

MCA 2-3-212. Minutes of meetings. Minutes must include without limitation: (a) the date, time, and place of the meeting; (b) a list of the individual members of the public body, agency, or organization who were in attendance; (c) the substance of all matters proposed, discussed, or decided; and (d) at the request of any member, a record of votes by individual members for any votes taken.

APPROVED MINUTES

The Libby City Council held regular meeting #1681 on Monday, July 21, 2025, in the Council Chamber at Libby City Hall.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Mayor Williams.

Present were Mayor Williams, Councilors Gail Burger, Ethan Kolp, Kristin Smith, Hugh Taylor, Administrator Sam Sikes, Clerk/Treasurer Leann Monigold, and (via Zoom) Councilor Brian Zimmerman and City Attorney Dean Chisholm. Councilor Melissa Berke was not in attendance.

Announcements: Mayor Williams announced George Gerard of the Rotary Club dropped off a Veteran parking sign he would like in City Hall parking lot, part of a previously discussed project along with a window poster with a QR code linking to help resources. Justin will contact Mr. Gerard about installing the sign.

The EPA and DEQ will be in Libby on August 4 for a five-year groundwater review. A council update is scheduled for 6:15 p.m. that Monday, with a public meeting to follow on Tuesday, possibly 6pm (exact time unknown).

The Mineral Avenue Project community engagement was held two days last week. Thursday at the Farmers Market and another on Friday, they were well attended and received mostly positive feedback. Comments collected will be reviewed by the engineer to develop a plan. They will be back in the fall for a meeting with property owner and the public.

Approve Approve minutes for Regular Council meetings #1680 held July 7, 2025:

Councilor Burger **MADE A MOTION** to approve City Council meeting minutes 1680, Councilor Kolp **SECONDED**.

Public Comment: None

Councilors Burger, Kolp, Smith, Taylor, and Zimmerman voted **FOR**.

MOTION PASSED.

Department Head Reports:

Administrator: Administrator Sikes reported FY25 Building Permits: Final closeout completed with 35 permits issued, totaling \$56,653—an increase from last year’s 40 permits at \$37,198. The difference in revenue was due to multi-structure permits. Permits included 31 buildings, 13 roofs, 2 remodels, 2 carports, 1 major addition, 2 decks, and 1 miscellaneous permit. This growth supports increased property tax revenue. Department of Revenue splits and updates to street maintenance and lighting taxes are in progress.

Cedar Street: A crew began exploratory digs due to discrepancies between actual and documented pipe sizes. The crew will be identifying parts needed to prevent delays during the construction phase. Door-to-door communication will be used in the future for affected residents.

Adjustments for the second half of the Equivalent Dwelling Unit (EDU) billing will be reflected in August bills (for July).

DEQ Inspection: An OU1 site inspection was conducted. Erosion was observed, justifying the addition of soil and efforts to find more resilient ground cover like clover to protect the cap.

HVAC Unit Replacement at City Hall, five of 27 discontinued HVAC units were replaced today. A company was found that could make the units, avoiding full system replacement. The remaining 21 units will be scheduled for replacement over the next 5–7 years, with funding allocated through the capital improvement plan.

A cost-effective solution has been identified to deter vandalism at Fireman’s Park restrooms. Instead of installing Wi-Fi, a stand-alone MVR system with front and rear bulletproof cameras will record directly to a hard drive. The total cost is approximately \$1,200, significantly less than the initial estimate. The setup is pending final approval from MMIA. Cameras will not face inside restrooms. Recordings may be used for legal purposes and will be securely stored, with annual backups archived. Due to potential audio recording capabilities, Mr. Sikes will review Montana privacy laws and develop a policy for public access to footage. Signage will also be posted to inform the public of video surveillance.

A resident submitted a variance request to place a mobile home on city property. Mr. Sikes will need to inform them a conditional use permit is required instead, as the request may not comply with current zoning regulations and will work with the resident before the matter is brought to Council.

Councilor Smith inquired if the cameras could be used without recording audio because it would not be beneficial. Mr. Sikes said he would investigate that, without sound would also provide a smaller recording size and could fit more on a hard drive.

Committee Reports:

Budget: Mayor Williams announced a meeting will be scheduled for next Wednesday, July 30th and will be finalizing the budget prior to the August 4th Preliminary Budget approval.

City/County Board of Health (BOH): Councilor Smith reported The Board of Health met briefly and reviewed a septic system variance request for a property near a lake. Although the proposed system does not meet standard setback requirements, it replaces an illegal system and includes advanced treatment, which was considered an improvement by the Health Department. The BOH received an update on the crisis response team, which is currently non-operational. Questions and Concerns were raised about the program's lack of progress; it is intended to provide specialized mental health support and reduce the pressure on law enforcement. Believing the Commissioners have a responsibility to that program, more updates are to come. The BOH issued a letter with concerns about the five-year review status, not thinking that their plan is fully protective of public health.

Public Comment Non-Agenda: None

New Business:

Tony Petrusha- Recreation update:

Mr. Petrusha reported he has been working with Libby Park District (LPD), Port Authority, and Lincoln County to manage recreational facilities in the Libby area.

It has been almost a year since his last report, as stated previously, the main objective was to develop and improve the LPD; progress is good. The functionality has improved to align with Montana Codes for districts, developed a budget and accounting program, hired a Recreation manager (Funded by NRDP) and established project priorities.

Mr. Petrusha believes it is a good time to coordinate recreation planning and development in South Lincoln County and would like the LPD and the City of Libby to establish a working relationship to help increase recreational opportunities for the Libby area and requested a member of the City Council join to speak to recreation.

Swim pond construction is moving ahead, there are a few more items to complete, LPD, the Lincoln County Port Authority, and Lincoln County are working to finalize these items. Opening date is uncertain currently.

Nature trail at the Fishpond is usable, but needs final touches

Kootenai River Recreation Safety Map is complete and available at the Chamber of Commerce, and merchants in Libby and Troy. An e-version of the map is the next step.

LPD is working with USFS on the Snowshoe trail from Leigh Creek 4.6 miles north Just past Deep Creek. The Smearl and Deep Creek bridges are set.

The Norgard Trail from Hogan Lane to Nordic Ski course has the route agreed upon, working with DNRC to establish an easement across section 16 south of the golf course. Lincoln County easement is now in place.

Pioneer Park bike track is built, waiting on volunteers to finalize the margins, clean up and install signs, it is already seeing a lot of use from local bike riders.

Libby Outdoor Recreation Association (LORA) is working on a recreation development plan for Ski Dale Park to include winter and summer facilities.

Received grants from Natural Resources Damage Project (NRDP) grant to Montana Department of Justice, the following projects are listed in the Interim Restoration Plan:

(2.3.4) 2 years funding for Recreation manager; have received first paid invoice.

(2.3.6) Norgard Trail and parking area; Waiting on easement, then final approval will be given.

Project Manager Contract funds remaining \$11, 121.

Mayor Williams inquired about what the summer facilities were at Ski Dale. Mr. Petrusha said in the bicycling realm, a pump track is being considered for Ski Dale Park, positioned near the hillside without interfering with the sled run and adjacent to the trail leading to Parmenter Flats. Additional improvements could include more picnic tables, cleaning up the trees and the old ice-skating rink area to add more barbecue places.

Council Smith inquired about a pump track. Mr. Petrusha explained it is a track with humps and hills where you pedal harder on your bike.

Public Comment: None

Approve Resolution # 2058 to abandon city-owned right-of-way discontinuing and vacating Colorado and Kootenai Streets and adjacent alley:

Mayor Williams read Resolution #2058.

Councilor Smith **MADE A MOTION** to adopt Resolution #2058, Councilor Zimmerman **SECONDED**.

Councilor Smith commented that all the information is highly supportive of the resolution. It aligns perfectly with state laws, requirements and guidance, and this piece of property is useless to the City of Libby and can be put to higher and better use and supports adopting this resolution.

Councilor Kolp inquired what came of the future water main extension services. Mr. Sikes explained the city cannot require Sooters to run a water main unless they're requesting services. But since the area will be within city limits, that will fall under the water rules, they would have to extend it down to the far edge of their property, which would be the line between Plat 951, and certificate of survey 2946. The city can't put that as a requirement for this abandonment.

Mayor Williams pointed out pages 5 and 6, gains and losses of both the abandonment and the non-abandonment option.

Councilor Zimmerman thanked everybody involved in the request, especially with Sam doing the research and the digging, along with the Sooters putting everything in line and in perspective with what we can and can't do, and making this all, hopefully, come to resolution for everybody.

Public Comment: None

Councilors Kolp, Smith, and Zimmerman voted **FOR**. Councilors Burger and Taylor voted **AGAINST**.

MOTION PASSED.

Streets Committee recommendation to discuss and/or approve as part of a LOR safety grant.

- a. Crosswalk flags**
- b. Painting strips inside of pedestrian crosswalks for better visibility:**

Councilor Burger gave a summary of the Lights/Streets/Sidewalks Committee meeting and the Committee agreed to bring the crosswalk flags forward for Council discussion and to see if they wanted to move forward.

Councilor Smith clarified that the Committee's motion to bring the crosswalk flags to Council was because LOR was willing to fund several dozen flag sets, including extras to replace any that may disappear.

After discussion, the recommendation was to pursue LOR funding if Council approved.

Councilor Burger explained another item brought forward to Council was LOR could provide paint for crosswalk striping to improve pedestrian visibility. Ms. Burger said there had been a suggestion to use a logger boot print design instead of striping, adding artistic and visual appeal to the downtown area. Councilor Smith did not recall boot prints being discussed in the Committee meeting. Mayor Williams said that idea had come up after the meeting, that it would be an artistic addition if the LOR grant could cover any stencils that were needed.

Mayor Williams mentioned another suggestion that could be included as part of the Safety Grant, a portable speed sign. One of those signs costs around \$5,000 and could be beneficial on California Street coming down the hill off the bridge.

Councilor Smith suggested for clarity to focus on the flags because they can be ordered promptly, and the striping can be brought back later. The Committee's discussion about striping was for next year's streets. Councilor Burger noted her discussion with Tabitha (LOR representative) suggested funding both projects to have the materials available in the spring for the Streets department to give them the maximum time to implement plans for next summer.

Councilor **MADE A MOTION** to pursue the LOR Safety grant for the flags in the locations downtown that were discussed, Councilor Taylor **SECONDED**.

Public Comment: Tony Petrusha inquired what the flags were for. Councilor Burger explained what the flags were for.

Council discussed where the flags were to be placed. On Mineral Ave. and California Ave. from 2nd St. to Lincoln Blvd.

Councilors Kolp, Smith, Taylor, and Zimmerman voted **FOR**. Councilor Burger voted **AGAINST**.

MOTION PASSED.

Streets Committee recommendation of re-installation of the Labor and Industry banners:

Councilor Burger explained that the Streets Committee discussed the reinstallation of the Labor and Industry banners. There was initial confusion as to whether the banners were intended for one-time use or to be reinstalled annually. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend to Council the reinstallation of the banners.

Mayor Williams raised the issue of how the banners would be reinstalled, noting that the City does not currently have a lift truck. Councilor Burger suggested several options, including reaching out to Montana Sky, Flathead Electric, or renting a lift from Rick's Rental.

Councilor Taylor expressed support for reinstalling the banners but emphasized the need to determine the logistics and cost. Councilor Kolp inquired how the banners were installed previously, and Mayor Williams explained that Montana Sky and Flathead Electric had volunteered their services.

Councilor Taylor offered to contact Flathead Electric to see if anyone could help with the banners. The council agreed to revisit the matter at the August 4 meeting to allow time to gather additional information.

Approve all claims received to date:

Mayor Williams reminded the public that if anyone is interested in viewing the claims they are available during the day of the meeting.

Public Comment: None

Councilors Burger, Kolp, Smith, Taylor, and Zimmerman voted **FOR**.

MOTION PASSED.

Approve all business license applications received to date:

Gracious Table, Mandy Bell.

Councilor Smith **MADE A MOTION** to approve all business license applications received to date, Councilor Burger **SECONDED**.

Public Comment: None

Councilors Burger, Kolp, Smith, Taylor, and Zimmerman voted **FOR**.

MOTION PASSED.

Unfinished Business: None

General Comments from Council:

Mayor Williams commented there was some conversation on Facebook over the fire concern on Cedar Street extension, which is the back of Bowen hill. Jennifer Nelson, County Forester, had several small parcels that by themselves were not projects. She created a project called "Tidbits", which is those little parcels, and the city owned piece of land is one.

She's working her way through those tidbits as she closes out her grant cycle. She will be looking at getting some of the fire mitigation work done on that slope, but she does not have a timetable. Wanted to make sure Council knew that there is a plan in place to mitigate fire risk.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilor Smith **MADE A MOTION** to adjourn, Councilor Taylor **SECONDED**.

Councilors Burger, Kolp, Smith, Taylor, and Zimmerman voted **FOR**.

MOTION PASSED.

Mayor Williams adjourned the meeting at 7:45 pm.

Mayor Peggy Williams

Attest: _____

Clerk/Treasurer Leann Monigold