

Ennis Town Commission Meeting  
March 12, 2026  
6:15 PM  
Ennis Town Hall  
328 W Main Street

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:15 PM.
2. Roll Call of the council found Commissioner Ranson, Way, Hankins, and Hardy present. Commissioner Abernethy was present online.
3. Mayor Roberts led the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Approval of meeting minutes. Commissioner Hardy motioned to approve the minutes. Commissioner Way seconded the motion. No additions or corrections. Called to vote, all commissioners voted in favor. Motion carried.
5. Department Reports
  - a. Library: Karen Ketchu was unable to attend the meeting as she was attending a conference. Mayor Roberts reviewed the library report that was included in the Commission packets.
  - b. Public Works: Eric Olson attended the meeting remotely and reported that two fire hydrants have been replaced. Behind First Interstate Bank and at Moore's Creek Crt. and staff are continuing to upgrade older water meters throughout the community. He also reported that recent sewer samples met discharge limits. Myron Wallmow asked for clarification regarding scheduling the grader. Mr. Olson explained that he was referring to scheduling its use and determining the number of man-hours required.
  - c. Zoning - Madison County Planning: Cody Marxer and Michelle Shriock from Madison County Planning attended the meeting. Susie reviewed the report included in the commission packets.
  - d. Clerks: Brennah attended a budgeting class in Helena and was unable to attend the meeting. Mayor Roberts reviewed the Clerk's report that was included in the commission packets. Myron Wallmow asked how residents could access previous water and sewer usage. Mayor Roberts explained that the online portal will display usage and bills moving forward only. The Ennis Public Library has offered to assist residents in accessing previous usage or charges through Black Mountain Software using the library's computers. Commissioner Hardy asked how short-term rentals are identified, and it was noted that properties advertised online are used to track short-term rentals.
  - e. MCSO: Officer Tim attended the meeting to review the Madison County Sheriff's Office report. He reported that there were 139 calls for service during the month of February.
  - f. Budget Report: Mayor Roberts reviewed the budget reports and noted that the shortened format she requested appears sufficient for council review. Myron Wallmow asked about Montana Cities and Towns. Mayor Roberts explained that it is the organization the Town contracted with to assist with the accounting portion of the Town's finances. She also noted that they assisted the Town regarding the \$175,000 in ARPA funds, which ultimately allowed the Town to retain those funds.
6. Claims: Commissioner Way asked what the electric heater listed in the claims was for. Mayor Roberts responded that it is intended for the North Forty pump house. Commissioner Hardy made a motion to approve the claims. Commissioner Way seconded the motion. Before the

vote, Commissioner Hardy asked about the status of the new Public Works office. Eric Olson reported that the project has been completed. Upon a call to vote, all commissioners voted in favor. The motion carried.

7. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items: No comments

8. Scheduled Matters:

- a. Ennis Skatepark Update: Erin Leonard, a community member involved in initiating the skate park project, attended the meeting and provided an update. She reported that the community has raised \$253,000 over the past two years to support the project. Groundbreaking is planned for early June, and an opening celebration will be held once the park is completed. The Skatepark Board expressed its appreciation to the Town and members of the Lions Club for their continued support. Ms. Leonard also requested to be added to the agenda for the next council meeting. Commissioner Way noted that during earlier discussions, it was agreed that a group would be formed to help maintain and care for the skate park. Ms. Leonard confirmed that the board still intends to establish a group for that purpose.
- b. Consideration of Resolution 625-2026 TSS/BOD Surcharges: Mayor Roberts informed the commission that this agenda item was for discussion only and not for action at this time. He noted that Colette, with Great West Engineering, will be reviewing standards used across the state regarding Total Suspended Solids (TSS) and Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) surcharges. John Paddock with Montana Rural Water Systems attended the meeting remotely. Commissioner Hardy asked about the discharge standards for agricultural areas compared to discharging into the river. It was explained that the Town's lagoon system manages TSS and BOD levels and that some customers in town have been overloading the system. The pretreatment ordinance was established to address this issue, as overloading the system could cause it to fail and potentially discharge untreated wastewater into the river. The discharge standards are established by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Mayor Roberts stated that the Council should gather additional information before considering approval of the resolution. Matt with Willie's Distillery commented that he felt the resolution was premature and should not be voted on at this time. John Paddock noted that the limits are set to ensure the lagoon system does not enter septic conditions. Eric Olson added that PH level limits are addressed within the pretreatment ordinance. Austin Thompson, an engineer with Western Environmental Technologies of Helena, attended the meeting and noted that the submission sheet uses different measurement units and that the current resolution focuses on concentration levels without specifying an allowance. Commissioner Hardy discussed the possibility of adding a wastewater system project to the Capital Improvement Plan and asked John Paddock what potential permit restrictions might look like. Mr. Paddock noted that some systems in the state are currently operating under permits that are more than twenty years old.
- c. Future projects - Grants: Commissioner Hardy requested that this item be included on the agenda. The commission discussed both smaller and larger projects. A work session will be scheduled to further review and update the Capital Improvement Plan.

- d. Letter to Troy Downing's office: The Town received a notice from the U.S. Treasury indicating that \$175,000 was required to be repaid. The Montana League of Cities and Towns intervened on behalf of the Town and contacted Representative Troy Downing. As of March 6, the Town received a letter confirming that repayment of the \$175,000 is not required. Mayor Roberts wants to send a letter thanking them for the work they have done. Commissioner Ranson made a motion to approve the letter. Commissioner Abernethy seconded the motion. Upon a call to vote, all commissioners voted in favor. The motion carried.
- e. Tourism Grant Application partnering with Lions Club: Matt "Hondo" Barr, President, Lions Club Park reported that they are pursuing upgrades to the Pavilion and playground equipment. A handout outlining the project details was provided to the Commission. The estimated project budget is \$400,000. Mayor Roberts approached the Lions Club to partner in the Department of Commerce TAG grant for up to \$75,000. Mayor Roberts requested Commission approval for the Town to submit the grant application in support of Lions Club Park. The grant requires a 10% local match. Commissioner Hardy made a motion to authorize the submission of the grant application. Mr. Barr will approach the club membership as a whole to cover the 10% match if awarded the grant. Commissioner Hankins seconded the motion. Upon a call to vote, all commissioners voted in favor. The motion carried.

#### 9. Commission Comments

Commissioner Ranson: Noted that an Ability Community Chat is scheduled for Monday, March 16, at the Senior Center.

Commissioner Way: Inquired whether the second monthly meeting will become a regular occurrence. Mayor Roberts responded that the second meeting was originally intended for claims and hopes to keep it brief.

Commissioner Hankins: Stated plans to further explore the Montana Main Street Project.

Commissioner Abernethy: No comments.

Commissioner Hardy: Expressed a desire to invite all businesses potentially affected by the surcharges to participate in discussions.

10. Mayor Comments: Mayor Roberts provided clarification to Commissioner Ranson regarding the distinction between "little e" and "big E" in ex parte communications. She also shared a PowerPoint presentation on property taxes with the Commission. Mayor Roberts noted that the Town's participation in the MMIA workers' compensation program is winding down and asked the Council to consider whether to withdraw from the program or continue participation. Additionally, Mayor Roberts reported receiving an email regarding the CDBG grant. The Town had not applied for CDBG funding until the WellHouse was being bid. The email indicated that some components of the project were missed by the engineering firm due to the Dept of Commerce classifying the wellhouse project as part of the storage tank project instead of two separate projects. Mayor Roberts explained that the Commission will need to either request an amendment to the scope of the project with the Dept of Commerce or withdraw the grant, complete the missing components, and reapply. The Commission came to a consensus to request an amendment to the scope of work.

11. Unscheduled matters: NONE

12. Adjourn: Commissioner Hankins motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Ranson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Brennah Bench

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brennah Bench". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

**Brennah Bench, Clerk**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lisa Roberts". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

**Lisa Roberts, Mayor**