

Town of Ennis Commission Meeting
Thursday, February 12, 2026
6:15 PM
Ennis Town Hall
328 W. Main Street Ennis, MT 59729

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m.
2. Roll Call of the council found Commissioner Way, Hankins, Abernethy, and Hardy present.
3. Mayor Roberts led the Pledge of Allegiance
4. Approval of meeting minutes January 8 and January 23, 2026. Commissioner Way moved to approve the minutes of January 8 and January 23, 2026. Commissioner Abernethy seconded the motion. Commissioner Hardy abstained, as he was not present at those meetings. All other commissioners voted in favor. M/S/C, unanimous vote.
5. Department Reports
 - a. Library: Karen Ketchum submitted a written report, which was included in the Council packets. Mayor Roberts reviewed the report with the Council. Numerous events are scheduled for February. In addition, a 3D printer will be introduced at the Library for use in after-school programs.
 - b. Public Works: Public Works Director Eric Olson attended the meeting virtually. He reported that the replacement of old water meters is ongoing. The valve at the lagoon has been repaired with no issues. Mr. Olson expressed his appreciation to the department staff for their hard work. He stated that the department plans to fill cracks in various roads and reported that a fire hydrant had cracked; parts have been ordered for repair. Staff are also working on locating and mapping curb stops throughout town using GPS. Commissioner Way inquired about the number of hours the wells are operating, and Mr. Olson reported they are running approximately six hours per day. Commissioner Hankins asked whether there are plans to pave any roads in town. Mr. Olson responded that Chowning Road needs to be evaluated and may be considered for paving. He noted concerns about paving roads in areas where AC water lines will need to be replaced. In the meantime, he plans to add additional gravel to address issues on gravel roads.
 - c. Zoning: Susie Sprout submitted a written report to the shared drive and provided a brief overview to the Council. She reported attending the Planning Board meeting regarding the TND for Longbranch, which will be brought before the Council for review in the near future. Susie and Eric have been working on outstanding street bonds that are pending refund. Commissioner Hankins inquired whether the dirt pile located near Sportsman's has an approved permit. Susie confirmed that no permit has been issued, and the responsible party will be contacted to ensure compliance. Eric added that he and Susie discussed the Street Bond permit requirements related to curb and sidewalk installations, noting that these are often cut during construction and not properly restored.
 - d. Clerks: Brennah was not in attendance at the meeting. Mayor Roberts reviewed the written report that had been submitted to the Council drive.
 - e. MCSO: Jackson Goodman with the Sheriff's Office provided a brief overview of the monthly report. The Sheriff's Office responded to a total of 199 calls for service during the reporting period. Mayor Roberts inquired whether there were any irregularities to note. Mr. Goodman reported that there were three warrant

arrests, which is higher than typically seen in this area. Commissioner Hardy asked about the status of finalizing a contract with Sheridan. Mr. Goodman was unable to provide an update at this time.

f. Mayor's Budget Report: Mayor Roberts noted that the Town Code requires a quarterly budget report. She reported that the Town of Ennis is currently at 45% of projected revenues and 36% of projected expenditures. The General Fund balance is \$599,315.23. Mayor Roberts also reviewed the balances of the remaining funds with the Council. She further stated that the Town's bank accounts will be reviewed and revised in coordination with the League of Montana Cities and Towns.

6. Claims: Mayor Roberts clarified that the claim labeled "Business Cards" included both business cards and postcards used to notify residents of the new payment portal. Myron Wallimow inquired whether DIS Technologies is now in place and whether the Chase credit card account is no longer being used. Mayor Roberts confirmed that DIS Technologies is serving as the Town's IT provider. She further explained that the Chase account had to be canceled because the previous clerk was the only individual with access, and the Town was unable to gain access to the account. Commissioner Abernethy asked about the \$95 late fee associated with filing the Annual Financial Report. Mayor Roberts stated that the fee resulted from the Town's inability to access the account. Jodi Rogers with the League of Montana Cities and Towns is reviewing the matter to determine whether the charge can be refunded. Commissioner Hardy moved to approve the claims. Commissioner Way seconded the motion. All commissioners voted in favor, M/S/C unanimous vote.

7. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items: Myron Wallimow expressed his appreciation to the Madison County Sheriff's Office for the work they provide to the community. Bruce, representing the Madison Valley Community Center, reported that in December the organization received approval for 501(c)(3) status. He announced that a community listening session will be held February 19-21 at the Library to provide residents an opportunity to share their input and perspectives. He also noted that the organization plans to pursue grant opportunities and conduct fundraising efforts.

8. Scheduled Matters

a. Appointment to Vacant Commission Seat: Commissioner Way recommended Kristy Ranson for the vacant commission seat after meeting with both candidates. He also suggested that Stephanie Cselie, given her extensive experience in building, be considered for a position on the Planning Board. Commissioner Hardy inquired whether Kristy Ranson intends to serve the full term of her appointment. He also noted that the Planning Board is currently short in membership and would benefit from Stephanie Cselie joining. Commissioner Hardy moved to appoint Kristy Ranson to the vacant commission seat. Commissioner Hankins seconded the motion. All commissioners voted in favor. M/S/C, unanimous vote.

b. Water/sewer fees, surcharge fees, and radio read meters discussion: Mayor Roberts opened the discussion regarding water and sewer fees. She noted that the current pretreatment ordinance is not user-friendly and suggested that property classifications be established to determine which properties are required to comply. Mayor Roberts reported consulting with the Department of Commerce regarding the DNRC grant. The grant allows for reimbursement if the water rates meet the target rate, and she emphasized that increasing the water rates sooner

will improve the likelihood of receiving reimbursement. The next step will be to pass a resolution of intent for a rate increase and notify customers. Both the base rate and the charge per gallon used will be increased. Additionally, bids will be solicited for both concrete and glass line tanks to compare pricing. Mayor Roberts also addressed the grant that enabled the Town to purchase 375 radio read meters. These meters are intended to replace older meters at a discounted rate of \$85.48. Two letters were sent to residents to notify them of the discounted rate. Mr. Olson explained that all meters in the Town of Ennis are interior meters, though some may have exterior readers; only the meter itself will be replaced. Residents may have the meters installed by Public Works or a licensed plumber. The current cost for meters purchased outside of the grant is \$426.87. Mayor Roberts suggested exploring ways to assist residents with the higher cost, including the potential sale of excess Town-owned land in Antelope Meadows. Mr. Olson added that the standard lifetime for water meters is approximately ten years. The Council discussed revisiting the discounted meter program after the deadline to assess how many were installed and whether the discounted pricing could be applied to the \$426.87 meters. The discussion then turned to surcharge rates, as outlined in Town Code Chapter 10. Mayor Roberts indicated that simply adding a penalty fee to business costs may not be an appropriate solution. Commissioner Way suggested implementing graduated surcharge rates based on household usage. Additional discussion focused on the purpose of surcharges and potential amendments to the Town Code. Mr. Olson will submit a recommendation to the Council. The goal is to ensure fairness to all residents. Further research will be conducted, and the matter will be discussed at a future meeting.

- c. Personnel Policy Manual: Mayor Roberts noted that the Town's Personnel Policy Manual was last updated in 2009. She submitted an example of an updated manual, developed using guidance from MMIA and the West Yellowstone manuals, and asked the Council for any suggestions. Department heads and employees will review the proposed manual and provide feedback. Mayor Roberts also noted that, because the Town has fewer than 50 employees, leave policies are categorized differently from those of larger municipalities.
- d. Workers' Compensation Discussion: Mayor Roberts reported that the Montana State Fund offers the most competitive rate for Workers' Compensation. It was recommended through the listserv to work with a direct agent for the application process, as the agent can also serve as an advocate for the Town. The Thurston agency, which operates locally, is a registered agent and has been contacted regarding this matter.
- e. MMIA Bulletin: The bulletin included a note regarding the Montana 250 sponsorship for the 4th of July celebrations. Mayor Roberts noted that, to date, the Town has not contributed to the celebrations, but participating through sponsorship could provide an opportunity to support the event. The Council discussed potential new celebration events. Commissioner Way moved to support a potential application for the Montana 250 grant. Commissioner Hardy seconded the motion. All commissioners voted in favor. M/S/C, unanimous vote.
- f. Town of Ennis letter of Support for Town of Virginia City: Commissioner Way drafted a letter supporting Virginia City regarding the cancellation of contracts with concessionaires. Mayor Roberts read the letter aloud to the Council. Commissioner Hankins moved to send the letter to the Department of

Commerce. Commissioner Abernethy seconded the motion. All commissioners

g. Great West Engineering Contract Amendment: Commissioner Way clarified his understanding of the contract amendment, noting that the original contract allowed for potential price increases. Commissioner Way moved to approve the signing of the contract amendment, with the condition that Phase Two does not commence until the property for the water deck is secured. Commissioner Ranson seconded the motion. All commissioners present voted in favor. M/S/C, unanimous vote.

h. Website Update: Brennahan had researched options for website providers. Municipal Impact provided an estimate for transferring the current website and ongoing annual charges. A separate estimate from CivicPlus was nearly four times higher, and Mayor Roberts determined it was not necessary to bring that option to the Council. The Commissioners agreed that the Municipal Impact estimate was reasonable for the services provided. Mayor Roberts noted that several other Montana towns use Municipal Impact and highlighted that their websites are ADA-compliant. She also indicated that the cost for this contract is included in the current IT budget. Commissioner Abernethy moved to approve the contract with Municipal Impact to manage the Town's website. Commissioner Hankins seconded the motion. All commissioners present voted in favor. M/S/C, unanimous vote. Myron Wallimow inquired whether unused budget items could be reallocated. Mayor Roberts responded that, if the funds are within the same budgetary fund, they can be transferred, and noted that budget amendments will be made at the end of the fiscal year as needed.

9. Commissioner Comments:

- Commissioner Ranson expressed enthusiasm for joining the Council and looks forward to working diligently with fellow members.
- Commissioner Way commented on recent legislative session discussions. He noted concern that, as a tourist town, Montana is often perceived as attributing state issues to tourism. He emphasized the importance of staying informed and engaged with the upcoming session.
- Commissioner Hankins had no report.
- Commissioner Abernethy reported that she has signed up to attend a training in Bozeman hosted by MSU and has been assisting Mayor Roberts with Human Resources-related questions.
- Commissioner Hardy attended a Planning Board meeting and highlighted the need for additional members to serve on the board.

10. Mayor Comments: Mayor Roberts reported that she has been working on the updated Personnel Policy Manual, which was submitted for review at this meeting. She provided an update on ARPA funding, noting that Jodi Rogers was authorized to correct reporting errors, and the Town is now awaiting a response. Mayor Roberts stated that she has been coordinating with DIS Technologies to manage the Town's IT needs. She also met with residents regarding compliance issues and outstanding water and sewer hookup fees. In addition, Mayor Roberts has been working with Brennahan to improve office systems; Brennahan prepared a daily task list to help streamline operations. Mayor Roberts attended a Planning Board meeting and met with Cody Marxer to begin compiling a list of needs for zoning and subdivision management.

11. Unscheduled Matters: Any item(s) not listed for the current meeting, with the of such discussion shall be to decide if to schedule the item(s) for discussion/vote on a subsequent

agenda. Commissioner Hankins asked if the planning board meetings are recorded and posted. Mayor Roberts explained that they will start to do that.

12. Adjourn: Commissioner Hardy motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Ranson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Brennah Bench, Deputy Clerk



Brennah Bench, Clerk



Lisa Roberts, Mayor



