

Agenda Items

City of Billings
Legislative Report to City Council
Ninth Week of the Montana Legislature
March 12, 2015

The House Appropriations Committee conducted hearings on HB 2, the General Appropriations Act, on March 5 and 6 and held executive action on March 9 and 10. The Committee made some substantial changes to the Executive Budget and approved the Bill on a party line vote, sending it to the House. However, the revenue estimate for the Legislature's actions on appropriation bills has not been determined.

As of today, 1061 bills have been introduced, of the 2444 filed bill draft requests. For this Report, the following topics and bill draft requests are highlighted:

- The local impact option authority bill (LC 0599) has not yet been introduced, but there is agreement on the substantive provisions of the draft bill. The expected sponsors and the League of Cities & Towns continue to discuss and complete steps and commitments agreed upon prior to bill introduction.
- The Governor's "Healthy Montana Plan", which includes Medicaid expansion, was rejected by the House on March 10th when it adopted the adverse House Human Services Committee report by a vote of 59 to 41. Republican Legislative proposals to increase access to health care in a limited manner will be introduced in about 20 bills. One of the primary bills included in the Republican proposal is HB 455, introduced by Rep. Nancy Balance. This Bill was heard on Feb. 18th. Sen. Ed Buttrey will introduce a Medicaid expansion bill as a possible compromise proposal.
- SB 103, sponsored by Sen. Mary Caferro, would provide a presumption for certain illnesses under workers compensation in favor of paid firefighters. This Bill was tabled on Feb 20th. SB 103 missed the General Bill Transmittal deadline.
- SB 157, sponsored by Sen. Bruce Tutvedt, would revise property reappraisals to a two year cycle and adjust tax rates in reappraised classes. The first hearing was held Feb. 4th. The Committee is deciding upon Bill amendments.
- SB 214, sponsored by Sen. Elsie Arntzen, was introduced by the Senator to revise laws regarding county islands within city boundaries. This Bill was tabled on Feb. 4th. It missed the General Bill Transmittal deadline.
- SB 301, introduced by Sen. Cary Smith, would revise laws on the PSC regulation of municipal utilities (this request was in response to the latest tiered water costs based upon consumption adopted by the City of Billings in 2014). SB 301 was tabled in Committee on Feb. 19th. The Bill missed the General Bill Transmittal deadline. League of Cities & Towns and the Cities of Billings, Bozeman and Great Falls opposed this Bill.
- SB 360 (LC 1355), introduced by Sen. Doug Kary, would allow local governments to prohibit public intoxication by ordinance. SB 360 passed 3rd Reading in the Senate on Feb. 26 by a vote of 29 to 21. The House Judiciary Committee will hear SB 360 on March 16th.

- HB 213, sponsored by Rep. Mike Miller, would increase the exemption amounts under the business equipment tax laws. The Bill was amended in Committee to include backfill provisions to protect losses to local governments should the Bill pass. HB 213 passed 2nd Reading in the House on March 10th and has been referred to the House Appropriations Committee.
- HB 224, requested by Rep. Zac Perry, would revise building code programs to increase the enforcement reserve authority from 12 to 24 months. The City of Billings supports this Bill. It passed the House and was heard in the Senate Local Government Committee, where it was tabled on Feb. 13th. A motion in Committee to re-consider this Bill is expected.
- HB 297, introduced by Rep. Virginia Court, would have prohibited the use of cell phones while driving anywhere in the State. The Bill was amended to apply only to texting while driving. It passed the House on 2nd Reading on March 10th.
- HB 275, introduced by Rep. Nancy Wilson, would raise the gas tax by 5 cents per gallon and use the proceeds to fund road maintenance and public transportation. The Bill was tabled on Feb. 2nd.
- HB 333, introduced by Rep. Schwaderer, would have limited the use of cameras operated by local governments. This Bill failed on Second Reading in the House on Feb. 19th, by a vote of 50 to 50. The Bill missed the General Bill Transmittal deadline.
- HB 344 (LC 0710), has been introduced by Rep. Daniel Zolnikov. The Bill would prohibit the use of license plate scanners, except in certain circumstances, and would limit access to information obtained from scanners. The Bill passed the House on March 10th.
- HB 463, introduced by Rep. Kelly McCarthy, would revise civil asset forfeiture laws. HB 463 passed the House on Feb. 25th by a vote of 92 to 7. It will be heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee on March 13th.
- HB 471, introduced by Rep. Rob Cook, would permit an inflationary adjustment for mill levies at the average rate of inflation for the prior three years. HB 471 was heard in the House Taxation Committee on March 5th.
- LC 1475, requested by Sen. Elsie Arntzen, would “clarify use of tax increment finance laws”. This LC is “on hold”. However, LC 2194 is ready for introduction by Sen. Arntzen. LC 2194 would exempt the public school equalization mill levies (95 mills) from tax increment financing.
- HB 512 (LC 2258), introduced by Rep. Dale Mortensen, would approve and fund a crime lab in Yellowstone County (although MSU-B in Billings was the preferred location, other locations are also being considered). HB 512 has been scheduled for hearing in the House Appropriations Committee on March 17th.

I look forward to discussing these and other legislative matters with City Administrator Volek and City Council. Please contact me if you have any questions or would like information on any particular topic or bill.

Ed Bartlett, City of Billings Lobbyist, cell: 406-431-6014; email: efbartlett@charter.net



Mayor Tom Hanel
City of Billings
Box 1178
Billings, MT 59101

November 19, 2014

RECEIVED

DEC - 3 2014

City Administrator

Dear Mr. Hanel,

Home Matters. Home is where we recharge from the day, where we get our beginnings, where we grow into all we can be. Home is where jobs go to sleep at night. Home Matters to you and me. **Home Matters to everyone, old and young, rich and poor, every color and every gender.**

The idea was to get you thinking about how Home Matters. Right now, Billings residents seeking a new home or apartment have to go to multiple agencies to find the right fit, if the right fit even exists. Together, we can create a one-stop shop for renters and homebuyers – The Home Center.

Here is the plan:

To create a One Stop Shop for home seekers, all Billings housing agencies (Human Resources Development Council, Beartooth RC&D, Rebuilding Together, Habitat for Humanity, Homeword, Housing Authority of Billings, Rural Dynamics, Inc., the City of Billings and NeighborWorks Montana) will cooperatively staff The Home Center.

To get all of the information in one place, The Home Center will serve everyone with program information, financial and homebuyer counseling and education, fair housing and rental referrals.

To ease the shortage of good housing, The Home Center will collaborate with developers and builders to create more quality workforce housing, so Billings area employers can recruit new workers and continue to grow.

To make homeowners more successful, The Home Center will provide homebuyer education and individual homeownership planning to better prepare buyers for one of their most important financial decisions.

To help tenants and landlords, rental information and counseling will be offered to all comers – with key concepts on how to be a good renter and a good landlord and where to find the rental that fits your needs.

To build a better Billings future, The Home Center will find collaborative ways improve neighborhoods, remove blight, and renovate existing housing stock.

Here is how you can help:

The Home Center must reach a goal of \$125,000 for 2015 in order to open the doors. The Home Center has already raised \$52,000 to be used in 2015 (\$92,000 in total over 23 years), but we need to raise more money. The City of Billings can help with a \$60,000 donation (\$20,000 each year for three years) from the City Council's contingency fund. You have the power to take The Home Center from concept to reality.


Ryan Auer, Stockman Bank
Campaign Committee Chair

The Home Center, Box 2396, Billings, MT. 59103 406-670-9100

✓ CC: Christina Volek, City Administrator

Other Items



FROM THE DESK OF . . .

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Assistant City Administrator

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March 13, 2015

TO: Mayor and City Council
COPY: Tina Volek, City Administrator
SUBJECT: Ethics Training

As you may recall, I contacted you in January about city-wide employee ethics training. This is one of the City Council's 2014-2015 strategic goals. A schedule misunderstanding with the MSU Local Government Center forced us to cancel the January training, but it is rescheduled for March 24, 25 and 26. You are invited to attend any of the sessions. Please call or email if you have questions. The schedule is:

Tuesday, March 24

Billings Police Dept. Training Room, 4810 Midland Rd	8 - 9:30 a.m.
“	10 - 11:30 a.m.
“	1 - 2:30 p.m.
“	3 - 4:30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 25

Billings Airport Operations Center, 2281 Overlook Dr.	8 - 9:30 a.m.
Billings Police Dept. Training Room, 4810 Midland Rd	10 - 11:30 a.m.
“	1 - 2:30 p.m.
“	3 - 4:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 26

Billings Public Library Community Room, 510 N. Broadway	8 - 9:30 a.m.
“	10 - 11:30 a.m.
“	1 - 2:30 p.m.
MET Transit, 1705 Monad Rd.	7 - 8:30 p.m.



March 2015

Billings[®]



SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8 9 10 11 12 13 14

15 16 17 18 19 20 21

22 23 24 25 26 27 28
 Shamrock Run
 11am-2pm
 Midtown

29 30 31
 Purple 5K
 5am-1pm
 Downtown

Special Event Calendar

*Approval Pending

For questions or details:
wellbrooks@ci.billings.mt.us