

Minutes of the Regular Meeting

Ronan City Council

May 13, 2026

MEETING

The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Ronan convened on May 13, 2026, at 6:00 P.M., in Ronan City Hall. Those present were: Mayor Ryan Corum, Council present: Larry Hall, Ellen Kaphammer, Julie Moore, Mark Nelson, and Micah Robertson. Police Sargent Brandon Smith, Public Works Director Dan Miller, Clerk-Treasurer Kaylene Melton, and Deputy Clerk Gwen Zolber were also present. Council Member Lindsay Meyers, City Attorney Ben Anciaux, and Police Chief Rob Jacobson were absent.

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 April 22, 2026 Regular Meeting. Ellen seconded the motion. The Mayor called for a vote. All voted in favor. No one opposed. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Western Montana
Musicians Co-Op

The Musician Co-Op asked about the possibility of leniency regarding the 10:00 P.M. deadline to take down event items as promised on their approved May 16th Open Container and Street Closure permit. Any additional time would be used for take-down only, not to extend the event participation. Discussion was held. Council agreed to a 30-minute allowance for removal of items from public spaces. Barricading procedures were also discussed. It is the permittee's responsibility to provide barricades, however, Ronan Public Works offered to lend some candlestick delineators to the event location. It was suggested they ask the Ronan Co-Op Brewery to borrow barriers they use for events as well.

Lake County Sheriff

Undersheriff Levi Reed made a formal request to discuss operational concerns regarding the City of Ronan's dispatch logging procedures "either a meeting with the Sheriff and myself, or myself, with whoever of the Council wants to be pushing this discussion forward.", or via placement on the next agenda. Undersheriff Reed said that Lake County provides "approximately 40% of law enforcement service hours" to the city, asserting this "stake" qualifies the county to discuss Ronan's resource utilization. He noted he provided a letter to Ronan Chief of Police, Rob Jacobson, outlining a law around "billing options and ways to address that." He stated the "Sheriff's Office has held a standard" for radio check-ins to ensure personnel availability, noting the policy has not been "deviated from" in his 27 years of local law enforcement experience. He added that "such a severe deviation" from county practice is concerning to the Sheriff's office. The Undersheriff reported that Chief

Jacobson declined to meet with the Sheriff's office regarding these standards, as the matter is "in the hands of the Council."

Lifetime Achievement Award Ronan Clerk-Treasurer Kaylene Melton was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Montana Municipal Clerks, Treasurers, and Finance Officers Association. The honor recognizes and celebrates her dedication throughout her 20-year tenure of municipal service.

Katie Elliott Will be on the May 27th Agenda for a street closure to allow for murals painted by community members, but will be unable to attend that Council meeting, so she is providing information regarding the event at this time to answer any questions Council may have.

CONSENT AGENDA

Claims Discussion was held. The Council reviewed the list of claims owing as of May 13, 2026. Larry made a motion to approve the payment of the bills, as listed. Mark seconded the motion. The Mayor called for a vote. All voted in favor. No one opposed. Motion carried.

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Discussion was held. Ellen made a motion to approve the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Application for Open Container Permit for an "Annual Fundraising Banquet" Event at the Ronan Community Center, May 16, 2026, from 5:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. Mark seconded the motion. The Mayor called for a vote. Larry, Ellen, Julie and Mark voted in favor. Micah opposed. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Veteran's Honor Guard Glen Sharbono provided information regarding the Memorial Day procession route from the hospital to 1st Street, then out to the cemetery starting at 12:00 P.M. on Monday, May 25, 2026. No street closure will be necessary, and anyone who wants to join is welcome to. Sargent Smith advised Ronan Police Department will still keep an eye out for them.

Police Expenditures Mayor Ryan Corum advised the City Council that Allen Corneliusen had removed himself from the Agenda. Undersheriff Levi Reed questioned the removal, asking why the subject could not be discussed since it remained on the published public agenda. Mayor Corum again explained Mr. Corneliusen had removed himself, but Undersheriff Reed maintained his challenge to the ruling and contested the restriction until a Council Member intervened to state the item was officially cancelled.

Street Planning Grant Public Works Director Dan Miller advised that the \$159,000.00 grant requires a 20% match, which would be \$32,000.00. It also requires a different public notification timeline than originally anticipated. Subsequently, this item is being tabled and most likely will be combined with other projects or grants to be viable.

OLD BUSINESS

- Ronan Library Flooring Michelle Fenger advised the library will reopen next week, and provided photos of the building with the old flooring and the flooring just installed. The old flooring was in place longer than her 20-year tenure. Concrete leveling was necessary due to a significant area with a 2-inch concave issue that needed addressed before new flooring could be laid down. The older part of the library is scheduled have new flooring installed in the fall.
- Friends of the Children Brittany Simonich informed the Council of her transition to the role of Community and Economic Development Program Manager with Mission West, noting that Taylor Lennox will assume responsibilities for Cooperative Development. Additionally, due to the unique public notification requirements associated with the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) being pursued by Friends of the Children, a general needs assessment will be added to the next meeting agenda to ensure full legal compliance. Mrs. Simonich stated that Mission West intends to serve as the grant administrator, which will require a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) through the City's formal procurement process to be discussed in detail at a future date. Dan Miller advised that he consulted with Mr. Lennox regarding potential facility funding opportunities for wastewater infrastructure and the fire department. Mrs. Simonich noted that the Department of Commerce requires all proposed project work under this specific grant program to be consolidated into a single application.
- Main Street Meeting Main Street provided an information sheet for their Ronan Revitalization 'kick-off' meeting May 20th from 3:00-4:30 P.M. in Mission West's large conference room, and everyone is welcome.

COUNCIL COMMENT

Ellen: With Tractor Supply coming in, posted speed limits are a concern. Also, the college is moving the big pile that is over by the City shop and it looks nice.

Julie: City is "blooming"; lots of work going on behind the hospital.

Gwen: Congratulations to Kaylene again!

Fire Chief: The holiday flags are currently kept at the fire station.

Kaylene: Bishop Insurance is getting a quote together for Ronan's Workers' Compensation insurance through State Fund. We should be receiving the instructions tomorrow on how to upload audio files onto the City's website. Our police department has improved much over the last 10 years; residents who caused trouble have moved away because they could no longer get away with the same behaviors. The largest portion of the RDApply application is the financial information. Sasha with Midwest Assistance Program is qualified to assist with pulling the financial reports Rural Development requires for grant applicants. Will

look into any cost that may be associated with her help. The Ronan Police Department's finances are falling within budget. Jennifer Cote, our previous auditor, will be in touch with details outlining expectations on her assistance with the remaining financial items that need completion.

Dan: The City has received letters from the Department of Justice as well as the Tribe regarding water rights due to the changes made in the compact that went through. Spoke with an attorney who was a water rights expert for the Department of Natural Resources and has been hired to represent the Tribe. Dan prepared a packet for City Attorney Ben Anciaux, who will keep the City updated regarding this. Dan also spoke with the engineer and head of the roads program for the Tribe. The Tribe applied for a large safety grant last year and they want to begin implementing pedestrian safety similar to what we have by Image Quest in the crosswalks near the schools along Round Butte, 3rd, as well as a walking path along 3rd Avenue. It will connect the path at Round Butte and the school and the path over at highway 93 at the stop light. The college students used heavy equipment to move a lot of dirt from the pile by the shop. Weekly meetings continue to move the wastewater updates forward, and the next large funding option the City will be applying for is from Rural Development and is part grant and part loan. Because past financials must be completed for the reports required to apply, Dan recommends a Special Meeting to address hiring the previous auditor, Jennifer Cote. Qualifying for this combination funding will secure the two other grants already applied for and approved, though it is fairly likely utility rates will be raised.

Sargent Smith: Chief Robertson will be back on May 21st and the new officer started the Police Academy approximately two weeks ago and is expected to graduate the end of July.

Mayor Ryan Corum: The Mayor reported a successful turnout for the recent "Donuts with the Mayor" event. He noted multiple resident complaints regarding excessive smoke from Tech Woods, U.S.A., including one report filed with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), adding that the company did affirm plans to install a smoke mitigation system within a defined timeframe. The Mayor also reported ongoing efforts to establish an understanding between the Ronan Police Department and the Lake County Sheriff's Office, confirming that one officer is in the academy, and an additional open position is posted. An unidentified member of the public questioned the priority level and middle ground sought regarding the law enforcement agreement, and further expressed concern that persistent smoke from non-wood materials would negatively impact the valley, emphasizing the need for a resolution without forcing the business to close. Another unidentified attendee urged the Council to view the interagency relationship as a public benefit and suggested utilizing a mediator. Allen Corneliusen requested and was granted a three-minute public comment allowance after previously removing himself from the formal agenda. Corneliusen noted that the mill levy passed ten years ago for in-house expenses was

approved narrowly and stated he was not seeking immediate answers. Based on inquiries to other Montana municipalities, he questioned the current shift coverage of three daytime officers versus limited night shift coverage, stating the Chief of Police should perform active street patrols and complete reports from the vehicle like chiefs in other towns. He cited Montana Code regarding enforcement and the Mayor's oversight of department operations, and expressed financial concerns regarding budgetary shortages and the taxpayer expense of an officer commuting 55 to 60 miles one-way in a city vehicle. The Mayor responded that he is currently working on this issue.

The next Council meeting will be Wednesday, May 27, 2026, at 6:00 P.M.

ADJOURNMENT

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

APPROVED:

Ryan Corum, Mayor

Attest:

Gwen Zolber, Deputy Clerk