

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
GREAT FALLS PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD/ZONING COMMISSION
January 13, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

Brock Cherry called the regular meeting of the Great Falls Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission to order at 3:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers at the Civic Center.

ROLL CALL & ATTENDANCE

Planning Board Members present:

Joe McMillen, Chair

Michael Gorecki, Vice Chair

Michael Bicsak

David Cantley

Jim Wingerter

Planning Board Members absent:

None

Planning Staff Members present:

Brock Cherry, Director of Planning and Community Development

Lonnie Hill, Deputy Director of Planning and Community Development

Andrew Finch, Sr. Transportation Planner

Alaina Mattimiro, Associate Planner

Jamie Nygard, Sr. Administrative Assistant

Other Staff present:

None.

Mr. Cherry affirmed that a quorum of the Board was present and that he would preside over the meeting until the election of officers is held.

MINUTES

Mr. Cherry asked whether there were any comments or corrections to the November 25, 2025, meeting minutes. Seeing none, Mr. Wingerter motioned to approve the minutes as written, seconded by Mr. McMillen. All in favor, the minutes were approved.

Conflict Disclosure/Ex Parte Communications

Mr. Wingerter stated that he would recuse himself from the Federal Transit Administration Funding Contract Amendment.

BOARD ACTIONS NOT REQUIRING A PUBLIC HEARING

Election of Officers for 2026

BOARD DISCUSSION AND ACTION

MOTION: That the Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission elect Joe McMillen as the Chair for 2026.

Made by: Mr. Cantley

Second by: Mr. Gorecki

VOTE: All in favor, the motion passed 5-0

MOTION: That the Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission elect Michael Gorecki as the Vice Chair for 2026.

Made by: Mr. Cantley

Second by: Mr. Wingerter

VOTE: All in favor, the motion passed 5-0

Section 5303 Federal Transit Administration Funding Contract Amendment with the Montana Department of Transportation.

Mr. Finch stated that in November 2025, the City signed an agreement with the Department of Transportation to receive funds from the Federal Transit Administration through the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), which then passes those funds on to the Great Falls Transit District. Each year, MDT sets a goal for the percentage of federal dollars it spends that will go toward a registered disadvantaged business enterprise, which is a minority-owned business. MDT has adjusted that goal from .7% to 0%. Therefore, the contract requires an amendment to acknowledge that change.

BOARD DISCUSSION AND ACTION

MOTION: That the Planning Advisory Board approve the Section 5303 Contract Amendment #1 with the Montana Department of Transportation.

Made by: Mr. Gorecki

Second by: Mr. Cantley

VOTE: All in favor, the motion passed 4-0

Abstained: Mr. Wingerter

Growth Policy Update

Mr. Cherry stated that the first draft of the Growth Policy Update was officially published on January 12, 2026. He stated that, statutorily, the Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission will be the recommending body for the Growth Policy Update to the City Commission. The open Public Comments period will end on February 28, 2026. After that, all changes from the comments and recommendations will be incorporated, and draft #2 will be issued to begin the formal process for adopting the Growth Policy Update.

Orion Planning and Design, the consultant, attended the meeting. Allison Mauch, Planner with Orion, introduced the team and outlined the Growth Policy Update roadmap and provided an overview of the chapters for the Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission.

Mr. Cherry stated that the Montana Land Use Planning Act has essentially created a new paradigm for Long-Range Planning. There are now specific components that must be included in the narrative. The Future Land Use map is a new component for the State of Montana. It is very different from a zoning map. It will provide greater predictability for residents and those who want to invest in the community.

Mr. Cherry stated that the goal is to complete the Growth Policy Update by late Spring or early Summer 2026.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Cherry informed the board about an upcoming training session scheduled for January 27, 2026, for all Board and Commission members.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair McMillen adjourned the meeting at 3:37 p.m.

CHAIRMAN JOE MCMILLEN

SECRETARY BROCK CHERRY