



Work Session Meeting Agenda
2 Park Drive South, Great Falls, MT
Gibson Room, Civic Center
August 19, 2025
5:30 PM

The agenda packet material is available on the City's website: <https://greatfallsmt.net/meetings>. The Public may view and listen to the meeting on government access channel City-190, cable channel 190; or online at <https://greatfallsmt.net/livestream>.

Public participation is welcome in the following ways:

- Attend in person.
- Provide public comments in writing by 12:00 PM the day of the meeting: Mail to City Clerk, PO Box 5021, Great Falls, MT 59403, or via email to: commission@greatfallsmt.net. Include the agenda item or agenda item number in the subject line, and include the name of the commenter and either an address or whether the commenter is a city resident. Written communication received by that time will be shared with the City Commission and appropriate City staff for consideration during the agenda item, and, will be so noted in the official record of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

PUBLIC COMMENT

(Public comment on agenda items or any matter that is within the jurisdiction of the City Commission. Please keep your remarks to a maximum of five (5) minutes. Speak into the microphone, and state your name and either your address or whether you are a city resident for the record.)

WORK SESSION ITEMS

1. Opioid Metro Region Governance Committee - Proposed Interlocal Agreement for review and discussion - Continued from 8/5/25. Presented by David Dennis (estimated 20 minutes)
2. Downtown Urban Renewal District - Work Force Housing Program Update. Presented by Brock Cherry (estimated 30 minutes)
3. Request of city property for the new Toby's House Crisis Nursery. Presented by Executive Director Leesha Ford. (estimated 15 minutes)

DISCUSSION POTENTIAL UPCOMING WORK SESSION TOPICS

ADJOURNMENT

City Commission Work Sessions are televised on cable channel 190 and streamed live at <https://greatfallsmt.net>. Work Session meetings are re-aired on cable channel 190 the following Thursday morning at 10 a.m. and the following Tuesday evening at 5:30 p.m.

Wi-Fi is available during the meetings for viewing of the online meeting documents.

UPCOMING MEETING SCHEDULE

City Commission Work Session - Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:30 p.m.

City Commission Meeting - Tuesday, September 2, 2025 7:00 p.m.



Downtown Urban Renewal District Workforce Housing Program Update

Planning & Community Development Department

8/19/2025

Workforce Housing Recap

What is Workforce Housing?

Per the MCA, Workforce housing is housing affordable to households whose income is between 60% and 140% of the area median income (AMI), as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

What does that mean for Great Falls?

Household Size	60% AMI	140% AMI
1 Person	\$36,120	\$84,280
2 Persons	\$41,280	\$96,640
3 Persons	\$46,440	\$108,360

Our Mission Started with Public Priorities

As identified in the recent Growth Policy Survey and reinforced through feedback from Downtown business owners, property owners, and design professionals during informational sessions on May 28th and 29th:

- **Upper-Floor Housing**
→ Add homes above retail to maximize existing space.
- **Reinvestment in Historic Buildings**
→ Preserve Great Falls' character while creating modern housing.
- **Blight Removal**
→ Turn vacant or deteriorated properties into community assets.
- **A Thriving, Livable Downtown**
→ Support 18-hour activity and economic resilience through added residential presence.

Missoula's TIF-Funded Workforce Housing

PCD staff met with the City of Missoula — the only Montana city actively using TIF for workforce housing.

Project Spotlight: Scott Street–Ravara Housing Development

Key Partners:

- Missoula Redevelopment Agency (City) – TIF Administration
- Homeward & Trust Montana – Community Land Trust & Compliance
- Ravara Development, LLC – Private development team

Total: 314 units

- 89 for-sale homes (46 income-qualified)
- 225 market-rate rentals 160 units (51%) reserved for households $\leq 120\%$ AMI (e.g., \$72,600/year for a 1-person household)
- 160 units (51%) reserved for households $\leq 120\%$ AMI (e.g., \$72,600/year for a 1-person household)

Site Plan (9 acres):

- 3-acre Community Land Trust
 - 46 income-qualified homes
 - 43 market-rate homes
- 5-acre mixed-use development
 - 225 rental apartments
 - 35,000 sq ft of commercial space: childcare, grocery, and community hub

Missoula Key Takeaways

- Larger projects succeed when paired with a partner (nonprofit, housing authority, developer) to manage income compliance.
- Smaller projects without a compliance partner face higher risk and administrative burden, often outweighing the benefit.



Biggest Challenges

- 1. Income Compliance Complexity:** Ensuring TIF-supported units stay within workforce income limits requires ongoing income verification, legal agreements, and monitoring. This makes small-scale projects—like upper-floor conversions—challenging to implement without a partner to manage compliance long-term.
- 2. Limited Support for Workforce Tier:** Organizations like NeighborWorks can assist with income compliance, but their focus is typically on subsidized or lower-income housing. While valuable, this doesn't fully address the need for market-rate or higher-tier workforce housing support.

Next Steps – Pilot Program Considerations

A pilot workforce housing program **can move forward**, but:

- **May not meet** original goals for moderate-income housing.
- **Unlikely to support** simple upper-floor renovations by existing property owners.
- **More likely to benefit** from new construction with subsidized housing partners.
- **Does not address** the large inventory of vacant downtown upper floors.

Next Steps towards market housing development Downtown?



- **Explore sending out a “Request for Proposals” (RFP)** to solicit interest in building **market rate housing on City-Owned Property** Downtown (surface parking lots).
- **Explore property tax abatements/exemptions:** Time-limited relief on the value added by rehab (often 5–10 years). Does not address the large inventory of vacant downtown upper floors.
- **Building Permit Fee reductions,** specifically for existing downtown vacant buildings.

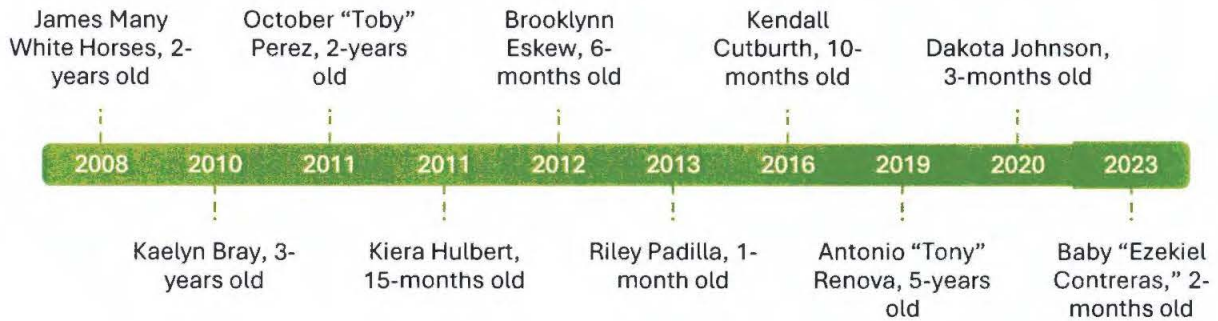
July 21, 2025



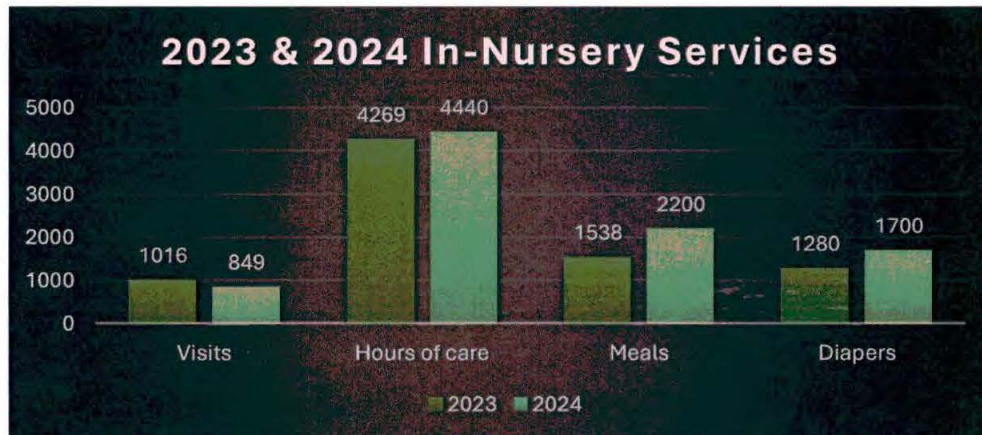
Dear Great Falls City Commissioners,

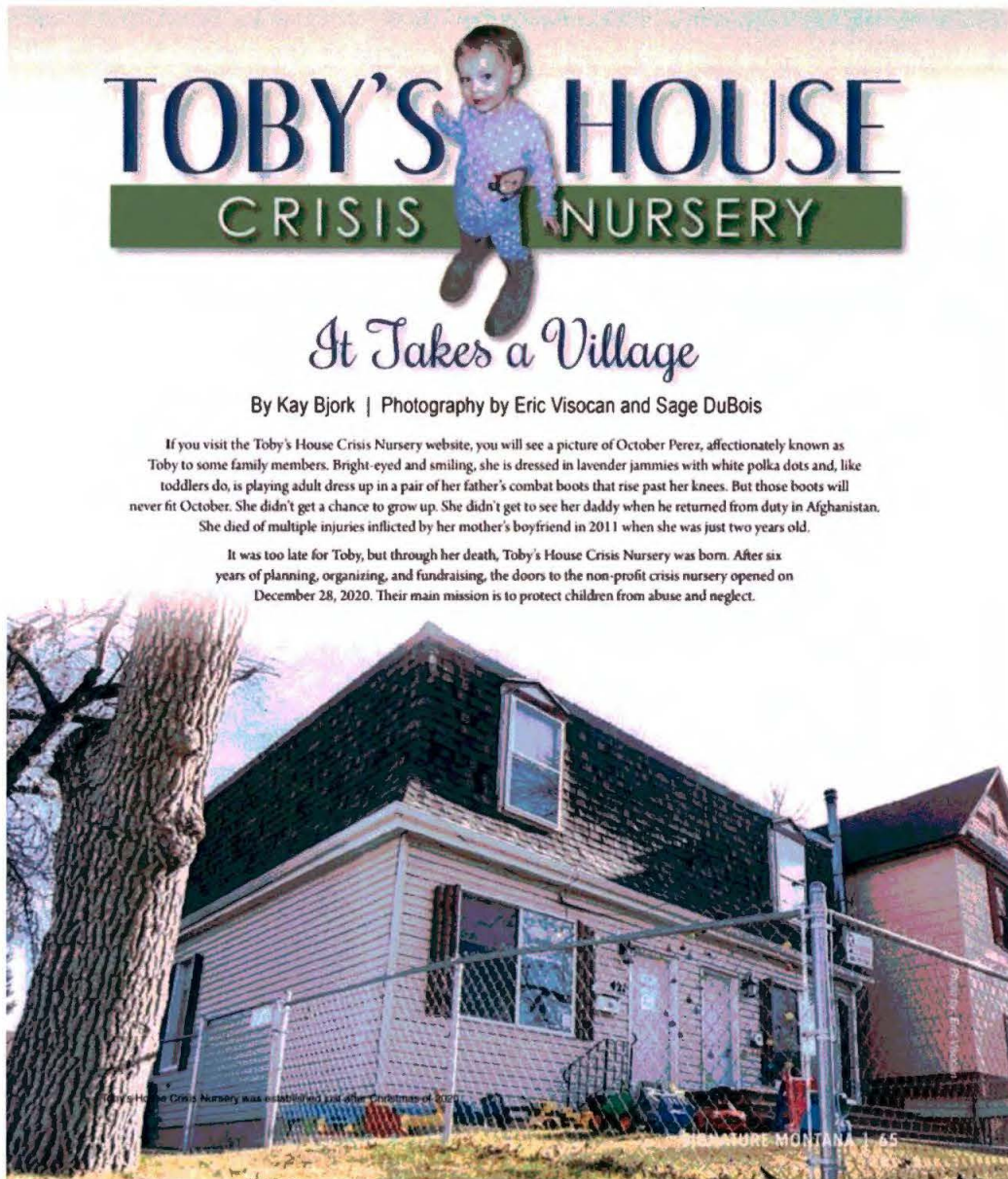
Toby's House Crisis Nursery is a local non-profit serving children ages 0-6 and their families in the Great Falls community since December 2020. The nursery is committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect providing crisis and respite care, as well as some transitional care for families waiting for availability at a daycare. The nursery was recognized by Montana Children's Trust Fund as the Montana Nonprofit Organization of the year in 2022.

The origin of Toby's House Crisis Nursery is rooted in a tragic span of years in which Great Falls lost numerous lives to child abuse and neglect. The nursery is named for October Perez, who was killed by her mother's boyfriend while her father was serving in Afghanistan in 2011 when she was only 2-years old. It is dedicated to her and the other children in our community who should never have endured the harms they suffered.



In 2024, Toby's House provided over 4000 hours of care, helped over 100 new children and their families, and has been a community resource center for diapers, formula, clothing and more.





Currently located at 421 5th St North, the nursery's rental site has limited space, and its layout does not support our community's needs long-term. The nursery's Board of Directors has been working diligently to gain donor support for a facility that can build expanding capacity and services to nurture children and families in our community, preventing and addressing child abuse and neglect.

Great Falls has an opportunity to create a formal youth partnership/sponsorship with Toby's House, and leverage resources that support both child abuse prevention and a healthy, vibrant community for our local children. Local businesses and donors are working

together to build a new 1-level crisis nursery that is safe, accessible, visible and can better serve our community's needs.



The newly constructed facility will be about 11,000 sq/ft including parking and a secure play area. It supports future growth and expansion of hours and services available to the community. The proposed site would ideally be in or adjacent to city park property.

The Nursery would need to be near downtown for walking accessibility and is best suited for an area in a city park, to fully maximize benefits to the city's children and families.

The public benefit of locating the nursery in a park includes increased traffic and use of a city park as a thriving hub for children and their families. The nursery will collaborate with parks and recreation to provide family-centered programming in the park, host volunteers, and support further the department's development plans for the park through nursery donors and memorials. Collaborating with Toby's House to provide a land for the facility will likely reduce some costs of site maintenance, increase safety and family-oriented use of parkland, and would not decrease property tax revenue for the city.

The nursery is funded through private donors and grants/foundations and is growing its program services that support operational funding. Families using the nursery do not need to meet income criteria, and services are at no cost to families. The nursery operates from 8am to 11:59 pm (or when last child leaves) Monday through Friday and has an expansion grant from Montana Children's Trust Fund for initiating weekend hours which has been 9am to 3pm on Saturdays to provide resources and in the future will include childcare on weekends.

The crisis nursery was a 2014 committee/project of the Early Childhood Coalition to address child abuse and neglect in Great Falls. Eleven years later, the committee incorporated as a nonprofit, opened the state's first crisis nursery, and has a contract with Bright Futures Birth to 5 Project to pilot a mentorship to replicate our success in another Montana Community.

The nursery provides support for families struggling with crisis and emergency, families needing a break from a crying baby, health and mental health needs, sobriety support, and

supports the city's workforce when their daycare, school, or HeadStart is closed, and when childcare plans fall through at the last minute.

Toby's House Crisis Nursery's services are a vital part of our city's economic and workforce development, ensuring workers can take a job even though the daycare they enrolled at cannot take their child for another two months. Toby's House Crisis Nursery 'minds the gap' and collaborates with many entities to ensure we have a thriving, family-friendly community.

The public good provided by Toby's House Crisis Nursery can be supported through a public/nonprofit agreement that would benefit the City of Great Falls and its most beloved and yet most vulnerable population, children. Whether an allotment of property or a long-term lease of land for a suitable site, the nursery's Board of Directors seeks consideration to use city property for the construction of a new facility.

The community has an urgent need for a new crisis nursery site, and we urge the city commission to initiate the steps needed for a public hearing and official notice period.

Very Respectfully,



Leesha Ford, Executive Director, Int.

Toby's House Crisis Nursery Board of Directors:


Amy Pulliam (Jul 21, 2025 10:47 MDT)

Jul 21, 2025

Amy Pulliam, Chair

Lizzie Donnelly, Secretary/Treasurer

Linda Mettam, Board Member

Michele Levine, Board Member

Tim Dallacqua, Board Member

Cara Carlson, Board Member

Maureen Balyeat, Board Member