen Johannes, Kelly Ault, Cole Waltner, Tim Mayo and Dennis Holten, all yea votes. Motion passed.

Approval of Public Works Construction Agreement between the City and Heart 7 in the amount of \$74,100.00 for road relocation, resurfacing the gun range and restructuring the back stop. Dennis Holten made a motion to approve the agreement, seconded by Tim Mayo; roll call for vote, Danen Johannes, Kelly Ault, Cole Waltner, Tim Mayo and Dennis Holten, all yea votes. Motion passed.

Approval of Task Order 36 from Interstate Engineering to furnish services for the city pool rehabilitation in the amount of \$117,000.00. Dennis Holten made a motion to approve the task order, seconded by Kelly Ault; roll call for vote, Dennis Holten, Tim Mayo, Cole Waltner, Kelly Ault and Danen Johannes, all yea votes. Motion passed.

AIRPORT

Approval of the appointment of Rick Flemmer to the City-County Airport Board for a term of 4 years. Cole Waltner made a motion to approve the appointment, seconded by Tim Mayo; roll call for vote, Dennis Holten, Tim Mayo, Cole Waltner, Kelly Ault and Danen Johannes, all yea votes. Motion passed.

Approval of Northwestern Energy Customer Agreement to install natural gas to the T-hangar complex. Total amount of \$11,306.00. Tim Mayo made a motion to approve the agreement, seconded by Dennis Holten; roll call for vote, Danen Johannes, Kelly Ault, Cole Waltner, Tim Mayo and Dennis Holten, all yea votes. Motion passed.

Approval of the city council to support the City-County Airport Board in the creation of an Airport Authority – this vote does not approve an Airport Authority. Danen asked what the advantages are to having an Airport Authority. Rich Cowger explained. They mayor stated that it would take the city and county out of the equation, would be set up like a special district. Dennis asked if the authority would have the option to tax. Rich said that is not something the authority is looking at doing. Cole Waltner made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Tim Mayo; Danen Johannes, Kelly Ault, Cole Waltner, Tim Mayo and Dennis Holten, all yea votes. Motion passed.

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COMMENTS NOT ON THE AGENDA	<p>Kelly asked Peyton if he could look into having flag hangers on the city light poles instead of placing them in the holes in the concrete. Peyton said he would look into this. She would like to see these on the light poles that the Christmas decorations get hung on. Danen asked about the condition of Itch-Kep-Pe Park and if the city was repairing and maintaining the picnic tables and other items that might need repairs. Peyton said repairs will be made. Peyton also stated that he continues to get people dumping down there illegally. Danen stated that he had been down at Itch-Kep-Pe three times this last week and every time he had seen police patrolling. Danen asked about the huge cracks at the tennis courts and what was getting done about them. Peyton explained that he reached out to the contractor and the contractor was not helpful. Tim asked about any legal action that the city could take. Ryan discussed the contract that the city had with the contractor and that the cracks were noted in the contract and not covered under any warranty. Danen requested that next time we do repairs to the courts we repair them right. Danen said that he has had several people approach him about the hours at the transfer site and wanted to know if we could extend the hours on Wednesday to stay open longer. Danen suggested 11-6. Peyton said that it was possible and he would check with the employee that handles the transfer site. Cole agreed with Danen. Kelly asked again what we are doing with the pool, are we putting in the paper that the pool is going to be closed. Cole said that is what we pay Peyton for if he says it needs to be shut down then that's what we need to do. Peyton said he would talk to the paper and get something in the paper. Danen said he doesn't want to see the pool close, but he understands with all the issues that we should be proactive about it. Danen stated that he worries about all the kids that thought they had a job, they need to know sooner than later. He said it's hard to find a summer job in Columbus. Kelly asked if the city had summer jobs for kids, like mowing and such. Peyton said there used to be one. Dennis stated you must be 18 to operate equipment.</p>
ADJOURNMENT	<p>The mayor requested a Motion to Adjourn. Dennis Holten made the motion to adjourn at 7:43 p.m. seconded by Tim Mayo, roll call all yea votes.</p>



 JOSEPH MORSE II, MAYOR



 CHERRIE L MCALEXANDER, CLERK-TREASURER

