

# Great Falls Citizens Council Minutes

Tuesday, February 24, 2026 – 7:00 p.m.

Civic Center – Gibson Room

Chair Sandra Guynn opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Neighborhood Council representatives in attendance:** NC1 Trevor Cummings and Art Taft; NC2 Tim Croft; NC3 Eric Peterson; NC4 Sandra Guynn; NC5 Howard Plouffe; NC6 Rick Cornellier; NC7 Allison Tangen; NC8 David Price; NC9 Judie Suden. **Great Falls City Commissioners attending:** Commissioner Joe McKenney and Commissioner Rick Tryon.

**Old Business:** Additions to the minutes: Chair Sandra Guynn wanted to add the date of May 27, 2025 to the minutes that were approved during the October 28, 2025 meeting. Rick Cornellier made a motion to accept the minutes of the October 28, 2025 meeting with the addition. Allison Tangen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **New Business:**

**Election of Officers: Chair:** Allison Tangen nominated Sandra Guynn for chair, Tim Croft seconded the nomination. Sandra Guynn was elected unanimously.

**Vice Chair:** Sandra Guynn nominated Allison Tangen for vice chair, Tim Croft seconded the nomination. Allison Tangen was elected unanimously.

**Secretary:** Art Taft nominated Eric Peterson for secretary, Tim Croft seconded the nomination. Eric Peterson was elected unanimously.

**Official delegate:** Allison Tangen nominated Sandra Guynn for official delegate, Howard Plouffe seconded the nomination. Sandra Guynn was elected unanimously.

**Bylaws Review and Update:** Rick Cornellier asked if all meetings were being publicized in the paper. Howard Plouffe asked if the bylaws included the proper use of Facebook by councils. Rob Moccassin said councils follow city social media policy found in the handbook.

Sandra Guynn said scheduled Montana Department of Transportation Great Falls District Administrator Jim Wingerter had been called out of town but will attend the May meeting.

**Great Falls Police Department Update:** Captain Doug Otto said the department was down three officers and there were four entry-level officers coming on. He said there were 52 applicants for one animal control officer position, and there were five vacancies in dispatch. He said the department will be working on enforcement efforts with cell phone

use while driving, speeding and red-light violations. The department will be finding unique ways to put officers in high crash areas. He said they will be applying for a selective traffic enforcement grant from the state. Howard Plouffe said there was an uptick in crime in NC5. He wanted to know how to contact police. Captain Otto said to call or go online to report crimes. He said the department is looking at handheld radar units and will focus on high crash areas first. He said the department's year-end report was nearing completion and will be placed online in April. He said Crimemapping was inoperable for a time but is now back in service. The department is looking to use Centerline AI as an artificial intelligence tool. This will allow users to pull specifics for neighborhood councils. He said during the recent earthquake dispatch received more than 70 calls to the 911 center. Captain Otto said there is a concern about protected information being picked up on radio broadcasts. By encrypting the radio signal, the Cascade County Sheriff's Office would not be able to hear their radio traffic. He said the department would likely encrypt the signal in the future.

**Jayson Oltoff, Connection Doctor.** Oltoff discussed how he organized neighbors to clean up neighborhood areas. He sees the neighborhood councils as not getting traction and wanted to know how the councils could work together to bring the community together for a common goal. He suggested that each council have a communications person.

**Cari Yturri, Family Promise.** Yturri said her organization mobilizes volunteers to help families who want to gain independence. She said housing is a big problem with rent costs increasing three years ago. Apartments have been sold to out-of-state owners and they've increased rents. She said there were 321 families considered homeless in the area. She said the new Baatz apartments were a great win for the city. The Homeless to House Hub looks at potential properties to address the issue of homelessness in Great Falls. She said Family Promise only has two units available. Yturri said her office location is at 1019 Central Avenue, and they can be reached online at [familypromisegf.org](http://familypromisegf.org). She said their annual budget is \$350,000 and is funded by donations.

### **Council Sharing:**

**NC1** – Art Taft said they elected new officers and have moved their meetings from Meadowlark Elementary School to Faith Lutheran Church. He said the council would like to see a stop light or roundabout at the Fox Farm Road and Park Garden Road intersection.

**NC2** – Time Croft said they were unable to have a meeting for lack of a quorum. He said recent meetings have been light on attendance for their meetings.

**NC3** – Eric Peterson said their council has set the date of August 22, 2026 for the next NC3 Summer Celebration. He said his council Facebook page continues to grow with a total of 1,055 followers. He said the Little Shell housing project has created a concern for residents on the increased traffic and utility load for the area.

**NC4** – Sandra Guynn said they have two new members of their council. She said there are three new projects in the works for her council area, Silverstone, Discovery Meadows, and Meadowview Village projects.

**NC5** – Howard Plouffe said his council has added Greg Milton as a new member to their council. He said a contractor working on a 60-unit senior living development has been helpful with their concerns. He said he is hopeful that a traffic study can be done to drop the speed limit from 45 to 35 miles per hour on a portion of 10th Avenue South.

**NC6** – Rick Cornellier said they have been following Crimemapping and there has been a 50 percent increase in crime in his district from 2024-25. He said a housing project for 67 new homes will be constructed near The Peak.

**NC7** – Allison Tangen said a big topic is the issue of downtown parking. She said the local non-profit Toby’s House found private land to build a new building and recently conducted a groundbreaking ceremony.

**NC8** – David Price said his council had no November or December meetings and the January meeting had no quorum. He said neighborhood concerns included hit and runs, a 1st and 2nd avenue North traffic study, and vehicles parking on the boulevard.

**NC9** – Judie Suden said her council has three new members and they are looking for an additional person to serve on the council. She said the Eagles Manor has been sold, and she is concerned about solutions for residents with changes to the facility.

Great Falls City Commissioner Joe McKenney thanked members of the councils for stepping up to serve, looking out after the neighborhoods and being a voice. He said the commission listens to what the councils have to say.

Great Falls City Commissioner Rick Tryon said the councils are closest to the issues in our neighborhoods. He said we need to ask about the long-range cost of developments, and we haven’t made it a priority to see the costs 10 to 15 years down the road.

**Agenda suggestions** – Jim Wingerter from the Montana Department of Transportation or Shane Etwiler from Northwestern Energy to discuss data centers.

Rick Cornellier made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Tim Croft seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Peterson, Secretary and Sandra Guynn, Chair