

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL

February 24, 2026

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Laurel, Montana, was held in the Council Chambers and called to order by Mayor Dave Waggoner at 6:30 p.m. on February 24, 2026.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Thomas Canape	Sara Naylor
Brent Edmond	Jessica Banks
Casey Wheeler	Irv Wilke
Richard Kloose	Jodi Mackay

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

OTHER STAFF PRESENT:

Michele, Braukmann, Civil City Attorney
Britney Harakal, Administrative Assistant
Kurt Markegard, CAO
JW Hopper, Fire Chief
Travis Nagel, Assistant Fire Chief
Jonathan Gotchshall, Firemen

Mayor Waggoner made the following statement: moving forward after tonight's City Council Meeting, letters that are sent into the City of Laurel regarding the proposed forensic mental hospital health facility will be entered into the public record under correspondence. The City Attorney will note the receipt of all letters, including the date, the center, and center and opposition support for the facility. The public can review the letters in their entirety when the Meeting minutes are compiled and posted. If anyone wishes to have their letters read into the record verbatim, the City invites the sender to appear in person at any City Council Meeting and utilize the time for public comment to read their letter.

In addition, please note that Roberts rules of which govern laurel city council meetings and most specifically rule 43 decorum and debate requires that all persons present at meetings should refrain from applause or other demonstrations of approval or disapproval during debate and the presiding officer should check such demonstrations in addition personal attacks or insults by persons present at meetings are not permitted under the parliamentary rules governing city Laurel Council meetings. The City expects all individuals present in chambers to honor the behavioral expectations and decorum that govern this debate.

Mayor Waggoner led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag.

MINUTES:

Motion by Council Member Canape to approve the revised minutes of the regular meeting of January 13, 2026, as presented, seconded by Council Member Wilke. There was no public comment or Council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All eight Council Members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

Motion by Council Member Banks to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of January 27, 2026, as presented, seconded by Council Member Wilke. There was no public comment or Council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All eight Council Members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

COUNCIL DISCLOSURE OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS:

Council Member Mackay disclosed the attached communications.

PUBLIC HEARING: None.

CONSENT ITEMS:



- **Claims entered through February 20, 2026.**
A complete listing of the claims and their amounts is on file in the Clerk/Treasurer's Office.
- **Clerk/Treasurer Financial Statements for the month of January 2026.**
- **Approval of Payroll Register for PPE 2/15/2026 totaling \$257,037.96.**

The Mayor asked if there was any separation of consent items. There was none.

Motion by Council Member Klose to approve the consent items as presented, seconded by Council Member Wilke. There was no public comment or Council discussion. A roll call vote was taken on the motion. All eight Council Members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

CEREMONIAL CALENDAR: None.

REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS: None.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (THREE-MINUTE LIMIT):

Barbara Ann Sprauge-Emineth, 501 Alder Avenue, read a letter into the record (attached).

Sophia Wisecup, 1311 Meadow Circle, expressed concerns regarding the proposed mental health facility, citing its proximity to an elementary school and youth softball facilities. Noted potential impacts on public safety, youth activities, and local law enforcement resources. Requested additional information regarding security measures and staffing.

Harper Anderson, 1206 12th Street Circle, spoke on behalf of the Laurel High School softball program. Raised concerns about safety due to the facility's proximity to youth training areas, particularly during evening hours, and also noted potential impacts on available recreational space and local resources.

Mayor Waggoner reminded those present that applause is not permitted under Robert's Rules of Order.

Elizabeth Gilg, 1200 Cedar Crest Circle, requested Council consider an emergency ordinance in collaboration with Yellowstone County and place the item on an upcoming agenda. Noted that a written request had been submitted.

Laura Kirschenmann, 939 W. 4th Street, expressed concerns about the proposed facility's proximity to residential areas and schools. Introduced her son to share student perspectives.

Trey Kirschenmann, 939 W. 4th Street, shared concerns expressed by students and noted general safety worries related to the proposed facility.

Kris Vogele, 306 E. 4th Street, discussed a prior request for an emergency ordinance and encouraged Council to take a more proactive approach. Raised concerns regarding transparency, prior communications between City staff and the State, and consistency with the City's growth policy, submitted supporting materials.

Amber Zahn, 1224 W. 4th Street, addressed concerns regarding House Bill 5, transparency, and procedural compliance. Emphasized the importance of adherence to statutory requirements, growth policy, and public participation. Also noted concerns related to workforce capacity and operational considerations in similar facilities.

Jennifer Lorenz, 916 5th Avenue, raised questions regarding the hiring process, contract terms, and funding for the Chief Administrative Officer position. Referenced provisions of the employment agreement and suggested Council review compliance with stated duties.

Shawna Hopper, 504 Roundhouse Drive, commented on the importance of consistent application of rules.

Jacob Schreiner encouraged increased transparency and community engagement regarding the proposed facility and emphasized the opportunity for collaborative problem-solving.

Attorney Braukmann read additional written public comments into the record (attached).

SCHEDULED MATTERS:

- **Appointment of Cheryl Hill from an advisory member to a voting member of Laurel Urban Renewal Agency for a four-year term ending December 31, 2029.**

Motion by Council Member Mackay to approve the Mayor's appointment of Cheryl Hill from an advisory member to a voting member of Laurel Urban Renewal Agency for a four-year term ending December 31, 2029, seconded by Council Member Wilke. There was no public comment or Council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All eight Council Members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

- **Appointment of Chris White to the Laurel Urban Renewal Agency for a four-year term ending December 31, 2029.**

Motion by Council Member Naylor to approve the Mayor's appointment of Chris White to the Laurel Urban Renewal Agency for a four-year term ending December 31, 2029, seconded by Council Member Wilke. There was no public comment or Council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All eight Council Members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

- **Appointment of James Kuhr to the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department.**

Fire Chief Hopper introduced Mr. Kuhr to the Council.

Motion by Council Member Edmond to approve the Mayor's appointment of James Kuhr to the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department, seconded by Council Member Wilke. There was no public comment or Council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All eight Council Members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA: None.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS (ONE-MINUTE LIMIT): None.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION:

An update from the Emergency Services Committee: CHS made a \$5,000 donation to both the Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services. Thank you for their partnership with our Emergency Services. Also, Sergeant Booth went on 30 K-9 deployments with Colt this year. They assisted with the seizure of 50 lbs of meth, 2 kg of cocaine, approximately 100,000 fentanyl pills, and 20 stolen firearms. They also assisted in locating a missing young lady. Officer Baumgartner, a member of the Tactical Response Team, responded to 11 call-outs this year. The Tactical Response Team is used for high-risk search warrants, barricades, and similar operations. One of the calls he was called out to was the search for the homicide suspect in Anaconda. They also work with sex trafficking and crimes against children.

MAYOR UPDATES: None.

UNSCHEDULED MATTERS:

Council Member Mackay reiterated prior requests for a substantive statement from the Mayor regarding the mental health facility, including how the situation developed, responses to outstanding questions, and the anticipated path forward. She noted that no response had been received and again requested such a statement from the executive branch. *Mayor Waggoner responded*
We'll work on that talking w/ Capt Attorney & Council Member Mackay. Inquired whether any follow-up had occurred regarding the Mayor's February 3rd comments calling for the City Attorney's resignation and whether there was intent to pursue the matter further. The Mayor stated there had been no follow-up and no intent to pursue the matter.

Council Member Mackay requested an update on the status of public records requests and asked who is currently managing them during the Clerk/Treasurer's absence.

The City Attorney and Mayor discussed with staff refining the search terms for record requests to reduce unnecessary document volume and associated staff time. The goal is to narrow requests to relevant materials and complete production as efficiently as possible.



It was noted that the current fee schedule adopted by Council is being applied to records requests; however, the administration is evaluating the invoicing approach and may bring a proposal to Council to consider a fee reduction or waiver in the next cycle.

An initial invoice is expected to be included in the upcoming Council packet, with potential supplemental invoicing upon the Clerk/Treasurer's return and further review. Coordination will occur upon return to ensure completeness of the records response package prior to Council workshop review.

Shawna Hopper, 504 Roundhouse Drive, commented on public records request fees, stating concerns that fees are being charged in situations involving alleged City errors. Also questioned why only certain individuals have received invoices for records requests and expressed concern about potential inconsistency in the application.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Council Member Wheeler to adjourn the Council meeting, seconded by Council Member Wilke. There was no public comment or Council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All eight Council Members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

There being no further business to come before the Council at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 7:29 p.m.


Britney Harakal, Administrative Assistant

Approved by the Mayor and passed by the City Council of the City of Laurel, Montana, this 28th day of April 2026.


Dave Waggoner, Mayor

Attest:


Kelly Streckler, Clerk/Treasurer



Print Name	Address
Nona Rae Adikes	102 844 Ave #B
Laura Kisschenmann	939 W. 4th St.
Steve Krum	249 24 th Ave W
Sullivan Jones	1201 West 4 th Street
David Bare	1713 W 4 th Street 59844
Amber Fahn	1224 W 4 th St
Elizabeth Gily	1200 Cedar Crest Circle
Shauna Chippard	504 Roundhead
Sophia Wisecup	1311 Meadow Circle

Print Name	Address
Kris Vogel	306 B 4th St, Laurel
Jennifer Lorent	916 5th Ave
Bryan Letcher	1224 West 4 th St
Jacob Schreiner	201 1 st Ave

Print Name	Address
Harper Andersen	1206 W 18 th Street Circle

Ex Parte Communications

Council Member Jodi Mackay

2/19/26

Mr. Deming,

Thank you for sharing this information with us. I appreciate you taking the time to engage and listen to the people of our community.

I would be interested in hearing if there is any feedback from the BOI or Governor's office regarding your stance.

Thank you for your time and service.

CM Jodi Mackay

From: Deming, Lee <Lee.Deming@legmt.gov>

Sent: Monday, February 16, 2026 3:55 PM

To: City Mayor <citymayor@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1A <ward1a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2A <ward2a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3A <ward3a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3B <ward3b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4A <ward4a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4B <ward4b@laurel.mt.gov>

Subject: Proposed Forensic Mental Health Facility

Mayor Waggoner and City Council Members,

Senator Ricci and I wish to inform you that we do not support the location of the Forensic Mental Health facility in or near Laurel.

Some of the reasons for this lack of support is the unresolved safety issue, the lack of communication by the State with the City of Laurel, and the fact that opponents-our constituents-will not support a facility of this type in or near Laurel.

Senator Ricci and I have communicated our lack of support to the Director of the Board of Investments and he has assured us that he will pass along our sentiments to other State officials who need to hear it.

Thank you.

Emails to and from legislators involving legislative business may be subject to public disclosure under the [Right to Know](#) provision of the Montana Constitution and [Title 2, Chapter 6, part 10, MCA](#). This may include the sender, recipient, content, and attachments.

2/19/26

Ms. Wardell,

Thank you for reaching out and sharing your concerns with me on this matter.

Sincerely,

CM Jodi Mackay

Ward 4a

From: Kelli Lemke <kelli.lemke@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, February 19, 2026 7:43 PM

To: Ward 4A <ward4a@laurel.mt.gov>

Subject: Laurel Forensic Mental Health Facility

Dear Councilwoman Mackay:

Please do what you can to prevent the state forensic mental health facility from being constructed in Laurel at the site planned.

I know you've heard all the reasons that people have for loathing it. My reason is simple - I am confident that it is not in the best interest of our community.

I've lived in Yellowstone county nearly my whole life, Laurel for well over a decade. My family heritage in the state is about a hundred years. Growing up, I always thought I'd leave, like we all do, but I didn't, because I realized, again like we all do, that it's special here.

My husband's a pastor in Laurel. He grew up here. I'm one of the operations superintendents at the refinery. We have two little boys, 18 months and 3. The proposed mental health facility is about 550 yards from our front door.

For the most part, at the state level and below, I voted for this administration on the basis of traditional, conservative, Christian family values. I really believed that supporting people with these ideals would be the best for our state and local community and would protect the things that matter and the families who live here.

Clearly, part of what evokes my strident opposition for this facility is “not in my backyard.” However, more than that is the violation of “government working for you” and “safe communities” and “protecting our way of life” for Montanans (These are several of the governor’s official priorities. I suggest a quick compare/contrast exercise between these priorities and the handling of this situation for some lucidity on what the problem is). It would have never occurred to me in the particulars, but the state government constructing a prison of sorts out my front door is exactly the kind of thing I thought I would be protected from under these values.

For me and my family, we would change or stop our walking habits, especially on West 9th. We’d probably move houses, even at a financial cost. We likely wouldn’t send our kids to Laurel Elementary, and presumably not to the public school system in general once the elementary is out. How fancy the fence is doesn’t matter. I’m sure we’re not the only ones.

I’m all for helping law enforcement, but if convenience was their first priority, they would have chosen a different profession. I suspect protecting communities is more important to them too.

I’m all for helping people. But we don’t need to try to restrain seriously unwell people in the midst of our neighborhoods, let alone just off the elementary school playground.

I’m all for fiscal responsibility and financial investment. I doubt \$26.5 million will be enough. I’m confident there are alternatives.

I could wax on about taxes, utilities, the track record of the sustainability of this type of facility, etc., but you know all those concerns. To protect people and our way of life, we can’t allow the forensic mental health facility to be constructed as planned. It doesn’t make any sense. It’s a violation of Montanans and our principles.

For now, the official problem is at the state level. However, as we move forward and consider annexation and the fallout, the responsibility is more local. I suspect that you hold and campaigned on similar principles. I think we all want security at home, the government to serve its citizens, and our way of life protected. The proposed facility furthers none of these things for Laurel or for Yellowstone County.

Please oppose it every way you can. Thank you for your work to serve our community.

Kelli Wardell

Hello, my full name is Barbara Anne Sprague Emineth I live at 501 Alder Avenue and have for 45 years not to say that fact means my opinion carries any more weight than a person who moved here a month ago as some seem to think it should.

I am here to speak on the Forensic Behavioral Health facility that has become the talk of the town ever since a press release came out saying Laurel had been chosen as a location for it. I believe the name for it has been changed a couple times simply to make it more palatable to Laurels citizens.

To our local as well as state officials the total lack of communication on this issue has been appalling. I believe at one point there were 3 meetings planned in order to get some answers but once the powers that be realized just what level of objection there was they were canceled. Billings decided not to apply unless they got some answers. To the citizens of Laurel for making your voices heard for an extended period of time as well as spreading the word I applaud you all.

To the council members who have been patient and endured some really long meetings I Thank-you. I am confident you have heard us and if and when the time comes you will all represent your constituents to the best of your ability.

Last but not least I would like to send a message to governor Gianforte ; please stand by your public statement which was: The state WILL NOT put this facility anywhere it is not wanted. Sure hope you watch this U-tube video because for the record I can assure you the majority of Laurel residents as well as folks living outside of town DO NOT WANT this facility in the location the state has proposed!!!

The only good thing this facility would accomplish is helping with the backlog of people waiting to go to trial and that would be at the expense of the people who call Laurel home for all the legitimate reasons that have been presented at previous council meetings.

So here we are waiting for an annexation application that may or may not come through!

I would also like to acknowledge that there has been trusts broken while dealing with this issue. Something I have learned through ^{my} the 66 years on this earth is when someone's words don't align with their action, pay attention to what they do not what they say!

Thanks for your time

Sincerely, Barb Emineth

Barbara A. S. Emineth

I've also recently learned that not only has Miles City applied to have this facility but there is 80% support from the community.

RESOLUTION NO. R25-13

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE AN EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT FOR THE POSITION OF CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER.

BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Laurel, Montana,

Section 1: Approval. The Employment Agreement by and between the City of Laurel (hereinafter "the City") and Kurt Markegard (hereinafter "Markegard"), for Markegard's employment as Chief Administrative Officer, attached hereto and incorporated herein, is hereby approved.

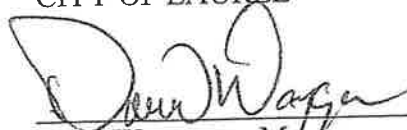
Section 2: Execution. The Mayor is hereby given authority to execute the Employment Agreement on behalf of the City.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the City Council on the 28th day of January 2025 by Council Member Canape.

PASSED and APPROVED by the City Council of the City of Laurel on the 28th day of January 2025.

APPROVED by the Mayor on the 28th day of January 2025.

CITY OF LAUREL

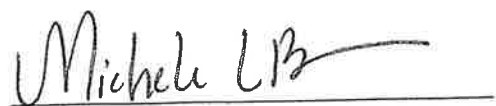

Dave Waggoner, Mayor

ATTEST:


Kelly Streckler, Clerk-Treasurer



APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Michele L. Braukmann, Civil City Attorney

EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT

THIS EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT (the "Agreement") is made this 28th day of January, 2025, by and between the CITY OF LAUREL, a Municipality in the State of Montana (hereinafter referred to as the "City") and KURT MARKEGARD, an individual (hereinafter referred to as "Chief Administrative Officer").

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, the Laurel City Charter of the City of Laurel, Montana provides for the appointment of the Chief Administrative Officer by the Mayor, with the advice and consent of the City Council; and,

WHEREAS, to fulfill the requirements of the Laurel City Charter, the compensation and conditions of employment for the Chief Administrative Officer have been set forth in this Agreement between the City and the Chief Administrative Officer.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Parties agree as follows:

1. **Appointment; Classification**: Chief Administrative Officer is hereby appointed and employed as the Chief Administrative Officer of the City of Laurel, subject to all conditions herein and all applicable laws. Chief Administrative Officer is hereby vested with the authority applicable to the position of Chief Administrative Officer and the Chief Administrative Officer hereby assumes the duties, responsibilities, and obligations of that office, as set forth in the Laurel City Charter and the Laurel Municipal Code, and in the applicable policies and resolutions of the City adopted thereunder.

The parties agree that this Agreement and the City's Job Description for the Chief Administrative Officer position constitutes the entire agreement between the parties and that no oral promises, representations, or warranties have been made or are an enforceable part of this Agreement.

The Chief Administrative Officer position created herein is classified as an exempt/non-Union position. The Chief Administrative Officer shall perform the essential duties and responsibilities contained in the Chief Administrative Officer Job Description and shall report directly to the City's Mayor. The Chief Administrative Officer shall not be reassigned from the position of Chief Administrative Officer to any other position without the Chief Administrative Officer's express written consent.

2. **Employment and Duties; Term; and Performance**: The appointment of the Chief Administrative Officer and the conditions of this contract shall be effective at 12:01 A.M. on City Council approval, or such other date as may be agreed to in writing by both parties hereto (the "Employment Date"), and fulltime performance of Chief Administrative Officer's duties as Chief Administrative Officer and to the performance of such other duties as are assigned to them from time to time by the Mayor and City Council, which shall include attendance at regularly scheduled City Council

Meetings, unless excused by the Mayor.

The term of this Agreement shall be a five (5) year term, renewable at the close of five (5) years, for an additional three (3) year time period, upon the recommendation of the Mayor and approval of City Council. Thereafter, this Agreement may be further renewed upon the recommendation of the Mayor and approval of City Council. No termination of this Agreement may occur within those specified time periods, except under the express terms of this Agreement, as noted in Section (4) below.

3. **Performance Evaluation:**

A. The Mayor shall review and evaluate the performance of the Chief Administrative Officer at least annually. Further, the Mayor shall provide the Chief Administrative Officer with a summary written statement of the findings of the Mayor after each review and evaluation and shall provide an adequate opportunity for the Chief Administrative Officer to discuss Chief Administrative Officer's evaluation with the Mayor and City Council.

B. Annually, the Mayor and Chief Administrative Officer shall define such goals and performance objectives which they determine necessary for the proper operation of the City and in the attainment of the City's policy objectives, and may establish a relative priority among those various goals and objectives. Said goals and objectives shall be reduced to writing, shall generally be attainable within the time limitations as specified, and within the annual operating and capital budgets and appropriations provided.

4. **Termination:**

A. The City may not terminate this Agreement, or refuse to non-renew this Agreement during the first two terms, unless any of the following events have occurred: the Chief Administrative Officer has: (1) violated the terms of the Laurel Municipal Code or the City's Personnel Policy; (2) violated the terms of this Agreement; (3) willfully and intentionally neglected the duties, responsibilities, and obligations of the Chief Administrative Officer's office; or (4) is convicted of any crime involving moral turpitude. If the Chief Administrative Officer is terminated for any of the foregoing reasons, or if this Agreement is not renewed for any of the foregoing reasons, such termination shall be considered "With Good Cause." Any other termination of this Agreement, or refusal to non-renew this Agreement, shall be subject to all "Good Cause" requirements of the Montana Wrongful Discharge from Employment Act.

B. In the event the City terminates or elects not to renew this Agreement, the Chief Administrative Officer shall be entitled to severance pay in an amount equal to one (1) year salary compensation plus one (1) year of benefits (the "Severance Pay"). For the purposes of this Section, benefits shall mean and include all of the

insurance and retirement benefits described below. The cost of the insurance benefits shall be paid by the City at a rate not to exceed the actual cost to the City prior to the termination; provided, however, any insurance rate increases implemented on the City's group plans will also be absorbed by the City. Compensation included in the Severance Pay shall be calculated at the rate of pay in effect on the date of termination and shall be paid in biweekly installments payable on regular City paydays, or at such intervals or dates as all other City employees may be paid, subject to appropriate tax withholdings.

- C. The Chief Administrative Officer may terminate the contract for any reason upon sixty (60) days' written notice as set forth herein and shall be entitled to payment by the City of any accrued vacation or other accrued paid days, provided such notice has been given. No severance payments or benefits shall be paid if termination is initiated by the Chief Administrative Officer, provided, however, that the Parties may mutually agree to severance payments and benefits as set forth above as part of a negotiated resignation.
5. **Rate of Compensation:** As compensation for Chief Administrative Officer's services, the City shall pay to the Chief Administrative Officer the sum of One-Hundred Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$115,000) annually, such compensation to be paid in biweekly installments payable on regular City paydays, or at such intervals or dates as all other City employees may be paid. This compensation will be reviewed annually from the Employment Date and may be adjusted accordingly by agreement of both Parties, up to but not exceeding a five percent (5%) annual increase. Further, the Parties acknowledge that the Chief Administrative Officer should be the highest paid employee within the City. Therefore, if the City increases any employee's rate of pay and/or benefits to exceed the compensation of the Chief Administrative Officer, the Chief Administrative Officer shall receive a like-kind increase so that Chief Administrative Officer's compensation remains above all other employees.
 6. **Paid Time Off ("PTO"):** The Chief Administrative Officer will be credited with forty (40) hours of PTO leave annually immediately upon the Employment Date, consistent with the City's PTO policies and the CAO's length of previous service with the City. Carryover of any PTO is pursuant to the City's policies and procedures, applicable to all City employees.
 7. **Disability, Health, and Life Insurance:** As of the Employment Date, the City agrees to put into force and/or continue insurance policies for life, dental, vision, disability, sickness, major medical, short term disability, long term disability, and dependent's group insurance covering Chief Administrative Officer and Chief Administrative Officer's dependents, which policies are the same as offered to other general employees of the City. Regardless of future policy amendments, the City agrees to continue payment of 100% of the premium for these benefits for Chief Administrative Officer.
 8. **Retirement:** As of the Employment Date, the City agrees to put into force and/or

continue such Retirement Plan(s) as are the same as offered to other general employees of the City.

9. **Professional Development:** The City hereby agrees to budget and to pay for the travel and subsistence expenses of Chief Administrative Officer for professional and official travel, meetings, and occasions adequate to continue the professional development of the Chief Administrative Officer and to adequately pursue necessary official and other functions for the City. The Chief Administrative Officer may choose which and how many professional development event(s) to attend without City Council approval so long as the expenses do not exceed the budgeted amount for this activity.
10. **General Expenses:** The City recognizes that certain expenses of a non-personal and generally job-affiliated nature are incurred by Chief Administrative Officer, and hereby agrees to reimburse or to pay said general expenses, including, but not limited to, Chief Administrative Officer's expenses for the purchase and use of a cellular phone. These expenses are to be reviewed and approved by the Mayor prior to reimbursement in accordance with established policy.
11. **Automobile:** In order to carry out official duties, the City will provide the Chief Administrative Officer with the use of an automobile. If no vehicle is available, the City shall reimburse the Chief Administrative Officer for the use of their personal vehicle at the current rate for mileage as determined by the Montana Department of Administration.
12. **Confidentiality:** The Chief Administrative Officer acknowledges that, during the term of his employment, he might obtain and gather confidential information regarding the City's operations and/or personnel. The Chief Administrative Officer acknowledges that all confidential information is the City's property and in no event shall he disclose such information to any person or entity, unless such disclosure is requested by the City or required by law.
13. **Other Terms and Conditions of Employment:**
 - A. The Mayor shall fix any such other terms and conditions of employment, provided such terms and conditions are not inconsistent with or in conflict with the provisions of this Agreement, with the Laurel City Charter or the Laurel Municipal Code, or any other law.
 - B. All provisions of the City Charter, Municipal Code, Personnel Policy, and rules and regulations of the City relating to vacation and sick leave, retirement and pension system contributions, holidays, other fringe benefits, and working conditions as they now exist or hereafter may be amended, also shall apply to the Chief Administrative Officer as they would to other employees of the City, unless otherwise provided for herein.
14. **Notices:** Notice pursuant to this Agreement shall be given by deposit in the custody of the United States Postal Service, postage prepaid, addressed as follows:

CITY:

Attn: Mayor
115 West 1st Street
Laurel, MT 59044

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER:

Kurt Markegard
Attn: Chief Administrative Officer
115 West 1st Street
Laurel, MT 59044


Alternatively, notices required pursuant to this Agreement may be personally served in the same manner as is applicable to civil judicial practice. Notice shall be deemed given as the date of personal service or as of the date of deposit of such written notice in the course of transmission in the United States Postal Services.

15. **Indemnification:** City shall indemnify the Chief Administrative Officer to the fullest extent allowable by law for actions taken within the scope of this Agreement and Chief Administrative Officer's official duties and shall provide public officials liability and errors and omissions insurance coverage as required by law and to the same extent as provided for other City officials or employees.
16. **General Provisions:**
- A. The text herein shall constitute the entire Agreement between the Parties and can only be amended or modified by written agreement of the Parties. An amendment or modification of this Agreement shall not be deemed a termination of this Agreement entitling the Chief Administrative Officer to severance pay to the extent set forth above.
 - B. If any provision, or any portion thereof, contained in this Agreement is held unconstitutional, invalid, or unenforceable, that provision, or any portion thereof, shall be deemed severable, but the remainder of this Agreement, or portion thereof, shall not be affected and shall remain in full force and effect.
17. **Binding Effect:** This Agreement shall bind and be enforceable between the Chief Administrative Officer and any subsequently elected or appointed Mayor or City Council Member for the duration of the Agreement.
18. **Governing Law:** This Agreement shall be governed by, interpreted, and construed under the laws of the State of Montana. Yellowstone County shall be the appropriate venue for any disputes arising under this Agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the City of Laurel has caused this Agreement to be signed and

executed on its behalf by its Mayor, duly attested by its City Clerk, and approved in form by the City Attorney, and the Chief Administrative Officer has signed and executed this Agreement, both in duplicate, the day and year first written above.


CITY OF LAUREL:


Dave Waggoner, Mayor


ATTEST:


Kelly Streckler, Clerk-Treasurer

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Michele L. Braukmann, Civil City Attorney

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER:


Kurt Markegard



City of Laurel	Job Description
Job Description Title: Chief Administrative Officer	FLSA Status: Exempt / Non Union
Accountable To: Mayor	Position Status: Regular Full-Time

Job Summary:

As defined by the City of Laurel Charter, Article III, Section 3.10, the Chief Administrative Officer, directs and coordinates administration of the City government in accordance with policies promulgated and approved by the Mayor and City Council. The Chief Administrative Officer shall directly oversee the operations and provision of services to citizens within each department of the City. He/she shall regularly perform complex work requiring significant interpretive judgment in analyzing, recommending and implementing City policy concerning fiscal matters and personnel matters. The Chief Administrative Officer shall coordinate day-to-day operational matters of all departments through the respective Department Heads. He/she shall recommend alternative courses of action and policies to the Mayor and Council for their consideration and approval.

Scope of Responsibility:

This position reports directly to the Mayor. This position directly manages and supervises the City's employees including, but not limited to, Department Heads of Public Works, Planning, Clerk/Treasurer, Police, Library, Fire, and Ambulance in accordance with policy.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

1. Duties Specific to Administration
 - 1.1. Confers with Department Heads in the proposed development and implementation of policies and programs.
 - 1.2. Manages and supervises Department Heads by providing sufficient direction and guidance to Department Heads, including coaching, documentation, performance evaluation and/or assessment and discipline.
 - 1.3. In association with Department Heads, manages and supervises all City employees including but not limited to development, coaching, performance evaluation and/or assessment and discipline.
 - 1.4. Makes recommendations to the Mayor regarding the termination of City employees and Department Heads.
 - 1.5. Facilitates the coordination and communication between departments and Department Heads.
 - 1.6. Works with Department Heads to ensure department goals and operations are within the City's overall mission and goals.

2. Duties Specifically Assigned by the Mayor
 - 2.1. Directs and coordinates the administration of the City government in accordance with approved policy; keeps Mayor/Council informed of all pertinent information.
 - 2.2. Assist Mayor in enforcing laws, ordinances, and resolutions as adopted by City.
 - 2.3. Reports to the Mayor on the affairs and operations of the City government.
 - 2.4. Reports to the Council as the Mayor requires.
 - 2.5. Assist Mayor in Council meetings and take part in discussion.
 - 2.6. Carry out all approved City policies.
 - 2.7. Recommend measures and actions that are in the City's best interest to the Mayor.

- 2.8. At the Mayor's direction, reviews and negotiates the terms and conditions of contracts, bonds, notes and other obligations of the City. Recommends to the Mayor for his/her approval prior to the City Council's consideration of the same.
 - 2.9. Oversees the preparation of the budget in consultation with the Clerk/Treasurer, other Department Heads, Mayor, and Council.
 - 2.10. Under the Mayor's direction, executes the budget adopted by the Council.
 - 2.11. Perform duties required by law, charter, ordinance or resolution.
3. Performs other related duties as assigned by the Mayor.

Minimum Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree (B. A.) or equivalent in Public Administration, Business Administration, Business Management, Accounting or Finance; and/or four to ten years' related experience in City, County or local government management, business and/or operational management in the private sector, financial management in the government or private sectors required; or a combination thereof.
- Must possess a valid Montana Driver's license.
- Must be bondable.

Personal Attributes/Skills Required or Preferred:

Problem Solving - Identifies and resolves problems in a timely manner; Gathers and analyzes information skillfully; Develops alternative solutions; Works well in group problem-solving situations; Uses reason even when dealing with emotional topics. Ability to define problems, collect data, establish facts, and draw valid conclusions.

Team Work - Balances team and individual responsibilities; Exhibits objectivity and openness to others' views; Gives and welcomes feedback; Contributes to building a positive team spirit; Puts success of team above own interests; Able to build morale and group commitments to goals and objectives; Supports everyone's efforts to succeed; Recognizes accomplishments of other team members.

Leadership - Exhibits confidence in self and others; Inspires and motivates others to perform well; Effectively influences actions and opinions of others; Inspires respect and trust; Accepts feedback from others; Provides vision and inspiration to peers and subordinates; Gives appropriate recognition to others; Displays passion and optimism; Mobilizes others to fulfill the vision.

Judgment - Displays willingness to make decisions; Exhibits sound and accurate judgment; Supports and explains reasoning for decisions; Includes appropriate people in decision-making process; Makes timely decisions.

Planning/Organizing - Prioritizes and plans work activities; Uses time efficiently; Plans for additional resources; Sets goals and objectives; Organizes or schedules other people and their tasks; Develops realistic action plans.

Interpersonal - Focuses on solving conflict, not blaming; Maintains confidentiality; Listens to others without interrupting; Keeps emotions under control; Remains open to others' ideas and tries new things.

Oral Communication - Speaks clearly and persuasively in positive or negative situations; Listens and gets clarification; Responds well to questions; Demonstrates group presentation skills; Participates in meetings. Keeps the Mayor and City Council promptly informed of all matters of major importance and recommends actions with respect to such matters as may be required; Ability to respond to common inquiries or complaints from customers, regulatory agencies, or members of the business community.

Written Communication - Writes clearly and informatively; Edits work for spelling and grammar; Varies writing style to meet needs; Presents numerical data effectively; Able to read and interpret written information.

Adaptability - Adapts to changes in the work environment; Manages competing demands; Changes approach or method to best fit the situation; Able to deal with frequent change, delays, or unexpected events.

Dependability - Follows instructions, responds to management direction; Takes responsibility for own actions; Keeps commitments; Commits to long hours of work when necessary to reach goals; Completes tasks on time or notifies appropriate person with an alternate plan.

Initiative - Volunteers readily; Undertakes self-development activities; Seeks increased responsibilities; Takes independent actions and calculated risks; Looks for and takes advantage of opportunities; Asks for and offers help when needed.

Professionalism - Approaches others in a tactful manner; Reacts well under pressure; Treats others with respect and consideration regardless of their status or position; Accepts responsibility for own actions; Follows through on commitments. Deals with the public in a manner that effectively promotes the image of the City and handles complaints tactfully but thoroughly.

Financial Analysis - Ability to read, analyze, and interpret financial reports, and legal documents.

Physical Demands & Working Conditions:

The position requires the ability to communicate orally and in writing. Duties require some limited physical movement of lifting up to 30 pounds (greater with assistance), bending, prolonged sitting, and stooping; work is performed in an office and is controllable; must be bondable; must possess a valid Montana Driver's license. Work conditions require high attention to detail and frequent deadlines with frequent interruptions.

CITY OF LAUREL, MONTANA

ORDINANCE NO. _____

EMERGENCY INTERIM MORATORIUM ORDINANCE

AN EMERGENCY INTERIM ORDINANCE IMPOSING A TEMPORARY MORATORIUM ON ANNEXATION, ZONING AMENDMENTS, SUBDIVISION PLATS, CONDITIONAL USES, AND VARIANCES AFFECTING UNDEVELOPED PROPERTY UNTIL COMPLETION OF A FINAL GROWTH POLICY AND IMPLEMENTING ZONING REGULATIONS.

WHEREAS, the City of Laurel is authorized under MCA 76-2-301 to regulate land use to protect public health, safety, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, MCA 76-2-306 authorizes emergency interim zoning ordinances; and

WHEREAS, the City has not completed a Growth Policy addressing future growth areas; and

WHEREAS, development pressure exists that may result in unplanned and inconsistent development.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Laurel:

SECTION 1. PURPOSE.

To preserve the status quo while the City completes planning and infrastructure analysis.

SECTION 2. MORATORIUM.

The City shall not accept, process, or approve applications for annexation, zoning amendments, subdivision plats, conditional uses, or variances enabling development in unzoned areas.

SECTION 3. GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE.

Applies to lands within the City and within one mile of City boundaries as authorized by MCA 76-2-306.

SECTION 4. EXCEPTIONS.

Emergency public safety projects and applications with vested rights prior to the effective date.

SECTION 5. DURATION.

Six (6) months unless extended per MCA 76-2-306.

SECTION 6. EMERGENCY DECLARATION.

Effective immediately upon adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this ___ day of _____, 2026.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Communications Timeline

Documentation: This timeline presents content from public records requests, including timestamps, quotes, and call durations as released by the City of Laurel. We have made every effort to represent these records accurately and completely. If you believe you have found an error or omission, please contact us at laurelcare.com so we can review and correct it promptly.

KEY: Phone Call Text Message Email Meeting Document

May 2025

May 2

Document — Legislature approves HB5

Montana Legislature concludes session, approving ~\$124M for behavioral health including \$26.5M for a new forensic mental health facility in eastern Montana.

July 2025

Jul 7

8:00 AM

Mayor → **Kurt**

Good morning.

8:19 AM

Mayor → **Kurt**

What's up

8:20 AM

Kurt → **Mayor**

I'm headed to go get condolence cards for Brittney and Kelly. Have city council sign them tomorrow night.

1:27 PM

Mayor → **Kurt**

Everything going ok

1:28 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Fine with me.

4:54 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Dan Villa.

4:54 PM

Mayor → Kurt

Did he seem nice

4:54 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Yeah he wants something.

4:55 PM

Kurt → Mayor

State land by cemetery to build a rural mental health facility

4:55 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Maybe

4:55 PM

Kurt → Mayor

A call is set for Monday if you want to join

5:11 PM

Mayor → Kurt

Okay I will.

5:12 PM

Kurt → Mayor

11am. Matt needs to attend as well

Jul 10

10:46 AM

Dan Villa → Kurt, Chris Kukulski

Subject: Invite to Staff and Council

Gentlemen,

Good morning. Hope you're both well.

In an effort to gain more understanding from your communities, I'd like to invite you, your pertinent staff and your respective councils to site tours in Yellowstone County for areas that are being considered for the new Behavioral Health Facility authorized in HB5 (2025). I'll also be inviting area state legislators to join.

We will meet at 1PM at the Rimrock Road MSU B Parking Lot and carpool/caravan from there. I'll send a Google Earth file and "feedback forms" for everyone to use so I'm not taking notes like a mad man the whole time.

Input from local officials is not only necessary to a success siting process, but also sincerely appreciated.

Feel free to call me anytime if you have any questions. Cell, home and work number is 406-560-1002.

Thanks and hope to see you soon.

DV

Jul 11

10:43 AM

Kurt → Dan Villa, Chris Kukulski

What day?

11:18 AM

Dan Villa → Kurt, Chris Kukulski

That's a head desk mistake. Sorry. July 24. Thanks for the catch Kurt!

1:03 PM

Chris Kukulski → Dan Villa, Kurt

Thanks Dan – what date are we meeting?

Jul 14

11:00 AM

Dan Villa → Kurt

Teams meeting invite: Boi/Laurel Intro Call (11AM–12PM)

Jul 15

9:29 AM

Kurt → Dan Villa

I missed the meeting. I hadn't received the invite, so I thought it was canceled. I will be in Drug Training in Billings this Thursday and Friday for our bus transit program, but I will be here Tomorrow.

9:31 AM

Dan Villa → Kurt

No worries. Give me a ring whenever you have a sec and we can chat through potential Laurel options.

Jul 24

10:39 AM

Mayor → Kurt

I'll be there in about an hour

12:41 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Im headed to Dan Villa meeting

4:58 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Just getting back to Laurel

4:58 PM

Mayor → Kurt

Go home

August 2025

Aug 11

8:46 AM

Dan Villa → **Kurt**

Morning Kurt, can you give a ring when you have a sec?

Aug 15

5:36 PM

Mayor → **Kurt**

Q2 is reporting Billings got the mental prison

6:12 PM

Kurt → **Mayor**

I don't see anything online

6:13 PM

Mayor → **Kurt**

It was on Q2

6:20 PM

Mayor → **Kurt**

Their planner was on talking about the growth to the west.

Aug 20

—

Document — BOI Statement (Dan Villa): Gianforte pauses BOI's role

[View document \(PDF\)](#) →

Aug 21

1:14 PM

Mayor → **Kurt**

I'm on my way in.

1:15 PM

Kurt → **Mayor**

I am here

2:28 PM

Mayor → **Kurt**

We have to write the governor

2:36 PM

Kurt → **Mayor**

Okay 🙌

Aug 22

2:44 PM

Kurt → Brereton, Osmundson, Villa (Mayor cc)

To you all, forgive me for missing an L in the spelling of Laurel.

2:46 PM

Kurt → Brereton, Osmundson, Villa (Mayor cc)

Subject: Laurel property for new state facility D02801

Mr. Brereton, Mr. Osmundson, Mr. Villa,

On behalf of the City of Laurel's Mayor, I am emailing you to let you know about a potential site for the new State of Montana mental health facility. The property is just west of the Laurel city limits and with the start of the development of a Love's Truck Plaza just west of the city, there will be new water and sewer services installed as part of the truck plaza. Love's is investing 2.4 million installing new water and sewer lines to their property and the property depicted in the attached pictures below in this email will benefit by having a 12-inch water main and an 8-inch sewer line run past this proposed property.

As a certified building inspector, I know what the state will need for water and sewer services to develop a building that will meet current building standards. Having a water line of 12 inches would allow any facility the ability to sprinkle the building to protect from fire spread. I believe that Laurel will have the necessary infrastructure adjacent to this property including gas and electric services than the other sites that have been considered. I realize that the state has limited funds to build such a facility but having all utilities close by would allow the state to purchase property that is currently listed for sale.

This site also has the benefit of having the old interstate interchange that was deeded to the City of Laurel after the State DOT built a new on/off interstate ramp further west. The city was granted this parcel from the Montana Department of Transportation and is 120 feet in width. The state had plans to demolish the asphalt, and I requested they deed it to Laurel for access to our land that is just north of the interstate. This old interstate on/off ramp would make an excellent access road for the new facility. Or the State could remove the asphalt and seek the property from city making the parcel even larger for facility expansion.

I have researched the necessary zoning needed to allow for a facility of this type and with annexation into the City of Laurel, the state could request a zoning designation of "Public" which would allow the facility to be built at this location. The property to the south is county zoning heavy industrial and this property is currently zoned county highway commercial. Residential development is sparse in the surround area.

The Mayor of Laurel would like to invite you all to a teams meeting to further discuss the potential for the proposed site to become the home of a new state facility. Please look over the included information and pictures and consider this site as the best site in Yellowstone County to build a facility. The property is currently on the market to be sold. I did check with the listing agent yesterday and it is available.

The Mayor and I look forward to further discussions.

Kurt Markegard
Chief Administrative Officer
City of Laurel, Montana
406-628-4796 ext. 5305

3:12 PM

Dan Villa → Kurt, Brereton, Osmundson

Thank you, Kurt. Appreciate it. We will be in touch once we have more guidance. Have a good weekend. Best to the Mayor.

September 2025

Sep 10

–

Document – Governor Gianforte's letter to BOI: restart ordered

[View document \(PDF\) →](#)

Sep 17

9:57 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 0 min 20 sec

Sep 18

11:13 AM

Missed call from Mayor

11:38 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 11 min 20 sec

5:00 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 17 min 18 sec

Sep 22

9:14 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 3 min 21 sec

10:04 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: Not recorded

10:08 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 10 min 48 sec

10:50 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 0 min 48 sec

Sep 23

10:46 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 1 hr 30 min

Sep 24

10:25 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 3 min 13 sec

10:28 AM
Kurt → Mayor
Duration: 20 min 12 sec

Sep 25

10:26 AM
Kurt → Mayor
Duration: 8 min 52 sec

4:04 PM
Kurt → Mayor
Duration: 2 min 11 sec

Sep 25

10:01 AM
Mayor → Kurt
Duration: 22 min 6 sec

Sep 28

10:37 AM
Kurt → Mayor
Duration: 16 min 39 sec

Sep 29

8:44 AM
Missed call from Mayor

8:57 AM
Kurt → Mayor
Duration: 21 min 40 sec

11:01 AM
Call from Mayor declined

Sep 30

11:03 AM
Kurt → Mayor
Duration: 9 min 44 sec

5:17 PM
Missed call from Mayor

5:30 PM
Kurt → Mayor
Duration: 10 min 4 sec

October 2025

Oct 1

–

Document – Legislative Legal Services memo: facility "most likely" a profit-making security

Staff Attorney Julie Johnson concludes the facility under HB5 would "most likely constitute a security," meaning BOI will charge DPHHS rent to yield investment returns.

7:59 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 25 min 16 sec

8:48 AM

Vince Ricci → Kurt

Duration: 15 min 15 sec

4:27 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 13 min 10 sec

6:32 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 3 min 27 sec

9:47 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 5 min 15 sec

Oct 2

1:23 PM

Dan Villa → Kurt

There's a road next to the land in Laurel but the GIS doesn't show ownership. Is that the city's?

1:23 PM

Kurt → Dan Villa

Yes

1:23 PM

Dan Villa → Kurt

Found the phone?

1:23 PM

Kurt → Dan Villa

New phone. Spent the last hour and half on the phone with Verizon. Sent you DOT email about the deed. It was recorded but I am not sure where the staff put it.

1:23 PM

Dan Villa → Kurt

Thanks!

1:32 PM

Kurt → Dan Villa

Subject: FW: Finalization of Quit Claim Deed – FYI (forwarding 2022 MDT email about deeding old I-90 off-ramp to City of Laurel)

1:34 PM

Kurt → Dan Villa

Subject: FW: Quit Claim Deed – "Found the email." (attaches Quit Claim Deed PDF)

2:37 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 0 min 3 sec

Oct 3

7:55 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 15 min 42 sec

Oct 6

–
Document – DPHHS Director Brereton's letter to BOI: formal site selection opens
View document (PDF) →

Oct 7

8:28 AM

Dan Villa → Kurt

8:30 AM

Dan Villa → Kurt

www.hb5.mt.gov – Budget and Program Planning

12:02 PM

Missed call from Mayor

12:31 PM

Lee Deming → Kurt

Kurt, can you tell me the state of Laurel's interest in the proposed mental health facility?

1:16 PM

Lee Deming → Kurt

Sorry, this is Lee Deming.

12:56 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 49 min 43 sec

3:28 PM

Kurt → Lee Deming

Duration: 0 min 39 sec

Oct 8

7:38 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Sends link: hb5.mt.gov – Montana Behavioral Health

7:39 AM

Kurt → **Lee Deming**

<https://nhs.mt.gov/>

7:46 AM

Lee Deming → **Kurt**

Kurt, I should be able to visit today sometime. Are you available today?

7:47 AM

Kurt → **Lee Deming**

I am just reading the letters in the link I set you. I should be around all day working. I have to go to Billings and make calls today. I should be able to have moments to talk.

8:18 AM

Lee Deming → **Kurt**

I have a meeting at noon today and another this late afternoon or evening. If you get a minute, text me if you can visit.

8:50 AM

Kurt → **Lee Deming**

Im free now

8:56 AM

Lee Deming → **Kurt**

Duration: 56 min 54 sec

9:01 AM

Mayor → **Kurt**

So it's not even going to be a prison

2:21 PM

Mayor → **Kurt**

Duration: 12 min 36 sec

3:14 PM

Lee Deming → **Kurt**

Kurt, John Forte from Riverstone Health is going to give you a call. He might be the best person to answer Laurel's questions.

6:33 PM

Kurt → **Commissioner Mark Morse**

Subject: I thought you might want this link that was sent to me.

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/News/2025/October/ProposalsforNewHealthFacility>

Commissioner Morse,

I was sent this link yesterday and I have not read it yet. I wanted to let you know that this is the first response we have received from the state. There was a lot of speculation going around and KTVQ was spreading misinformation.

The City of Laurel does not have 10 acres of land available inside city limits with services. The only thing I passed along to the state was that there was land listed for sale at the tour that you and I was on in and around Billings. Vince Ricci was standing right beside me when I told the state representative about a "for sale sign" that I had seen on my way to the family farm. The state followed up a few weeks later with the mayor and all the Mayor and I wanted was more information to make informed decisions. The mayor requested the information, and we were told that eventually they would send guidance to us all. I guess we just received the states response.

I have sent this link to Vince Ricci, Lee Deming and at 4:30 today I spoke to John Forte with Riverstone Health and told him he could google it to find it as I had not pulled it up to read it yet. I printed it off here at the office and plan to read it tonight at home.

The reason for this email is due to Mr. Forte's lack of knowledge about the release and so I thought if he didn't know I should probably let you know.

Have good evening, I am head to the LVFD open house.

Kurt

6:33 PM

Kurt → Lee Deming

I talked to him and sent him the link

6:36 PM

Kurt → Lee Deming

I also just emailed Commissioner Morse

6:37 PM

Kurt → Lee Deming

Open government is the best government!

6:38 PM

Lee Deming → Kurt

Thanks for the update. I hope the City will get some answered

Oct 9

10:56 AM

Commissioner Morse → Kurt, Waters, White

Kurt – thanks for the info. Am sharing with the other Commissioners. If you receive additional info, please send our way.

11:44 AM

Kurt → Civil Attorney, Mayor

Forwards DPHHS link. "I knew I was going to run into the Commissioners this morning so I thought I would send them the information that the state sent."

2:26 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 4 min 31 sec

Oct 10

2:06 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 30 min 31 sec

2:48 PM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 2 min 59 sec

Oct 14

4:31 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: Not recorded

Oct 16

10:15 AM

Missed call from Vince Ricci

10:16 AM

Kurt → Vince Ricci

Duration: 11 min 59 sec

Oct 17

10:12 AM

Kurt → Vince Ricci

Duration: 0 min 24 sec

12:13 PM

Dan Villa → Kurt

Is Laurel going to sign onto the Billings "slow down" letter?

12:41 PM

Kurt → Vince Ricci

Duration: 0 min 5 sec

1:22 PM

Vince Ricci → Kurt

Duration: 11 min 46 sec

12:26 PM

Kurt → Dan Villa

Duration: 6 min 16 sec

2:49 PM

Kurt → Dan Villa

Mayor put it on city council agenda next Tuesday. Discussion. Have a good vacation.

2:49 PM

Dan Villa → Kurt

Thanks! I'll call Wednesday.

5:34 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 14 min 54 sec

Oct 21

9:11 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 12 min 18 sec

11:00 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 1 min 2 sec

11:20 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 1 min 20 sec

3:00 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 4 min 27 sec

8:13 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 0 min 1 sec

Oct 22

8:48 AM

Dan Villa → Kurt

Morning! How'd Council discussion go?

9:18 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 30 min 35 sec

3:55 PM

Kurt → Dan Villa

It was fine. You can view it on our YouTube channel.

Oct 23

10:29 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 0 min 2 sec

10:43 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 11 min 1 sec

11:40 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 4 min 16 sec

5:46 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: Not recorded

5:47 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 33 min 16 sec

Oct 27

5:00 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 15 min 6 sec

Oct 28

–

Document – Speaker Ler formally requests Attorney General opinion on whether HB 5 facility constitutes a security

[View document \(PDF\) →](#)

Oct 29

1:46 PM

Missed call from Mayor

2:06 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 0 min 2 sec

Oct 30

9:35 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 3 min 39 sec

11:11 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 14 min 53 sec

Oct 31

–

Document – State FAQ released (DPHHS/BOI)

[View document \(PDF\) →](#)

9:42 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 1 min 46 sec

9:45 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 0 min 2 sec

9:46 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 2 min 46 sec

12:28 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 6 min 25 sec

November 2025

Nov 4

4:01 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 0 min 3 sec

7:14 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 9 min 23 sec

Nov 10

9:02 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 27 min 34 sec

11:15 AM

Dan Villa → Kurt

Any thoughts on letter and/or meeting?

11:20 AM

Kurt → Dan Villa

Mayor is okay with me writing one.

1:08 PM

Document — Big Horn County (Hardin) proposal received

Big Horn County submits proposal for the forensic mental health facility. [View proposal \(PDF\)](#) →

1:19 PM

Document — Custer County (Miles City) proposal received

Custer County submits proposal for the forensic mental health facility. [View proposal \(PDF\)](#) →

1:20 PM

Dan Villa → Kurt

I'll buy the beer if you send it this afternoon? 🍺

2:19 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: Not recorded

5:00 PM

Document — State proposal deadline

Deadline for community site proposals passes at 5:00 PM. Big Horn County (Hardin) and Custer County (Miles City) submitted proposals. Billings declines. Laurel does not submit a formal proposal.

5:24 PM

Kurt → Dan Villa

The burial of my uncle was today. He served Billings PD for 21 years and Carbon County Sheriff's office for 12 years. I was out of the office from 10am. I just saw this text.

5:24 PM

Dan Villa → Kurt

Ugh. I forgot. Thanks to him for his service. Hope you and yours gave him a great send off. Beer is still on me.

5:24 PM

Kurt → Dan Villa

I will go to the office tomorrow morning and get it written up.

Nov 12

4:07 PM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 10 min 24 sec

Nov 13

3:23 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 6 min 57 sec

4:00 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 0 min 1 sec

4:30 PM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 19 min 53 sec

3:30 PM

Dan Villa → Kurt

Duration: 29 min 2 sec

4:54 PM

Missed call from Dan Villa

5:00 PM

Kurt → Dan Villa

Did I miss a call?

5:00 PM

Dan Villa → Kurt

Yep. I'll call in 10.

5:00 PM

Kurt → Dan Villa

OK. I'm still at the office.

5:00 PM

Kurt → Dan Villa

Duration: 0 min 3 sec

5:01 PM

Kurt → Dan Villa

5:08 PM

Dan Villa → Kurt

Duration: 16 min 14 sec

5:25 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 8 min 13 sec

Nov 17

8:54 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Subject: Dan Villa Letter about Laurel Annexation – "Can you read this and see if you want any changes?"
(attaches letter draft)

8:57 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Looks great Kurt

9:16 AM

Kurt → Dan Villa (Mayor cc)

Subject: Letter from Laurel's CAO Kurt Markegard

Dan,

Attached is the letter explaining the limitations that Laurel had in the State's process to select a community to be the location for the new facility.

My schedule is open this Friday if anyone from the State would like to meet in person.

I attached Laurel's annexation policy as well. I didn't include the link to state statues but for quick reference MCA 7-2-44 is the laws to annex government lands.

I also have some thoughts on zoning laws I would like to discuss. I believe state law has some exemptions for certain types of government facilities.

Kurt Markegard
CAO
Laurel

morning

Kurt → Dan Villa

Letter is sent. Sorry I had to work at the farm all weekend.

morning

Dan Villa → Kurt

No problem. Thanks!

9:52 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 10 min 30 sec

2:02 PM

Dan Villa → Kurt

Could you and the mayor make Thursday at 4PM for a meeting with HHS and me?

3:31 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 4 min 21 sec

4:16 PM

Kurt → Dan Villa

I am free. Mayor said he was also.

4:16 PM

Dan Villa → Kurt

See you then. LMK where you want to meet.

4:16 PM

Kurt → Dan Villa

OK. I'll have to think about that again.

Document — Markegard's letter to BOI (published on hb5.mt.gov)

Kurt's official letter to Dan Villa explaining why Laurel did not submit a formal proposal. References summer tour, annexation requirements, and MCA 7-2-44. Listed alongside Hardin and Miles City proposals on state website. [View letter \(PDF\) →](#)

Nov 18

1:34 PM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 11 min 45 sec

7:36 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 4 min 7 sec

Nov 19

7:56 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 0 min 2 sec

8:13 AM

Missed call from Mayor

8:23 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 14 min 4 sec

9:24 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 0 min 29 sec

11:47 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 0 min 2 sec

12:00 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: Not recorded

12:33 PM

Missed call from Mayor

12:45 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 14 min 34 sec

3:48 PM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 20 min 34 sec

4:28 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 0 min 3 sec

Nov 20

8:54 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 13 min 46 sec

12:02 PM

Dan Villa → Kurt

Heading your way. Where do you want to meet?

12:02 PM

Kurt → Dan Villa

City hall. Not at 4pm. 115 west 1st street.

12:16 PM

Kurt → Dan Villa

Duration: 0 min 42 sec

12:22 PM

Dan Villa → Kurt

Duration: 0 min 15 sec

12:50 PM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 3 min 49 sec

~4:00 PM

Meeting — with HHS/BOI

Kurt and Mayor met with Dan Villa and state team. Date is verified; 4 PM start time is assumed based on the Nov 17 email but unconfirmed.

Note: The state's published HB5 project timeline schedules an "on-site review and local government presentation" for November 20, 2025. The Mayor and CAO later stated they did not know the location of the proposed site until the buy-sell agreement was announced to City Council on January 20, 2026.

5:43 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 5 min 45 sec

Nov 24

9:05 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 5 min 18 sec

9:31 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 3 min 50 sec

9:58 AM

Missed call from Mayor

10:02 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 6 min 59 sec

11:42 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: Not recorded

11:43 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 0 min 45 sec

Nov 25

9:15 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 6 min 59 sec

9:25 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 6 min 14 sec

10:17 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: ?1 min 48 sec

3:27 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 0 min 13 sec

Nov 28

2:37 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 7 min 53 sec

Nov 29

9:23 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Good morning! Comments not as bad as I thought. Klose and Canape left messages that Q2 contacted them

9:31 AM

Kurt → Mayor

No statements should be made

9:31 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Yeah I can't believe she contacted council members

9:41 AM

Mayor → Kurt

I forwarded you a email from Q2 to all of the council members

9:42 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Should I send a email please do not respond with any statements

9:43 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Individual emails.

9:44 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Yes

9:44 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Land use decisions need to be made at city council meetings and not in public

9:45 AM

Kurt → Mayor

That is all you need to say.

9:45 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Okay I will send something

Nov 30

11:40 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 17 min 38 sec

December 2025

Dec 1

12:34 PM

Missed call from Mayor

12:51 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 0 min 50 sec

12:52 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: Not recorded

12:52 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 19 min 6 sec

5:35 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 0 min 2 sec

5:46 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 37 min 49 sec

Dec 2

11:16 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 38 min 23 sec

12:05 PM

Missed call from Dan Villa

12:44 PM

Dan Villa → Kurt

Duration: 38 min 3 sec

1:36 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 6 min 4 sec

2:50 PM

Kurt → Dan Villa

Subject: Water and Sewer Maps

Dan,

I cannot attach the love's water and sewer extension as that file is too large to email. The water line is almost done but the sewer line is ongoing. Both extensions are going out to the Love's property and ending where the blue square is below.

Kurt

Dec 3

8:18 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Any better

8:19 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Yes

8:19 AM

Kurt → Mayor

I was here at 730

8:26 AM

Mayor → Kurt

You have got to take better care of yourself.

12:05 PM

Mayor → Kurt

Everything going ok

12:05 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Yes. Just finished up making sure oaths are ready to go

12:06 PM

Mayor → Kurt

Okay

12:06 PM

Mayor → Kurt

Anything from Dan?

12:06 PM

Kurt → Mayor

No

12:46 PM

Dan Villa → Kurt

Is there a latecomer on the water/sewer line extension?

1:40 PM

Kurt → Dan Villa

Duration: 15 min 8 sec

1:58 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: Not recorded

1:58 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: Not recorded

2:06 PM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 50 min 0 sec

Dec 4

5:33 PM

Mayor → Kurt

Send me Dan's phone number

5:35 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Sends contact card for DANNY VILLA, Anaconda, MT (phone redacted)

5:35 PM

Mayor → Kurt

Amy Mullaney is a laurel official being interviewed about it

5:35 PM

Mayor → Kurt

Argh Q2!!!!

5:45 PM

Mayor → Kurt

Sorry, talk with you tomorrow

10:21 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 19 min 0 sec

5:50 PM
Kurt → Mayor
Duration: 6 min 5 sec

Dec 5

7:49 AM
Kurt → Mayor
Duration: 26 min 46 sec

10:00 AM
Kurt → Mayor
Duration: 6 min 33 sec

2:31 PM
Kurt → Mayor
Duration: 1 min 57 sec

5:26 PM
Kurt → Mayor
Duration: 4 min 38 sec

Dec 8

7:42 AM
Dan Villa → Kurt

Subject: Public Comment — "Is there a Zoom link for tomorrow's Council meeting? Director Brereton and I would like to provide public comment to Council and staff."

Dec 9

9:13 AM
Kurt → Dan Villa
Duration: 6 min 9 sec

3:30 PM
Mayor → Kurt
Dan Villa just called Kelly. I guess Kelly is sitting up for them to call in.

9:57 AM
Kurt → Mayor
Duration: 8 min 23 sec

10:09 AM
Mayor → Kurt
Duration: 11 min 16 sec

3:31 PM
Mayor → Kurt
Duration: 0 min 24 sec

4:45 PM
Kurt → Mayor
Duration: 16 min ?? sec

5:03 PM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 0 min 59 sec

5:21 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 1 min 7 sec

Dec 10

8:23 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 12 min 14 sec

10:32 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 0 min 2 sec

10:42 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 14 min 34 sec

11:43 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 1 min 46 sec

11:50 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 3 min 7 sec

12:20 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 0 min 52 sec

Dec 12

10:39 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: Not recorded

2:49 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 12 min 8 sec

Dec 17

2:45 PM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 1 min 29 sec

3:53 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 0 min 55 sec

Dec 18

10:23 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 16 min 42 sec

Dec 19

—

Document — Attorney General Knudsen responds to Speaker Ler: letter of advice issued, unable to conclude on all elements

[View document \(PDF\) →](#)

8:25 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 2 min 59 sec

1:02 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 28 min 24 sec

Dec 22

9:24 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 2 min 58 sec

4:20 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 4 min 9 sec

7:25 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 3 min 7 sec

Dec 23

9:02 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 14 min 38 sec

10:58 AM

Missed call from Dan Villa

11:41 AM

Kurt → Dan Villa

11:51 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: Not recorded

12:07 PM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 5 min 3 sec

Dec 24

11:10 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 0 min 20 sec

Dec 30

12:51 PM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 0 min 30 sec

12:54 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 0 min 23 sec

12:57 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: Not recorded

12:57 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 0 min 47 sec

1:38 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 0 min 23 sec

1:38 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 1 min 33 sec

1:58 PM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 0 min 56 sec

2:31 PM

Dan Villa → Kurt

Subject: Meeting

Kurt,

Would you and any members of your team you'd like to add be available to meet team on January 7 at 4PM at Dick Anderson Construction's offices in Billings? We want to get a good understanding of the annexation process, zoning regs, basically all of the city requirements.

THX

DV

4:43 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: Not recorded

January 2026

Jan 5

4:03 PM

Kurt → Dan Villa (Mayor cc)

I have something scheduled at 5pm. I may be able to join by phone.

4:26 PM

Dan Villa → Kurt, Mayor

Would 1PM work better?

4:46 PM

Kurt → Dan Villa (Mayor cc)

The mayor has told me that will work.

Jan 6

9:44 AM

Dan Villa → Kurt, Mayor

Thanks. See you then.

10:52 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 5 min 49 sec

12:37 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 6 min 47 sec

2:19 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 13 min 47 sec

3:39 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 3 min 36 sec

Jan 7

1:00 PM

Meeting — Dick Anderson Construction, Billings

Kurt, Mayor, Dan Villa, and team. Discussed annexation process, zoning requirements, and city requirements for the proposed facility site.

1:02 PM

Kurt → Dan Villa

Duration: 0 min 13 sec

Jan 8

8:55 AM

Dan Villa → Kurt, Mayor

Subject: Annexation and Zoning Forms

Good morning, Kurt.

Thanks for the time yesterday. Very helpful and informative.

Can you please direct me to the forms we will need to submit to the city to request annexation and a zoning change?

Much appreciated.

Thx

DV

2:51 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 4 min 41 sec

4:22 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 17 min 16 sec

5:54 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 9 min 25 sec

Jan 14

5:51 PM

Mayor → Kurt

Shelly Molaschi sent me a email I forwarded to you

6:00 PM

Kurt → Mayor

First time I have seen this

6:01 PM

Mayor → Kurt

Yeah she asked me and I said not seen it

9:51 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 6 min 30 sec

11:01 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 1 min 6 sec

3:01 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 11 min 33 sec

Jan 15

9:16 AM

Mayor → Kurt

So Vila didn't send you any of that information

10:26 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Nope

10:46 AM

Kurt → Dan Villa

Duration: 0 min 1 sec

10:46 AM

Kurt → Dan Villa

Duration: 0 min 2 sec

10:55 AM

Dan Villa → Kurt

I'll call in 10.

10:55 AM

Kurt → Dan Villa

Duration: 0 min 2 sec

10:59 AM

Dan Villa → Kurt

Duration: 32 min 15 sec

12:08 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 3 min 20 sec

1:45 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: Not recorded

Jan 16

9:54 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 0 min 1 sec

9:55 AM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 18 min 59 sec

Jan 20

9:14 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Good morning Kurt

9:58 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Did you say the state is coming tonight or calling

10:42 AM

Kurt → Mayor

No idea

10:42 AM

Mayor → Kurt

We will work with them on what they need

Jan 21

9:49 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 49 min 21 sec

2:54 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 9 min 46 sec

4:39 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 0 min 2 sec

Jan 22

11:42 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 14 min 11 sec

12:44 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 1 min 11 sec

8:43 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 3 min 41 sec

Jan 23

10:31 AM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 6 min 38 sec

5:00 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 17 min 44 sec

Jan 26

12:27 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 2 min 8 sec

2:59 PM

Mayor → Kurt

Duration: 0 min 31 sec

4:15 PM

Kurt → Mayor

Duration: 11 min 0 sec

[Jump to Top](#)

Date: 2/18/2026

To: Laurel City Council & Mayor David Waggoner

RE: Formal Opposition and Notice of Procedural Risks Regarding the Proposed Laurel Forensic Mental Health Facility

Laurel City Council & Mayor David Waggoner

As a resident of Laurel living in direct proximity to the proposed 114-acre site for the new 32-bed State Forensic Mental Health Facility, I am writing to formally restate my opposition to this project.

While the state's need for mental health beds is documented, the selection of the Laurel site is fundamentally flawed. Based on the current trajectory, the State and City should be aware of several significant procedural, constitutional, and logistical hurdles that jeopardize the project's ability to meet the June 30, 2026, funding deadline:

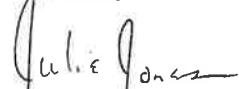
- **Constitutional "Right to Participate" Concerns (Art. II, Sec. 8):** The Montana Constitution guarantees citizens the right to participate in agency decisions *before* they are final. By executing a buy-sell agreement prior to holding public hearings in Laurel, the State has created a decision-making process that may be constitutionally deficient. This procedural error exposes the project to administrative challenges that could render the site selection voidable.
- **Annexation and Zoning Impossibility:** The proposed site sits outside city limits and currently lacks the necessary infrastructure. I, along with a significant number of concerned residents, will be actively petitioning the Laurel City Council to deny any annexation or rezoning requests. Without access to city water, sewer, and emergency services, this site is non-viable. A contested annexation process alone will likely push the project timeline well beyond the 2026 legislative funding window.
- **Environmental and Social Impact Requirements (MEPA):** Given that this facility will house criminal defendants near an elementary school, a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is a necessity, not an option. A full review of the impact on local property values, the strain on Laurel's volunteer fire department, and public safety risks is required. The time necessary for a diligent MEPA review, which is typically 6 to 12 months, is time this project does not have.

Laurel is not a "shovel-ready" site. The level of community opposition and the lack of existing infrastructure make this the path of most resistance. I urge the State to prioritize locations, such

as Columbus, that offer a more cooperative path to completion and greater local government support.

I am requesting a formal public town hall where the Board of Investments and DPHHS can answer directly to the residents who will be most affected by this facility.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Julie Jones

1201 West 4th Street

Laurel, MT 59044

CC: > Governor Greg Gianforte

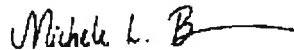
The Montana Board of Investments – Dan Villa, Executive Director

Director Charlie Brereton, DPHHS

Brittney Harakal

From: Civil Attorney
Sent: Saturday, February 21, 2026 5:08 PM
To: City Mayor; Kurt Markegard; Kelly Strecker; Brittney Harakal
Subject: FW: forensic mental facility

Best Regards,



Michele L. Braukmann
Civil City Attorney
City of Laurel
Cell Phone: 406.671.4333
civilattorney@laurel.mt.gov

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From: Deming, Lee <Lee.Deming@legmt.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2026 5:24 PM
To: Ward 4B <ward4b@laurel.mt.gov>; Civil Attorney <civilattorney@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>
Subject: Re: forensic mental facility

Good afternoon.

I have already declared my opposition to having this facility located in or near Laurel to the State and to the Mayor and City Council.

But, I will keep trying.

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Ward 4B <ward4b@laurel.mt.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2026 3:56:47 PM
To: Deming, Lee <Lee.Deming@legmt.gov>; Civil Attorney <civilattorney@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>
Subject: forensic mental facility

You don't often get email from ward4b@laurel.mt.gov. [Learn why this is important](#)

Good afternoon Lee, things as you might be aware of are getting out of hand here in Laurel. It's almost at a civil war state. I ask you to PLEASE do what you can to convince the state of Montana to change their plans for Laurel. Thank you.

Emails to and from legislators involving legislative business may be subject to public disclosure under the Right to Know provision of the Montana Constitution and Title 2, Chapter 6, part 10, MCA. This may include the sender, recipient, content, and attachments.

Brittney Harakal

From: Kurt Markegard
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2026 9:20 AM
To: Brittney Harakal
Subject: FW: Laurel Forensic Mental Health Facility

-----Original Message-----

From: Kelli Lemke <kelli.lemke@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 21, 2026 2:53 PM
To: Laurel City Planner <cityplanner@laurel.mt.gov>
Subject: Laurel Forensic Mental Health Facility

Dear Mr. Markegard:

Please do what you can to prevent the state forensic mental health facility from being constructed in Laurel at the site planned.

I know you've heard all the reasons that people have for loathing it. My reason is simple - I am confident that it is not in the best interest of our community.

I've lived in Yellowstone county nearly my whole life, Laurel for well over a decade. My family heritage in the state is about a hundred years. Growing up, I always thought I'd leave, like we all do, but I didn't, because I realized, again like we all do, that it's special here.

My husband's a pastor in Laurel. He grew up here. I'm one of the operations superintendents at the refinery. We have two little boys, 18 months and 3. The proposed mental health facility is about 550 yards from our front door.

Clearly, part of what evokes my strident opposition for this facility is "not in my backyard." However, several of the governor's official priorities, "government working for you" and "safe communities" and "protecting our way of life" for Montanans, are, in my opinion deeply violated by this project. They seem to be relatively universal, or at least American, values. It would have never occurred to me in the particulars, but the state government constructing a prison of sorts out my front door is exactly the kind of thing I would have thought I'd be protected from under these priorities. To me, this is the fundamental problem.

For me and my family, we would change or stop our walking habits, especially on West 9th. We'd probably move houses, even at a financial cost. We likely wouldn't send our kids to Laurel Elementary, and presumably not to the public school system in general once the elementary is out. How fancy the fence is doesn't matter. I'm sure we're not the only ones.

I'm all for helping law enforcement, but if convenience was their first priority, they would have chosen a different profession. I suspect protecting communities is more important to them too.

I'm all for helping people. But we don't need to try to restrain seriously unwell people in the midst of our neighborhoods, let alone just off the elementary school playground.

I'm all for fiscal responsibility and financial investment. I doubt \$26.5 million will be enough. I'm confident there are alternatives.

I could wax on about taxes, utilities, the track record of the sustainability of this type of facility, etc., but you know all those concerns. To protect people and our way of life, we can't allow the forensic mental health facility to be constructed as planned. It doesn't make any sense. It's a violation of Montanans and our principles.

For now, the official problem is at the state level. However, as we move forward and consider potential zoning options, annexation, and the fallout, the responsibility is more local. I suspect that you hold similar principles and that it is a part of why you do what you do vocationally. I think we all want security at home, the government to serve its citizens, and our way of life protected. The proposed facility furthers none of these things for Laurel or for Yellowstone County.

Please oppose it every way you can. Thank you for your work to serve our community.

Kelli Wardell

Brittney Harakal

From: Ward 4B
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2026 2:18 PM
To: Civil Attorney
Cc: Kurt Markegard; Brittney Harakal
Subject: Fw: Proposed Forensic Mental Health Facility

From: Ward 4B <ward4b@laurel.mt.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2026 10:41 AM
To: Deming, Lee <Lee.Deming@legmt.gov>; City Mayor <citymayor@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1A <ward1a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2A <ward2a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3A <ward3a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3B <ward3b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4A <ward4a@laurel.mt.gov>
Subject: Re: Proposed Forensic Mental Health Facility

State Representative Lee Deming and State Senator Vince Ricci, thank you for your email stating that you have changed your support for the state Mental Health Facility to be located in Laurel. I'm sure that was not a easy decision to make. AS you have heard the citizens in Laurel support such a facility JUST not in Laurel. As a elected official we are a representative of the people who elected us. If we are to honor that oath that we take then we MUST not only listen to the people that we represent but honor their wishes and requests. Even when sometimes WE think we know better.

64 years ago when I entered the United States military I took a oath to defend the Constitution of the United States, like veterans before and after me that oath goes with us to our graves. It never expires. Just like the oath we take when we enter city or state government we represent the people , we giving them our word and we are to keep our word if we are truly honest. For we represent a government , "OF THE PEOPLE ,BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE."

In the past you and I and Senator Ricci have worked together to support our seniors and our veterans, not just locally but state wide. I appreciate all the work that you and Vince have done not just for those two groups but for all citizens in Montana.

Saying all of that I hope that you and Senator Ricci will STRONGLY encourage the "powers that be" in Helena to come out with a statement that they have heard and listened to the citizens in Laurel and are reversing their plans for locating the Mental Health Facility in Laurel and will start the process of finding a different location in eastern Montana.

Once again thank you and Vince for all you have done for Laurel and Yellowstone county. May GOD be with you and help you in making of tough decisions.

I know you have my contact info but here it is again.

Laurel city council member
Richard A. Klose SR
Ward4b@laurel.mt.gov (city)
Kloserichard@yahoo.com (personal)
406-671-1814

From: Deming, Lee <Lee.Deming@legmt.gov>
Sent: Monday, February 16, 2026 3:54 PM

To: City Mayor <citymayor@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1A <ward1a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2A <ward2a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3A <ward3a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3B <ward3b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4A <ward4a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4B <ward4b@laurel.mt.gov>
Subject: Proposed Forensic Mental Health Facility

Mayor Waggoner and City Council Members,

Senator Ricci and I wish to inform you that we do not support the location of the Forensic Mental Health facility in or near Laurel.

Some of the reasons for this lack of support is the unresolved safety issue, the lack of communication by the State with the City of Laurel, and the fact that opponents-our constituents-will not support a facility of this type in or near Laurel.

Senator Ricci and I have communicated our lack of support to the Director of the Board of Investments and he has assured us that he will pass along our sentiments to other State officials who need to hear it.

Thank you.

Emails to and from legislators involving legislative business may be subject to public disclosure under the Right to Know provision of the Montana Constitution and Title 2, Chapter 6, part 10, MCA. This may include the sender, recipient, content, and attachments.

Brittney Harakal

From: Ward 4B
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2026 2:38 PM
To: Brittney Harakal; Civil Attorney
Subject: Fw: Recommendation for Letters being read...

From: The Front Porch <thefrontporchmt@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2026 2:26 PM
To: Ward 1A <ward1a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 1B <ward1b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2A <ward2a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 2B <ward2b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3A <ward3a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 3B <ward3b@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4A <ward4a@laurel.mt.gov>; Ward 4B <ward4b@laurel.mt.gov>; Civil Attorney <civilattorney@laurel.mt.gov>
Subject: Recommendation for Letters being read...

Hello City Council & Michele Braukmann

I want to first THANK YOU all for your service and taking the time to read through and listen to all the community concerns.

I am not sure of the protocol for reading all the letters that were sent in for ex parte... to save the time for both you the CC and the community, can I make a recommendation to have those emails read before council meetings. That is, if they need to actually be read into record.

If there is another way to put them into record without reading each one, I would recommend that.

I just see this concern being a long road ahead and I hate to see these meetings going late into the night. Of course, I want all voices to be heard but if there a way to do the above, to save on time each Tuesday night I would appreciate that consideration.

Thank you so much for your time and taking this into consideration

--
The Front Porch ...
Cheryl Hill
406.696.7678
thefrontporch.info