

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Ronan City Council
February 25, 2026**

MEETING

The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Ronan convened on February 25, 2026, at 6:00 P.M., in Ronan City Hall. Those present were: Mayor Ryan Corum, Council present: Larry Hall, Ellen Kaphammer, Lindsay Meyers, Julie Moore, Mark Nelson, and Micah Robertson. Deputy Clerk Gwen Zolber, Police Chief Rob Jacobson, Police Sargent Brandon Smith, City Attorney Ben Anciaux, and Public Works Director Dan Miller were also present.

ORDER/PLEDGE

Mayor Ryan Corum called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

MINUTES

Julie made a motion to approve the Minutes of the February 11, 2026 Regular Meeting. Mark seconded the motion. Discussion was held. The Mayor called for a vote. All voted in favor. No one opposed. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

Claims

The Council reviewed the list of claims owing as of February 25, 2026. Lindsay made a motion to approve the payment of the bills, as listed. Ellen seconded the motion. Discussion was held. The Mayor called for a vote. All voted in favor. No one opposed. Motion carried.

Ronan Irish Community

Mark made a motion to approve the Ronan Irish Community's Application for Open Container Permit and closure of Main Street for the St. Patrick's Day parade March 17, 2026 from 4:00 P.M. until 7:00 P.M. Larry seconded the motion. Discussion was held. The Mayor called for a vote. Larry, Julie, Mark, and Lindsay voted in favor. Micah and Ellen opposed. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Ronan Police Engine
for Dodge Charger

Julie made a motion to replace the current unusable motor for the Dodge Charger with a new engine which has a 3-year, 100,000-mile warranty. Lindsay seconded the motion. Discussion was held. The Mayor called for a vote. All voted in favor. No one opposed. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Conditional Preliminary
Approval for Dennison
Meadows

Larry made a motion to approve the Conditional Preliminary Approval for the Dennison Meadows subdivision. Ellen seconded the motion. Community members inquired on the amount of expected traffic increase and commented that the road is already in

bad shape and in need of grading. Mayor Ryan Corum offered that the City is working to get piping in to close the ditches, and once that is complete, the road will not be as wet, helping keep the road condition better. Scott Beggs, speaking on behalf of the Dennison Meadows subdivision, asked what part of the infrastructure upgrades they will be responsible for. Dan advised that a few more conditions than is set forth in our Subdivision Regulations is being asked. Council member Mark asked to confirm the final survey with all conditions must be met before Council will issue Final Approval, and Dan affirmed. Mr. Beggs reminded the Council they are not voting on a treatment center but on a 5-lot subdivision. Micah asked Ben Anciaux if a lawsuit that has been filed against the owners of the facility in Helena is a concern for the facility proposed for Ronan. Ben stated that the standards set in statutes and peripheral requirements provide the legal guidelines for the Council to follow when voting to authorize a subdivision, and that what is not expressly prohibited by law is allowed. Council member Larry commented that it is not known to Council if the owner of the property in Ronan also owns the Helena property or if they are independently owned and operated. Council member Lindsay added that the information regarding the Helena location is alleged, not proven. Larry and Mark affirmed this. Micah questioned the applicability of “additional information” to said lawsuit, and was reminded by various Council members the allegations are alleged, and that the Council’s responsibility is to follow the laws of the land and to represent the residents of Ronan independent of members’ personal opinions, and added that the Council has managed a similar situation recently with the vape store, Botanical City, that opened in Ronan. Mark read aloud MCA Section 76-3-608 which defines subdivision requirements. Micah asked to put off the vote until after the lawsuit is finalized. Council Members responded that the email communications between Micah and the Hope Center’s Helena Director provided clear answers to the questions Micah asked, and with no current proof of illegal activities, only allegations, it is beyond the scope of the City Council and into the State and Federal realm of authority. Betty Spencer spoke again twice, to address her concern of the “quality” of the residents that the Hope Center will house. Ben Anciaux stated that to stop the Hope Center from opening, a specific statute would need to be violated by the operations of the program, and unless and until that is found to be the case, there is no legal reasoning he is aware of to ban the Hope Center from operating in Ronan. Monte Spencer spoke again, noting land sale to treatment centers in the past were out of town. Council member Larry advised that was because that is where the land was available. Four of the six current Council members do live near the proposed subdivision. Jodie Hooker, owner of Bunkhouse of Ronan, spoke about the people she helps which are of similar circumstances

as those the Hope Center helps, stating in almost eight years of operating in Ronan, she has helped hundreds of people and has had zero issues. Council member Larry offered that he is a neighbor to Bunkhouse of Ronan and it has “improved our neighborhood”. The Mayor called for a vote. Ellen, Larry, Julie, Mark, and Lindsay voted in favor. Micah opposed. Motion carried.

Board of Adjustments
Re-Appointments

Larry made a motion to approve the re-appointment of Ray Aylesworth and Robert McCrea, to the Board of Adjustments, for a term of two years: March 1, 2026 – February 28, 2028. Lindsay seconded. Discussion was held. All voted in favor. No one opposed. Motion carried.

Planning Board
Re-Appointments

Lindsay made a motion to approve the re-appointment of Karl Kaphammer, Marilynn Tanner, and Raquel Davis, to the Planning Board, for a term of two years: March 1, 2026 – February 28, 2028. Julie seconded the motion. Discussion was held. All voted in favor. No one opposed. Motion carried.

COUNCIL COMMENT

Micah: Stated he would like focus brought to “purpose and interpretation” of law as it applies to the “health, safety, morals, and general welfare” of Ronan citizens. Attributing a quote to James Madison that has helped keep him “grounded and focused” as he gets more into politics, he stated “Our constitution was written to govern over a moral and religious people, and if we are not going to be that, then the Constitution is not going to operate appropriately”. After which the Mayor asked a clarifying question to Micah, to ensure he was not implying that anyone in attendance was immoral. Micah confirmed he was not implying that. He said he was attempting to implore the Council to “hone in more from a moral obligation and not just ‘Well, here’s the law’”, when considering the approval requests that come before the Council.

Lindsay: Stated excerpts from Micah’s public podcast that raised concerns for her about the fiduciary duties that Council members must ascribe to. She stated she is analytical, which is why she watched the podcasts, read the email communications between Micah and the Hope Center, as well as spoke with and asked a lot of questions to Dan, the Chief of Police, and City Attorney Ben, to see every side before making a decision based on law.

Ellen: Asked why the park restrooms are boarded up, which Dan advised they are winterized and will reopen when weather permits, around April.

Larry: Stated that it is his opinion and stated in courts that maintaining “the separation of church and State is an absolute” for the Council to adhere to; parts of Micah’s podcast also bothered him very much, and he (Larry) will call out anything pertaining to

Council matters that is not based in legalities.

Julie: Also “very bothered” by parts of Micah’s podcast, deeply disturbed by the suggestion made in what she watched that said some people should meet their maker sooner. Also stated there has been an increase in graffiti at the park, so be alert and call the police if you see anything suspicious.

Mark: Has been involved in many public meetings and commends everyone for the open dialogue.

Dan: Planning Board put a lot of work into research into the subdivision allowability. The next steps in getting the treatment plant back up and running takes place next week.

Chief Jacobson: Aware of the graffiti, working with City to get it cleaned up and is patrolling the area, but call if there is suspicious activity. Still looking to hire another officer.

City Attorney Ben Anciaux: Council cooperates well and is strong; we are naïve if we think the local drug problem(s) will be solved by someone else.

Mayor Ryan Corum: Homecoming Week food drive competition for Fishes & Loaves Polson vs. Ronan; details are in the works. Spoke with all Ronan Department Heads and everyone is doing great and we are lucky to have them, and is appreciative of them all. Born and raised here, he cares deeply for Ronan and he lives his life one way, and supports the citizens of Ronan to make their own decisions for their lives. Met with a few of Ryan Zinke’s staff and while the City is working on grants to cover the costs of necessary projects, sewer rates will need to go up a “little bit” to cover the gap in funding.

The next Council meeting will be Wednesday, March 11, 2026, at 6:15 P.M.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Ellen made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Julie seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED:

Ryan Corum, Mayor

Attest:

Gwen Zolber, Deputy Clerk