

**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 #1692 on Tuesday, December 15, 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 Taylor, Councilors Brooke Bolin, Gail Burger, Brian Crompton, Ethan Kolp, Erica Schaefer, Brian Zimmerman, Administrator Sam Sikes, Clerk/Treasurer Leann Monigold, and (via Zoom) City Attorney Dean Chisholm.

**Announcements:** Mayor Taylor noted one of the main concerns is the boil order, which Mr. Sikes will cover in his report. The goal is to reduce it to a health advisory by January 15.

### **Approve minutes for Regular Council meeting #1691 dated December 15, 2025, and Special Council Meeting dated December 24, 2025:**

Councilor Zimmerman **MADE A MOTION** to approve minutes for city council meeting 1691 and Special Council meeting dated December 24, Councilor Burger **SECONDED**.

Councilor Kolp noted on the Special Council meeting minutes under adjournment there are two different adjournments listed. Councilor Burger noted on minutes 1691 page eight under public comment, it should say Backen not Bracken.

**Public Comment:** DC Orr requested corrections to minutes 1691 regarding his comments about IP funds and dam maintenance, and requested the minutes reflect his comments about concerns he raised about council appointment procedures and the study commission, asked Council to review the audio before passing the minutes.

Council consensus was to postpone the approval of meeting 1691 minutes until the next meeting to give Council time to review the audio.

Councilors Bolin, Burger, Crompton, Kolp, Schaefer, and Zimmerman voted **FOR** the approval of Special Council Meeting dated December 24<sup>th</sup> only.

**MOTION PASSED.**

### **Department Head Reports:**

Administrator: Administrator Sikes reported bid paperwork for the spoils pile parking lot project has been received and will go out for bid, with bid openings expected within 30 to 45 days. Two engineers from WWC Engineering will begin a wastewater Preliminary

Engineering Report (PER) to analyze the entire sewer collection system and identify needed upgrades, providing a five to ten year plan with grant opportunities. The city received grants totaling \$559,000 for the lift station (\$125,000 from RRGL and \$434,000 from MCEP) but did not receive the \$500,000 needed from Community Development Block Grant. The city has enough funds in capital improvement, short-lived assets, and reserves to proceed with the project.

Mr. Sikes provided an extensive report on the water boil order and flood recovery. The December 11 rain event (described as a 500-to-1000-year event) severely damaged the lower Flower Creek reservoir and diversion dam. The flood destroyed the northern retaining wall, which was scheduled for normal maintenance and will now require massive permanent repairs. The spillway over-topped for roughly 12 hours, causing extensive erosion and a boil that threatened the entire bank. Emergency protective measures included working with Chris Noble's crew and DNRC in the middle of the night to relieve pressure on the wall. Morrison Merrily engineers and Noble's crew stabilized the bank, which is being checked every 24 hours.

The city lost all storage capacity and head pressure, requiring them to bypass the sedimentation basin and direct pipe water to the plant, which increases turbidity and necessitates the boil order. Emergency measures included stabilizing the access road with two layers of six-inch deep three-inch fractured rock, building a mini coffer dam to allow clean water through the old bypass pipe, constructing a 200-foot bypass road, and installing pumps as a redundant system. A temporary coffer dam will be built to restore head pressure and allow the system to operate as designed, estimated at \$1 million. They will be testing water over five to six days and hope to lift the boil order within two weeks, though they will likely remain under a health advisory. The city is gathering all costs for potential FEMA reimbursement pending presidential approval. Over \$60,000 in fractured rock was dropped in a day and a half just to keep the road passable. Army Corps of Engineers has been here five times, and they might get a task mission from FEMA to come in during summer and rebuild the wall. Montana DES has been assisting, state representatives toured the facility, Mayor Taylor met with Senator Sheehy, and FEMA toured recently. Councilor Crompton inquired why they would put in a coffer dam that will have to be ripped out rather than just doing the permanent fix first. Mr. Sikes explained they can't go in and pull material when it's wet and saturated, and it won't be dried until summertime. They have to use DEQ approved sources and mines to get materials, and those are already soaked too. They can't pack wet material as it won't work, so the permanent repairs have to wait for summer.

**Streets Supervisor:** Justin Williams reported that the streets department has been extremely busy over the past month, particularly during the last two and a half weeks, with winter conditions, flooding, and wind events. Crews have been jetting and camera-inspecting sewer mains, performing weekly maintenance, and advancing two utility projects: a water and sewer main extension along Hammonds and Second Street, and water and sewer tie-ins for the Cabinet Affordable Housing project off Commerce Way. Winter

operations included frequent de-icing, storm drain cleaning due to heavy sediment buildup, sign and signpost replacements from wind damage, and hauling two loads of salt brine from MDT. Equipment maintenance was extensive, including repairs to trailers, vehicles, the backhoe, and replacement of an aging water line at Fireman's Park campground. Crews also addressed vandalism, dead animal removal, cemetery burials, tree removals, power outages at the wastewater plant and street shop, and continuous monitoring of the reservoir ring dike and staff gauge. All labor, equipment hours, and costs related to the storm and flooding are being carefully tracked for potential disaster reimbursement.

**Police:** Chief Ercanbrack reported 2025 was a strong year for the department, with 2,893 cases investigated, up from 2,202 in 2024, and generally consistent calls for service. Notable decreases included 61 thefts (a 40% drop), 78 disturbances (a 25% drop), and 29 mental health calls, down from 56 the prior year. Other activity included 94 crashes, 289 public assists and welfare checks, 33 juvenile-related calls, 53 DUI or drug-related cases, 1,008 traffic stops (up from 474), and a 73% increase in corrective cases. The department received \$88,353 in grants for equipment such as breathalyzers, LIDAR units, radar systems, patrol gear, and emergency supplies, with additional grant opportunities being explored for another patrol vehicle. Through community support and Shield 616, approximately \$15,000 in new body armor was secured. Chief Ercanbrack also highlighted community engagement efforts, building improvements, and expressed appreciation for council and public support while reaffirming the department's commitment to public safety.

**Clerk/Treasurer:** Clerk/Treasurer Leann Monigold welcomed new council members and noted all new microphones and televisions thanks to LOR. On December 31 she submitted the annual financial report showing how all funds were spent throughout the year. For the disaster they started a disaster fund with approximately \$7,000 from general fund, that was designated for disaster, to move over as part of the 25% FEMA match. All hours, equipment, and expenses will be separated into this fund for tracking. Working with ER Assist, they'll have all information organized. Noting at year end there will need to be a budget amendment for the new fund. Mr. Sikes noted it could take up to three years for FEMA reimbursements.

### **Committee Reports:**

**Fire:** Councilor Zimmerman presented the Libby Volunteer Fire Department 2025 annual report. 146 fire calls with average turnout time of 6.45 minutes, average response time of 11 minutes 40 seconds (city 6.94 minutes, rural 11.12 minutes, out of district 19.78 minutes), and average time on scene of 46 minutes 8 seconds. Average personnel responding was 17.2 members. Total training hours were 3,008 and time on incidents was 1,013.20 hours. Incident plus training time equals 4,021 hours at \$30 per hour totaling \$120,630 donated to Libby. Overall, 44 calls in the city, 78 in the county, and 24 outside the district.

**Lights/Streets/Sidewalks:** Councilor Burger announced they have a meeting Wednesday at noon. At December 3 Streets meeting they reviewed the VFW lease for parking which failed to leave committee with a motion and no second.

**Public Comment Non-Agenda:**

Brian Sharp, VFW Commander, stated the VFW has been the primary water distribution site since December 26, serving over 100 families daily, and invited council to visit between 9 am and noon. He requested a meeting to discuss the VFW parking lot lease proposal.

Tabitha Viergutz, LOR Foundation, announced they are still funding for emergency reasons. LOR is at just over \$84,000 and tracking this for the 25% match and tracking funds for independent nonprofits or community groups working on projects for the community. Will be hosting an informal lunch on Friday at noon at the VFW to recognize individuals and groups that have supported Libby during the disaster.

DC Orr, Chairman of the Local Government Study Commission, requested council recognize the commission as an official committee that can give reports, noting they are funded by the city at \$30,000 and were elected by voters to study constitutional issues and draft potential charter changes.

Tony Wickham commented that during the December appointment process, community members endorsed John Beebe but council voted for Brooke Bolin, stating the will of the people was not honored.

**New Business:**

**Election of Council President:**

Mayor Taylor explained every two years the council president is re-designated by nomination and vote.

Councilor Kolp **NOMINATED** Brian Zimmerman.

**Public Comment:** DC Orr commented the nominee is the most experienced member but cautioned council about violating constitutional rights of speakers through improper use of motions.

Councilor Kolp **MADE A MOTION** to vote on Brian Zimmerman being appointed council president, Council President **SECONDED**.

Councilors Bolin, Burger, Crompton, Kolp, Schaefer, and Zimmerman voted **FOR**.

**MOTION PASSED.**

## **Council Committee Assignments – Discussion:**

Mayor Taylor explained they have an active list of committees but are short members after losing several councilors. Has been trying to meet with each new member to ask if anyone is interested in particular committees to contact him. There'll will be a decision by the next council meeting.

Mayor Taylor explained they are working to fill committees after losing several council members. New members should contact him about committee preferences. A decision will be made by next council meeting.

**Public Comment:** None.

## **Streets Committee recommendation regarding creation of diagonal parking spaces on Main Street from Lincoln Boulevard to 6th, 6th to 5th, and 5th to 4th to create additional parking – angle on east side of the street matching Mineral Avenue:**

Councilor Burger explained the committee recommends angle parking on Main Street to address parking issues, noting they consulted Streets Supervisor Justin Williams. Councilor Schaefer inquired about safety concerns with backing out of angled spaces. Chief Ercanbrack responded most accidents are from visibility at stop signs, not from backing out of angled spaces.

### **Public Comment:**

Rocky Gifford commented angle parking can be hazardous and is circulating a petition about 2-hour parking and parking concerns.

DC Orr described traveling to a town with angle parking where you back into your spot, so the driver's side looks in the direction they're pulling out, giving more distance before interfering with traffic.

Tony Wickham requested an analysis showing the level of congestion and how this solution would address it.

Councilor Zimmerman explained the reasoning is to alleviate congestion around the County Annex and Courthouse by creating more parking on Main Street for County employees since their previous parking lot owner won't lease to them. Councilor Schaefer inquired about back-in parking being safer. Mayor Taylor explained Council could discuss it and even bring it back to committee. Councilor Zimmerman explained back in 2017 when they started redoing angle parking downtown with Chief Kessle, they looked into which ways to go and what type of angle parking. Angle parking they have was the safer option. Only a few towns had reverse parking and they actually had more accidents per capita because backing up gave people issues, though that was eight or nine years ago so it could be looked into again. Councilor Burger noted another problem with back-in parking is pickup trucks would impede on sidewalks, and some sidewalks already have issues.

Councilor Burger **MADE A MOTION** for the recommendation regarding creation of diagonal parking spaces on Main Street from Lincoln Boulevard to 6th, 6th to 5th, 5th to 4th, to create additional angle parking on east side of the street matching Mineral Avenue, Councilor Zimmerman **SECONDED**.

Councilor Kolp stated backup parking should be explored further. Councilors Schaefer and Crompton agreed. Councilor Bolin asked if they could approve implementation of diagonal parking and determine direction through committee or if direction needs to be determined now. Mayor Taylor explained it would change the angle direction and should be decided at the time, but they can hold off on a vote, table it, whatever council would like to do.

Councilor Burger voted **FOR**. Councilors Bolin, Crompton, Kolp, Schaefer, and Zimmerman voted **AGAINST**.

**MOTION FAILED.** Council consensus was to move it back to committee.

#### **Reappointing members to Libby Shade Tree Committee (Tree Board) – Discussion:**

Mayor Taylor explained per city ordinances 12.4040, the city has a shade tree committee consisting of five members. This was lightly touched on at the last council meeting of last year. The consensus was to move forward to keep in conformity with grants received for trees and Arbor help.

Jennifer Nelson explained she has been involved with the Tree Board as a volunteer for several years. About three years ago, the chair accepted a job in Idaho and the committee dissolved. She asked Council and Mayor reinstate the Shade Tree Committee. The Tree Board has been really good for Libby. After the 1997 microburst decimated trees in Libby, thanks to the tree board and Tree City USA commitment, the council allowed replanting of many trees including the entire boulevard. Those trees are now 30 years old. With help from the Streets Department and volunteers, they've been nursing this along with pruning and planting. Ms. Nelson made recommendations on a list provided to Council.

Councilor Zimmerman thanked Ms. Nelson for wanting to bring this back to life as they've done a phenomenal job over the years. Mayor Taylor noted the item could be put on the next Council meeting agenda for action. Council agreed it should be on the next agenda.

#### **Approve LOR grant for emergency generator at street shop on City Service Road:**

Tabitha Viergutz from LOR Foundation presented a \$27,500 grant for a 32-kilowatt liquid-cooled Generac generator for the street shop. During the power outage the street crew only had access through man doors until they borrowed a generator from Bigfork. The project would commence upon approval and end December 29, 2026. This commitment was made January 2 and is contingent on acceptance tonight. This would be part of the 25% FEMA matching funds. Councilor Zimmerman confirmed it's for the shop only, not wastewater. Councilor Crompton asked about capacity if the shop expands. Williams confirmed it was

sized for the load. Ms. Viergutz explained LOR has a \$30,000 ceiling and this stays within that budget.

Councilor Zimmerman **MADE A MOTION** to approve the LOR grant for emergency generator at street shop on City Service Road, Councilor Burger **SECONDED**.

Public Comment: None.

Councilors Bolin, Burger, Crompton, Kolp, Schaefer, and Zimmerman voted **FOR**.

**MOTION PASSED.**

**Approve all alcohol license applications received to date:**

Libby Qwik Shop, Mint Bar, and VFW #1548

Councilor Zimmerman **MADE A MOTION** to approve all alcohol license applications received to date, Councilor Kolp **SECONDED**.

Public Comment: None

Councilors Bolin, Burger, Crompton, Kolp, Schaefer, and Zimmerman voted **FOR**.

**MOTION PASSED.**

**Approve coin operated amusement license applications received to date:**

Mint Bar and VFW #1548.

Councilor Zimmerman **MADE A MOTION** to approve all coin operated amusement license applications received to date, Councilor Burger **SECONDED**.

**Public Comment:** None

Councilors Bolin, Burger, Crompton, Kolp, Schaefer, and Zimmerman voted **FOR**.

**MOTION PASSED.**

**Approve all claims received to date:**

Councilor Zimmerman **MADE A MOTION** to approve all claims received to date, Councilor Kolp **SECONDED**.

**Public Comment:** None

Councilors Bolin, Burger, Crompton, Kolp, Schaefer, and Zimmerman voted **FOR**.

**MOTION PASSED.**

**Approve all business license applications received to date:**

Breathe Easy Inspections and Sandra's Self Care LLC

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

**Public Comment:** None

Councilors Bolin, Burger, Crompton, Kolp, Schaefer, and Zimmerman voted **FOR**.

**MOTION PASSED.**

**General Comments from Council:**

Councilor Burger thanked Councilor Kolp for being boots on the ground at so many sites during the emergencies, noting he was everywhere in the community and even went to Troy.

Councilor Zimmerman welcomed everyone and thanked them for showing up and wanting to put in time to help serve the community.

Mayor Taylor thanked the community for how they always come together during difficult times. The city still doesn't have drinkable water but is working on it. Thanked Mr. Sikes who was on vacation for two weeks but spent every single day in the building during his vacation because of the emergency, which goes above and beyond what's required. Mayor Taylor looks forward to working with all the new Council people and the future of Libby.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Councilor Zimmerman **MADE A MOTION** to adjourn, Councilor Kolp **SECONDED**.

Councilors Bolin, Burger, Crompton, Kolp, Schaefer, and Zimmerman voted FOR.

**MOTION PASSED.**

Mayor Williams adjourned the meeting at 8:31 pm.

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Mayor Hugh Taylor

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_

Clerk/Treasurer Leann Monigold