

**MINUTES
CITY OF LAUREL
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 02, 2025**

A Council Workshop was held in Council Chambers and called to order by Council Vice President Wilke at 6:30 p.m. on December 2, 2025.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tom Canape	<input type="checkbox"/> Heidi Sparks
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michelle Mize	<input type="checkbox"/> Jessica Banks
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Casey Wheeler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Irv Wilke
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Richard Klose	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jodi Mackay

OTHERS PRESENT:

Brittney Harakal, Administrative Assistant
Kurt Markegard, CAO
JW Hopper, Fire Chief
Kelly Strecker, Clerk/Treasurer

Public Input:

There were none.

General Items

Executive Review

1. Mayor: Resolution - Beartooth RC&D MOU

Myrna Latusky with Beartooth RC&D introduced Nan Knight and Brad Eik. Together, they briefly reviewed what they have done within Laurel this past year and the programs they offer. One big project they are working on is a sight selector tool, so when a business is coming into the area, they have a database with information that can narrow down areas to look at that meet their needs.

Council requested periodic newsletters throughout the year on their activities.

Council questioned which businesses can apply for a revolving loan fund. It was clarified that as long as they are a registered business with the Secretary of State, they can apply. If they are in agriculture, they also have to meet the value chain requirements.

One project worked on this past year was a funding research project on the Bozeman Trail. It is the most accurate research to date.

2. Finance: Resolution - Budget Amendment

This budget amendment makes changes to the budget passed in September. The first item covers the bid for the new Ambulance. The second item is to allow the Fire Department to purchase new extrication equipment and reimburse the General Fund with the grant they have received from CHS over the next three years.

The Fire Chief noted that the grant is to update their extrication equipment. One set of extrication equipment went down this past weekend. The new set will come with a lifetime warranty. They will need to be serviced every 5 to 6 years. The City does pay for the routine services.

Council Issues

Council questioned the recent announcement from the State regarding the Mental Health Facility coming to Laurel.

Chief Administrative Officer Markegard reminded Council that it is the State's decision to choose the facility's location. As he had previously briefed Council, the City cannot be considered under their process because we do not have property within our jurisdiction to propose. At this time, the City has not received a request for annexation.

City Attorney Braukmann stated that the City will need to preserve all feedback it receives on this matter. She reiterated that there is nothing before the Council at the moment.

Council asked how they should convey verbal comments they receive. If those statements need to be written down and submitted or stated during a public meeting. It was clarified that they should be stated during a public meeting.

Council and the public were reminded that the State is a separate governmental entity. The City does not control what the State does. The public was further reminded that just because the Council may not respond does not mean it lacks care. All information on the project can be found at <https://hb5.mt.gov/>.

Council noted that they had received some phone calls and voicemails regarding this matter. It was questioned if those need to be preserved, too. It was clarified that both text and voicemails are discoverable and need to be preserved.

Other Items

A seminar will be held at the Laurel Senior Center from 5:30 to 6:30 on Aging Thinking Behavior. Is it just normal aging, or is it something more?

The next Tree/Park Board meeting will be on Thursday at 5:30 p.m. in Council Chambers.

Rotary is selling Christmas trees from 12 to 6 in the Ace Parking Lot.

Sunday is Pearl Harbor Day. There will be a ceremony at the Yellowstone National Cemetery at noon and the City Cemetery at 2 p.m. They will be placing Wreaths Across America starting at 10 a.m.

Sunday is the Laurel Christmas Stroll. Reminder, there will be fireworks.

Attendance at Upcoming Council Meeting

Council Member Mackay will be absent from next week's meeting—all other Council Members plan to attend.

Announcements

No additional announcements.

The Council Workshop adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Brittney Harakal
Administrative Assistant

NOTE: This meeting is open to the public. This meeting is for information and discussion of the Council for the listed workshop agenda items.



MONTANA FOOD & AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT NETWORK



1,101

offered 1:1 TA and
business consulting to
1,101 businesses and
individuals.

\$28.5

MILLION

in secured funds for producers
& agricultural businesses
through private, state, or
federal funding.



134

trainings ranging from food
safety regulations and
understanding local food
laws to federal grant
application strategies and
value-added ag
opportunities.

“The mission of the FADC network is to create stronger, more educated, agriculture focused businesses that are better positioned to access capital. By building stronger businesses we are improving the economic viability of our Montana communities.”



Funded by and in
partnership with:

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE

MISSION - TO CULTIVATE RESPONSIBLE REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION.

VISION - CONNECTING BUSINESSES WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW OUR REGIONAL ECONOMY.

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

1 Economic Investment



Facilitated a total of \$408,264 in funding (loans, grants, and technical support) for businesses and projects in the City of Laurel & \$1,320,980 within Yellowstone County.

2 Job Creation & Retention



Our clients were responsible for creating and retaining 18 jobs, contributing directly to the vitality of the local workforce.

3 Local Reach



Provided hands-on support and technical assistance to 21 unique clients in Laurel, including small businesses, value-added ag producers, LURA, and non-profits, ensuring our resources reached communities across the entire County.

COMMUNITY & REGIONAL INITIATIVES

1 Community & Regional Initiatives



5 RLF Loans Totaling \$377,264 plus a \$210K loan pending.

Business Enhancement Program grants supporting businesses with technical training and consulting (4 training events held this year - \$10K value).

2 Food & Ag: Cultivating Local Growth



Cultivating Growth: Our F&A support provided \$31,000 in direct funding and technical assistance to stabilize and expand the City of Laurel's food supply chain.

3 Regional Ripple Effect



Rural Success Fuels Urban Growth: Beartooth's support for businesses throughout our region directly creates demand for commercial and financial services in Laurel, strengthening the region as a whole.

BEARTOOTH RC&D: YOUR PARTNERS IN PROSPERITY

Beartooth RC&D, a State-designated Certified Regional Development Corporation and Federally-funded Economic Development District, partners with the City of Laurel through an MOU that multiplies local contributions many times over. These funds help attract state and federal dollars that support business growth, foster job creation and retention, and strengthen the City's economy through targeted technical assistance and regional collaboration.



1 Business Site Selector Tool

An online platform being developed to showcase available sites and attract new business investment across Laurel, Yellowstone County and the region.

**More info on the back*



2 Rural Energy for America Program

Bringing State Resources Home: By leading the Eastern Montana REAP effort, Beartooth ensures that City of Laurel businesses have priority access to vital rural energy grants and technical expertise.



3 Brownfields Program

Beartooth RC&D now controls \$1.46 Million (\$460K Assessment Grant + \$1M RLF) in dedicated funding to clean up and redevelop neglected properties throughout our region. Brownfield cleanup projects create business opportunities & healthier communities.



**Showcasing
Our Region.
Attracting
Business.
Creating
Growth.**



Beartooth RC&D's Site Selector Tool initiative



What is the Site Selector Tool?

The Site Selector Tool is an online platform designed to showcase available properties, workforce data, and community assets across our five-county region. It connects businesses, investors, and developers with the information they need to make location decisions quickly and confidently.



Key Features

- Interactive property search by size, zoning, and readiness.
- Workforce and demographic data to highlight talent pipelines.
- Infrastructure and transportation mapping (utilities, highways, broadband).
- Incentive overlays (Opportunity Zones, TIF districts, tax incentives).
- Exportable, presentation-ready reports with maps and charts.
- Integration with local and regional data sources.



Brownfields Redevelopment

A unique feature of our Site Selector Tool will be a Brownfields layer, highlighting redevelopment-ready sites across the region. With available funding support for cleanup and reuse, these sites represent new opportunities for growth and community revitalization.

Get Involved

Be part of shaping the Site Selector Tool for our region. Attend a stakeholder meeting, share local property data, and help highlight the unique strengths of your community.

HOW IT BENEFITS THE REGION

- Promotes business attraction, retention, and expansion.
- Creates a unified regional platform for property marketing.
- Ensures local communities are represented in site selection decisions.
- Supports strategic redevelopment of underutilized properties.
- Strengthens economic resilience across Big Horn, Carbon, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, and Yellowstone Counties.



EXHIBIT A

Budget Amendment Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Fund 1000 – General Fund- Transfer

Original Appropriation	180,074.00
Amended Appropriation	<u>\$ 460,750.00</u>
Increase in Appropriation:	\$ 280,676.00

Increase Appropriations to the Interfund Operating Transfers Out, due to purchase of a new Ambulance made through donations and the purchase of extrication gear for the Fire Department through a grant from CHS over a 3-year period.

Fund 4000 – Capital Projects- Ambulance

Original Appropriation	\$.00
Amended Appropriation	<u>\$ 250,676.00</u>
Increase in Appropriation:	\$ 250,676.00

Increase Appropriation in the Capital Projects account for the Ambulance Department due to unanticipated purchase of a new Ambulance.

Fund 4000 – Capital Projects- Fire Department

Original Appropriation	\$ 427,883.00
Amended Appropriation	<u>\$ 457,883.00</u>
Increase in Appropriation:	\$ 30,000.00

Increase Appropriations due to receiving a CHS grant for the purchase of extrication gear. This grant will receive \$10,000 each year for the next three consecutive years with the city receiving the first payment in November of 2025.

Fund 4000 – Capital Projects

Original Revenues	\$ 180,074.00
Amended Revenues	<u>\$ 280,676.00</u>
Increase in Revenue:	\$ 460,750.00

Increase Revenues to the Capital Interfund Operating from the General Fund, for the purchase of a new Ambulance and Extrication Gear.



Creating connections to
empower agriculture

PO Box 909
Laurel, MT 59044

October 21, 2025

Laurel Volunteer Fire Department
215 W 1st Street
Laurel, Montana 59044

Dear LVFD,

On behalf of the CHS Energy Division, we are pleased to inform you of our commitment of support to the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department in the amount of \$30,000.00 over a three-year period. Please find enclosed the first of three installments for \$10,000.00. The remaining installments will be made in the Fall of each calendar year. We appreciate all that you do for our community and wish you continued success in all your endeavors.

We have also enclosed an Acknowledgment of Gift form for you to review, sign, and return in the self-addressed stamped envelope. This is a requirement of our corporate reporting policy. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or concerns regarding the form.

Sincerely,

Shane LaCasse

Shane Lacasse
Vice President of Refining

Enclosures