

TOWN OF FROMBERG
COUNCIL MEETING

September 11, 2025

PLEASE PRINT YOUR NAME

- | | |
|------------------------|-----|
| 1. Jerry Hall ✓ | 13. |
| 2. Steep Danielson ✓ | 14. |
| 3. Sandy Bauwens ✓ | 15. |
| 4. Dena Wilson ✓ | 16. |
| 5. Don Wilson ✓ | 17. |
| 6. N. Th. Elliott | 18. |
| 7. Elton Brittle ✓ | 19. |
| 8. ~~Dee Kala~~ | 20. |
| 9. | 21. |
| 10. | 22. |
| 11. | 23. |
| 12. | 24. |

**FROMBERG TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES FOR A REGULAR MEETING
HELD ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2025**

On September 11, 2025, meeting of the Fromberg Town Council was held at 118 W River Street in Fromberg, MT. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and the meeting was called to order at 6:26 pm by Mayor, Terry Feller. Other council members present were Nate Caton, Mike Ventling, and Tammy Taylor. Others present were Elton Kirtley, Sandy Bauwens, Don & Dena Wilson, Jerry Hall, Sherry Danielson, Romeo Anguiano and Tatum Strong, Public Works and Michele Auch, Clerk.

Public comment on items on or not on the agenda. Sandy Bauwens thanked the Town and County for the new pavement in town.

Correspondence was next on the agenda. Mayor read Councilman Haseman's resignation letter dated 8/28/25. Mayor read Donald J Wilson's letter of interest in filling the vacancy for the remaining term through 12/31/25 for Robert Haseman. Motion to approve council vacancy was made by Councilwoman Taylor, seconded by Councilman Caton. The motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton—aye, Councilman Ventling—aye, and Councilwoman Taylor—aye. Motion Carries.

Mayor/Council: Councilman Caton would like the massive bush taken out at the corner of Harley Avenue & School Street by the old gas station and it was brought up by Jerry Hall to watch out for the dogs.

Sherriff department report was next on the agenda. Not present.

Zoning/Variance application was next on the agenda. None

Zoning/Floodplain Ordinance Committee was next on the agenda. Councilwomen Taylor had nothing new to report. Mayor stated that the Morehead's Floodplain permit was approved for their sewer project tying into the Town's sewer system.

Planning Board: None

Historic Preservation: None

Old business was next on the agenda.

Discussion and approval on how to proceed with Stillwater Conservation District River Project was next on the agenda. Dennison stated there is nothing new to report. Stillwater Conservation didn't complete what they were supposed to do, what are we going to do about it? Options the Town has: File suit, work with the Stillwater Conservation District (SCD), SCD is not going to finish the work, they are willing to provide some resources, but not a lot, Carbon County Conservation District (CCCD) is waiting to see what everyone else is going to do, Councilman Caton stated to try a get all parties involved to better our chances. Councilwoman Taylor asked about the Judge's order. Dennison stated that the order is basically SCD was doing work in CCCD and CCCD said this is our area, so the Judge issued a preliminary injunction saying that County lines are your jurisdiction. Dennison stated that SCD had their SAM number and CCCD did not, which was needed for Federal funds. They entered into a contract with SCD to apply for all the Federal funds. Dennison stated that looking at all the documents SCD defiantly had obligations that they did not fulfill, specifically the planting of the trees, maintenance, top-soil, and after-care issues were not carried out. The Federal side is done; accounts closed and will have no further involvement. Big issue is that the cost of the project grew and there is conflict of interest

how to install meters. Sherry asked if the meters could be in the house? Public works technically are not supposed to go into people's homes. Town will work on an ordinance.

New business was next on the agenda. Discussion and approval to issue credit for water leak at 99 Lover's Lane-Tiffany Wilm was next on the agenda. Last meter read was 44,000 gallons. Motion was made by Councilwomen Taylor and seconded by Councilman Ventling. The motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton--aye, Councilman Ventling--aye and Councilwoman Taylor – aye. Motion Carries.

Jerry Hall asked if Don should be sworn in first? Yes, Don will not vote. Clerk will swear Don in the office later.

Resolution #544 A resolution to cancel elections for mayor and two council positions. Terry and Don were the only ones to sign up. A motion to cancel elections was made by Councilwomen Taylor, seconded by Councilman Ventling. The motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton—aye, Councilman Ventling—aye, and Councilwoman Taylor—aye. Motion Carries.

Resolution #545 (not #555 as on agenda) to adopt 25-26 Budget. A motion to approve 25-26 budget was made by Councilwomen Taylor, seconded by Councilman Caton. The motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton—aye, Councilman Ventling—aye, and Councilwoman Taylor—aye. Motion Carries.

Discussion and approval of upgrading the public works cell phone was next on the agenda. Romeo shared that pictures aren't sending and he is receiving notice on calls and texts hours or a day later. Old computer in the shop will be brought up later. It was discussed that an android phone with protective case, up to \$800 dollars for a 3-4-year phone would work. A motion to approve a new cell phone was made by Councilman Ventling, seconded by Councilwomen Taylor. The motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton—aye, Councilman Ventling—aye, and Councilwoman Taylor—aye. Motion Carries.

Discussion and approval of Romero and Tatum to attend 92nd Annual School for water and wastewater in Bozeman was next on the agenda. Councilman Ventling would like them to attend the Great Falls training. Robin from Montana Rural Water suggested that they go to Bozeman training. Suggested that they reach out to Joliet or Bridger to have them do the chlorine test and flow test readings while they are out of town. It was decided that they should rent a hotel and not drive back and forth to do the reading for the water and sewer. A motion to approve water and sewer school was made by Councilwomen Taylor, seconded by Councilman Caton. The motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton—aye, Councilman Ventling—aye, and Councilwoman Taylor—aye. Motion Carries.

Mayor asked about Breada's water testing, and they changed out her meter.

Discussion and appointing new signer on Valley Credit and Bank of Bridger bank accounts to replace Councilman, Robert Haseman was next on the agenda. Councilman Ventling will be the replacement signer on both accounts. A motion to remove Robert Haseman and Tim Nottingham and add Terry Feller and Mike Ventling to the Valley Credit was made by Councilwomen Taylor, seconded by Councilman Caton. The motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton—aye, Councilman Ventling—aye, and Councilwoman Taylor—aye. Motion Carries. A motion to remove Robert Haseman and add Mike Ventling to the Bank of Bridger accounts was made by Councilwomen Taylor, seconded by Councilman Caton. The motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton—aye, Councilman Ventling—aye, and Councilwoman Taylor—aye. Motion Carries.

Discussion on a Community Garden was presented by Councilwomen Taylor. She would like to see a community garden on Mine Spur Loop, possibly the ballfield, and use the ditch in both locations for water. This would look great with AARP for selling us for a grant in the future. Don stated we need to pick a location first and address in the Spring. Sandy Bauwens asked if Mine Spur Loop is not for sale. Councilwomen Taylor stated that we cannot sell easements.

Discussion and approval for bid to take down trees in the park was next on the agenda. Councilwomen Taylor stated we have stumps in the park and need to take down two trees, another two are problem Michele called NWE to create a safety zone from power lines. In discussion it was decided to postpone and get one or two more bids. Councilwoman talked about MUCFA and needed to see how much to join, they provide training, need tree ordinances in the future. Michele shared that Clarence had said to ask NWE to remove the trees. Need to deal with trees that are on Town property around town, before we need to involve our insurance.

Discussion and approval of the additions to the park by the Improvement Committee. Projects would be completed with Red Lodge Area Community Foundation Grant and Improvement Committee monies \$4,000 total for the improvement projects. Phase one would be cleaning, removal of gravel, and concrete they would need public works help, and commercial weed cloth would be installed. Phase two would be to dig a trench, install painted tires as a border for gravel, paint existing equipment and install a new spinner. Phase three would be to install 8" of pea gravel. They would like the help of Public Works to remove concrete borders, gravel removal, and help spread gravel. We would like approval of council for public works to help to move gravel, dump new pea gravel, remove concrete, disposal, and use skid steer and other equipment. Project will start around September 20th, tires with exposed steel belt cannot be used. A motion to approve park project and public works help was made by Councilman Ventling, seconded by Councilman Caton. The motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton—aye, Councilman Ventling—aye, and Councilwoman Taylor—aye. Motion Carries.

OPEN A PUBLIC HEARING:

Ordinance #530 an Ordinance of the Town of Fromberg to prohibit public camping was next on the agenda. Mayor thought 2 days is not enough time, this is about parking on Town property. Residential/public easement change to 7 days, No camping in the Parks. The Ordinance was tabled for correct language. A motion to table was made by Councilman Ventling, seconded by Councilman Caton. The motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton—aye, Councilman Ventling—aye, and Councilwoman Taylor—aye. Motion Carries.

The Consent Agenda was next on the agenda. A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Councilwomen Taylor, seconded by Councilman Ventling. The motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton—aye, Councilman Ventling—aye, and Councilwoman Taylor—aye. Motion Carries.

Town Attorney was next on the agenda. Dennison had nothing to report. Jerry Hall shared about dogs with no leashes. Michele to send Dennison current Ordinances on dogs.

with the contractor sitting on the SCD board. They hired a contractor to do the job that they didn't do, funds have already been disbursed, there are no more funds available. Don Wilson asked once the Town signed off is everything closed or is there opportunity to pursue legal action to recover what was supposed to be done. Dennison stated that the project ballooned from a small amount to a very large amount, which is very problematic having the contractor sitting on the board and voting on that. There were two phases of the project where the project is done and signed off on, then there's operation and maintenance. You would not have a good argument to go back to the project, operation and maintenance had a contract attached to it, as well. There would be a strong argument on the operation and maintenance since that's in writing. Mayor asked what Dennison suggested. Filing a lawsuit would involve the insurance company, preparing paperwork, talking to the County to be involved. Councilman Ventling stated that we should move forward with the paperwork, and everyone is waiting for us to move forward. Dennison stated that CCRD would be good for expert witnesses and advice if it came to an actual trial. Councilwoman Taylor is concerned that the trees are not planted and washing out could happen next season. Elton Kirtley stated that the engineer was not a good one, and he had a track record of not being a good one, would it be investigated in SCD decision to hire this guy, and someone made some money off this deal. The project started at \$400,000 and ended at almost a million. Dennison stated that there are rumors out there that there have been issues in the past with the engineer. Mayor stated let's Contact Conservation District and see what they have to say.

Mayor shared that Scott Miller, Commissioner, contacted him about a rail crew running a passenger train on the tracks, would there be any interest from the Town. Public was interested.

Sherry Danielson, a representative and property manager for trailer court, was up next. She was here to present her nine tenants, and they are good people. Her concern is the water meters and what the Town does with the past due water bills are the Town's headache. Here are the highlights from a lengthy conversation. Meters were ordered and in stock, Sherry wants to give her tenants notice on the timing of meters being installed, meters loops are ordered 3-4 months to be made, Romeo had to get Council approval due to the cost, Sherry asked if Romeo had experience installing meters, install meters under mobile homes, Councilman Ventling is concerned with the cold, 9 meter pits could be installed on Town property then trailer court responsible for new water lines, tenants can't afford new lines, meters should be 48" below frost line, meter pits are 6' deep, insulate meters, skirting up and tight around trailers, if the tenants power is shut off and freeze then tenants are required to pay cost of replacement meter. Councilman Ventling talked about generally for water and sewer municipalities are responsible to the curb stop and anything on the property is the homeowner problem. Our ordinances are not as perfect as he would like. Sherry thinks the Town should own the waterlines, Councilwoman Taylor and Councilman Ventling both stated that each property is supposed to have their own water line, and the trailer court does not. Sherry stated that the problem with new lines is the landowner will raise the lot rent, retirees, disabled, min wage, personal issues, can not afford anymore. Who's going to pay for the improvements. Councilwoman Taylor shared that a certain party came in and stated that they own the water lines and you won't touch them to put water meters in, were kind of in a bind. Sherry will have a conversation with Mr. Rude. I am here to fight for my tenants and not Mr. Rude. Councilman Ventling is trying to get from Dennison are we responsible for the lines going to the house, if meters are in the houses. If we are, we are going to start putting meter pits in. Dennison stated government treats everyone identical. Sherry shared recent discoveries regarding tenants in the Towns system and is this equal treatment under the law? Dennison stated that the city will be working directly with tenants, the tenants will be using the water and paying the town directly. It is highly ill advised to try and work through a third party. Meters under the mobile need to be agreed and something in writing between tenant and town if they break, they are liable. This sets a precedent for other homes out there. Councilwoman Taylor stated the town of Joliet is passing an ordinance for negligence, no insulation, they are responsible for the meter. Write up an ordinance for the meters at trailers and give them to the tenants. Councilman Ventling will train Romeo on

Public Works was next on the agenda. Romeo shared that he had spent time with Robin and John from Montana Rural Water, need to get the SAGR system up to par, phone calls with/about the flow meter, violation with DEQ lined out, temporary license started, paving 830 tons, needs 2 pumps to remove water from a leaking meter, flat bed for the Town truck, take truck to Carbon Equipment for evaluation of what it needs and is it worth fixing, budget approved \$10,000 towards a vehicle, $\frac{3}{4}$ ton truck maybe, government auction site add plow attachment, second vehicle all-wheel drive, bulk fill station was discussed, and plan to clean shop this winter.

Town Clerk was next on the agenda. Tax liens, \$16,000 has been collected, final list due September 15, 2025, to the County Treasurer. Final budget to the State is due October 1st, Audit is coming up, shut-off notices went out, 23 went out, 12 have paid. Not sure if they got shut off.

Elton Kirtley asked about a forensic audit for the last 20 years. Councilwoman Taylor stated to have Michele ask the auditors about discrepancies found regarding past paving from the water account, take funds from gas tax put back into water. Next meeting is October 9th.

A motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Ventling and seconded by Councilwomen Taylor. The motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton—aye, Councilman Ventling--aye and Councilwoman Taylor – aye.

Adjourn at 8:40 pm



Terry Feller, Mayor

ATTEST:



Michele Auch, Town Clerk

TOWN OF FROMBERG
COUNCIL MEETING

August 14th, 2025

PLEASE PRINT YOUR NAME

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|--------------------|-----|
| 1. Jerry Hall | 13. |
| 2. Dena Wilson ✓ | 14. |
| 3. Donald Wilson ✓ | 15. |
| 4. Sandy Bauwens ✓ | 16. |
| 5. Karl Rude ✓ | 17. |
| 6. Elton Rittley ✓ | 18. |
| 7. David Klasc | 19. |
| 8. | 20. |
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| 11. | 23. |
| 12. | 24. |

**FROMBERG TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES FOR A REGULAR MEETING
HELD ON AUGUST 14, 2025**

The August 14, 2025, meeting of the Fromberg Town Council was held at 118 W River Street in Fromberg, MT. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and the meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Mayor, Terry Feller. Other council members present were Nate Caton, Mike Ventling and Tammy Taylor. Others present were Elton Kirtley, Sandy Bauwens, Karl Rude, Don & Dena Wilson, Jerry Hall, Romeo Anguiano, Public Works and Michele Auch, Clerk.

Public comment on items on or not on the agenda. Discussion was had about paving Mine Spur Loop S at Don Wilson's property and stopping the paving short before the road sign. The road sign, fire hydrant, and power pole will need to be moved some day so the road can be moved to the left so it is not on their property. Councilman Ventling will need to swing by and take a look to see if there is a shut off for the fire hydrant.

The next item on the agenda was correspondence. None

Mayor/Council: Mayor asked about Councilman, Bob Haseman's health. Mike Ventling asked if they had looked at the curb stop by Dennis Teichroew house with no cap. He also stated that meters with high readings have water flowing through them, when a meter goes bad, no reading will happen, they slow down, but don't speed up. Don Wilson discussed his bad water meter. Councilwomen, Taylor asked to have a community Garden on the next agenda and having one would make the town look good for future grants, second thing she asked the council to take on was caring for Shirley's log cabin my the highway, need to get the broken glass in the windows fixed, take out the Xmas decorations and store them in the shop.

Sherriff department report was next on the agenda. Officer Wildim (spelling?) introduced new officer, James Jensen. 67 hrs. 45 minutes, Fromberg patrol 12 hrs.08 minutes, 79 hours, 55 minutes total time from July 1 through August 1. 25 records, no concerns, injury crash with commercial vehicle, traffic stops, fish and games called for snakes. Any questions? Nothing of concern.

Carbon Conservation District Riverbank Project Update: Aimee Bailey was not present. Spraying the weeds was in question. Who sprays? Did Tim Nottingham sign an agreement? Does Dennison have anything?

Zoning/Variance application was next on the agenda. Terry Feller's application to rebuild his front porch within the same footprint. Councilwoman Taylor didn't understand his drawing. Councilwomen Taylor made a motion to accept with corrected measurements on plans, seconded by Councilman Ventling. The motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton—aye, Councilman Ventling—aye, and Councilwoman Taylor—aye. Motion Carries. David Klases's application to build a chicken run was next. Motion to approve was made by Councilwomen Taylor, seconded by Councilman Ventling. The motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton—aye, Councilman Ventling—aye, and Councilwoman Taylor—aye. Motion Carries. David Klases's application to build a privacy fence was next. It was suggested to look up FEMA map and print off with date on it on the day you build, as a new FEMA map is in the works. Motion to approve was made by Councilwoman Taylor, seconded by Councilman Caton. The motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton—aye, Councilman Ventling—aye, and Councilwoman Taylor—aye. Motion Carries.

Zoning/Floodplain Ordinance Committee was next on the agenda. Councilwomen Taylor shared that the Mayor and Michele met with Annalee Venneri from Disaster Recovery DES. We missed out on \$140,000 FEMA money for redoing our parks, turf etc. In the future, if we are offered \$200,000 5% is to hire a manager. We could have shared the manager with Red Lodge, 5% to get in touch with someone in the know. At the time the council was misled by the party in charge that the town did not get any money. \$15,000 is still available for roads & gravel. Councilwoman Taylor had done bids for the parks, that was never delt with, but DES are still going to look into if there would still be money available, whether we use it for the parks or something else. City Parks was at #139,000 dollars, missing out on \$104,000 was FEMA's share. If we had saved money on the project we would still have gotten a check for \$104,000. The mayor shared that there was money set aside for Blewett and Lovers Lane that could have been paid for. Don Wilson asked who navigates the process in a disaster. Councilwoman Taylor stated that you hire a manager and reach out to others with more experience. If we had partners ahead of time, contractors could be reimbursed at least for fuel. Possibly work with State Line, rental companies, etc. Wages were not figured into any of the costs in 2022, that FEMA would have paid for. Must have documentation throughout the process.

Planning Board: None

Historic Preservation: None

Old business was next on the agenda. Discussion and approval of Interlocal Agreement for General Law Enforcement Services without the Addendum regarding conflict of interest. Discussion was had about having our own police services. Elton Kirtley had a comment about how the whole situation stinks, and possibility of our own cop. Councilwomen, Taylor stated it will not be any cheaper to have our own cop, it will cost more, and the cop would be under the mayor. To create our own law enforcement, we would have to increase taxes to use for law enforcement. Councilman Ventling, stated that reserves are not paid like in Bridger, possibly approach Bridger and work with them. Sandy Bawdens likes the 24/7 coverage. Don Wilson asked how many law enforcements they have in Bridger. A motion was made by Councilwomen Taylor to approve without addendum, seconded by Councilman Caton. Motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton—aye, Councilman Ventling--aye, and Councilwomen Taylor--aye. Motion carried.

Discussion and approval on how to proceed with Stillwater Conservation District was next on the agenda. Councilwomen Taylor moved to table, seconded by Councilman Caton till Dennison is available. Motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton—aye, Councilman Ventling--aye, and Councilwomen Taylor--aye. Motion carried.

New business was next on the agenda.

Resolution #543 A Resolution of the Town Council of the Town of Fromberg to set the Mill Levy for the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year Budget. Councilman Caton asked if we were confident with the numbers, Clerk stated that they were looked over by Kirstin Sweet. A motion to approve the Mill Levy for 2025-2026 was made by Councilwomen Taylor, seconded by Councilman Caton. The motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton—aye, Councilman Ventling—aye, and Councilwoman Taylor—aye. Motion Carries.

Discussion and approval for Nexus CPA Group for Audit Services was next on the agenda. Mayor stated that since we have received Federal funds a Federal Audit is required. Clerk explained that this is the same company that did our past Audit, but the name has changed since the previous owner retired. Johathan, who the clerk spoke with, had personally done the previous Town audit. \$25,000 is the contract amount, with additional unknown fees for additional reporting and travel time, if needed. \$50,000 was the original quote given. Audit fees were included in the water/sewer project, and the loans are still open if additional money is needed. A motion to approve the federal audit by Nexus was made by Councilwoman Taylor, seconded by Councilman Caton. Motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton—aye, Councilman Ventling--aye, and Councilwomen Taylor--aye. Motion carried.

Discussion and approval for cost of meter loops/yoke, we need 10 more per Romero approximately \$4,302.80. A motion to approve the meter loops was made by Councilwomen Taylor and seconded by Councilman Caton. Councilman Ventling explained what these parts are. Councilman Taylor shared that if their skirting isn't done correctly and the meters freeze, who is responsible, something should be changed in our ordinances. Meter needs to be insulated. Councilman Ventling shared that years ago COP Construction came in and installed meter pits or meters in the house. They should have put in meter pits right out at the property line. They allowed Perkins to put in the trailer court with only three meters, never should have been allowed to happen. Every hook-up should have a separate meter in a meter pit. There needs to be education on how to heat up their lines, some meters sit right next to the skirting of the trailers. The meters need to be protected! Nine separate meter pits with separate lines to each trailer. Karl Rude stated that you will have an easement problem, since the Town gave the alley to a private owner. Will need to go between the trailers to run the lines. Karl Rude stated that our ordinances state that the town owns the meters and the lines that go to the meters. Lots more conversation as had about Perkins Alley, City property, setting precedents, etc. Karl Rude talked about precedents, having pit for each trailer, connect line to residents, do it right. Don Wilson with 9 new meters, who is responsible for the lines to the trailers. Mike Ventling, we will need to talk with Dennison. Motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton—aye, Councilman Ventling--aye, and Councilwomen Taylor--aye. Motion carried. Karl asked if we were going to purchase the water lines or go to Civil court.

The consent agenda was next on the agenda. A motion to approve the Consent Agenda was made by Councilman Caton, seconded by Councilman Ventling. The motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton--aye, Councilman Ventling--aye and Councilwoman Taylor – aye. Motion Carries.

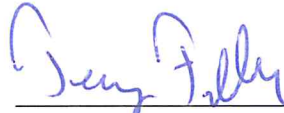
Town Attorney: Called in Sick.

Public Works: Romeo worked on 201 School Street, water ran, and sewer connected. He is working on maintenance on the pump at the park and getting prices for a new pump. FEMA Park's money maybe be used for the new pump. Councilwomen Taylor asked if he was feeling more confidence with water test. The mayor stated to make sure you take Tatum with him at the sewer pond, have anchor points! Karl Rude shared that you cannot swim in the aerated water, it lacks density. Make sure all the ropes are set, and the aeration is off, you need to let someone know when you're going on the pond. Call another town for help. Romeo is now the lead Public Works, with a pay raise for the Public Works position. Romeo talked about paving of Mine Spur Loop S & N, West River, Councilman Ventling shared good practices about paving. Bulk Water is not fixed, the valve to shut off the bulk water is broken. Councilman Ventling will go down there with Romero to come up with a plan to get it fix. Councilwomen Taylor informed that our road goes up to the end of football field. Councilman Caton shared that he is hearing nice things about seeing them around town. Rent a trench box when needed and have a ladder in the hole when digging.

Town Clerk Auch reported the figures for the lien letters. 77 certified letter \$ 153, 527.15, received to date approximately \$12,000. Carbon County Treasurers officed stated that trailers are personal property and a lien cannot be put on trailers. Clerk stated that she was getting mixed answers to this question. She will be working on the budget next. The trailers are not Karl's, but the water lines are.

A motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Caton and seconded by Councilman Ventling. The motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton—aye, Councilman Ventling--aye and Councilwoman Taylor – aye.

Adjourned at 7:57 pm



Terry Feller, Mayor

ATTEST:



Michele Auch, Town Clerk

Town of Fromberg Council Meeting

July 10, 2025

PLEASE SIGN IN
Print ☺

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|----------------------|-----|
| 1. Sandy Bauwens | 13. |
| 2. Karl Ruch | 14. |
| 3. Skyla Buckmiller | 15. |
| 4. Brenda Buckmiller | 16. |
| 5. SHAWNA HOPPER | 17. |
| 6. Dow Wilson | 18. |
| 7. DEAVA Wilson | 19. |
| 8. Elton Gitley | 20. |
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**FROMBERG TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES FOR A REGULAR MEETING
HELD ON July 10, 2025**

The July 10, 2025, meeting of the Fromberg Town Council was held at 118 W River Street in Fromberg, MT. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and the meeting was called to order at 6:36 pm by Mayor, Terry Feller. Other council members present were Nate Caton, Mike Ventling and Tammy Taylor. Others present were Elton Kirtley, Sandy Bauwens, Karl Rude, Sherry Danielson, Skylar Buckmiller, Brenda Buckmiller, Shawna Hopper, Don & Dena Wilson, Dennison Butler, Attorney; Romeo Anguiano and Tatum Strong, Public Works and Michele Auch, Clerk.

Public comment on items on or not on the agenda. None

The next item on the agenda was correspondence. None

Mayor/Council: Councilwomen Taylor brought up appointing someone when an emergency happens with a “GO Bag”, maybe someone retired that lives in town, documenting in real time (pictures etc.) of what’s happening during emergency. Mayor stated that Marcus is officially gone, we need to advertise the full-time position, and Romeo has officially taken over his spot. Bulk water was mentioned, Romeo understands there is a bad valve and doesn’t know how to shut off to fix, Mike Ventling will meet with Romeo about the part. Councilwomen Taylor stated that we need fences around wells and need a floodplain permit. There is a leak on East River Street that was replaced by State Line; it was mentioned that the Town needs more shut-off valves to isolate areas.

Sheriff department report was next on the agenda. Not present

Special events applications were next on the agenda.

Fromberg Days will be Saturday, August 2 from 11am-10pm, they want to wave open containers, block off West River Street up to the Fire Station, Nate will have bouncy houses for kids, corn hole tournament, music starting at 12pm with upcoming artists, craft booths, and use of the park. Councilwomen Taylor asked about special events insurance, Shawna said they both will add the Town of Fromberg to their business policy for the day and to make sure Michele gets a copy. There will be people with shirts for security and wristbands for alcohol. The mayor was concerned about people crossing the Hwy as no one slows down. Shawna did reach out to a construction company about getting reflective signs for the Hwy. on either side of Town. Councilwomen Taylor moved to accept the special events application, seconded by Councilman Ventling. Motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton—aye, Councilman Ventling--aye, and Councilwomen Taylor--aye. Motion carried.

Guns & Hoses Softball Game Special events applications requesting waiver for alcohol. Councilwomen Taylor moved to accept application, seconded by Councilman Caton. Motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton—aye, Councilman Ventling--aye, and Councilwomen Taylor--aye. Motion carried.

Zoning/Variance application was next on the agenda. None

Zoning/Floodplain Ordinance Committee was next on the agenda. Councilwomen Taylor shared that Terry, Michele and herself went to a meeting in Red Lodge for advanced recovery training. After we met with Traci Sears and Shylea Wingard for community assistance with DNRC Floodplain. We met with the Morehead’s, and Larry Richardson, Mayor stated that it was a good meeting. Councilwoman Taylor shared that we learned that we have some items that need to be signed off on the flood, Mayor stated that there are open cases

that we need to close. Councilwomen Taylor stated the ball was dropped during the last flood and we could have received a lot of money if we would have tracked employee hours separately and volunteer hours. We should have a contractor in place, possibly State Line, that we can call in an emergency for help and rental places that can then be reimbursed from FEMA. More discussion was had about the floodplain and flood insurance.

Planning Board: None

Historic Preservation: None

Old business was next on the agenda.

Brenda Buckmiller was next on the agenda. The mayor stated that Brenda knows that she doesn't own the property and Dennison did some research and confirmed that she did not own the property. Mayor gave some history of the Mine Spur Loop property and shared that when the city gives away property the citizens lose. He would like with Council's permission to send out flyers to the citizens to decide on this piece of property to sell for fair market value or not. Ideas and thoughts? Don Wilson would like to see the property turned into a community garden, as he is adjacent to the property. Councilwomen Taylor stated its city property, but it's in our ordinances that everyone is to maintain their own boulevards and alleys. Brenda Buckmiller stated that this city's property has been abandoned for over 35 years, and she has maintained it. Dennison shared that it's pretty straight forward looking at the Clerk and Records it is owned by the city. Do citizens gain rights by maintaining a property—No. This is very clear in the law. Otherwise, every citizen would take care of government property. You personally can't gain rights by taking care of property. City Council can decide if they want to push it out to the voters and let the voters decide if they want to sell it. It is very clear that it would have to be at fair market value, very black and white under the law. Sandy Bawdens asked if you can offer it to Brenda to buy it, Mayor stated it has to be offered to everyone. Councilwomen Taylor hates to give it away, and Don Wilson's property comes out into the road (Mine Spur Loop), as well as easements for utilities. More discussion was had about a community garden and the size of Mine Spur Loop. Dennison stated that to sell or not would need to be on another day, as it's not on the agenda. Mayor shared that paving of Mine Spur Loop and West River will take place in the second week of August. Brenda asked if she could just write a check for the property today? Dennison stated that it would be quite a process. First, the Council will have to decide if they want to sell it. Then you would have to obtain fair market value, then it would have to go to the Town where everyone could bid on the property. No one has an exclusive right to purchase Town property. Brenda's lawyer believes that she could get money for maintaining the property, plus taking down the trees at the cost of \$3,800.00, they put in pipe for water at the ditch. Dennison stated that would be the process that would need to be followed. Brenda stated that she would go to court then.

Karl Rude was next on the agenda he was here for past-due water bills at the trailer court. Mayor asked if we had ever figured out what the third meter pit was for? One meter was for the row of six trailers, one for three and the other meter they didn't want to turn on in case it didn't shut off, this was the Town idea of what was happening with the meters. Mike Ventling shared the history of the two meters being read and how the past property owner would split the bill up between tenants, there should have been individual meters set-up in his opinion. Councilman Ventling had highly recommended to Jay Carter and Tim Nottingham to not let them put in their own meters that would not integrate with our Black Mountain System, they needed to use Master Meters that they had on hand. According to Karl and Terry the current meters are non-functional. Mike Ventling stated that manual reads have to be physically entered into the system, but each one is listed to the house and meter number in Black Mountain. Karl asked how they are being read now. Councilwomen Taylor and Michele stated that currently its set-up that each trailer is getting a minimum monthly charge, no one is paying for volume. Mayor asked that when you took over the trailer court and when you signed the agreement with the tenants, he

had to assume that the water was included with the lot rent, this may be true or not. Sherry Danielson shared that when McClaine had the property she worked for him for three months, and McClaine didn't deal with the tenants with water, he paid the bill, as they were not separate meters. A month before Karl and Meg bought the trailer court, she was instructed to get meters that were readable to each trailer, which she did. McClaine gave Karl the meter reader, Karl gave the reader to Tim Nottingham with threat of being fined, as he did not want to sign up for water, and it's the tenant's responsibility. Karl came in and got a copy of the certified lien letter for his three accounts, as they were sent to JAB Properties in error. Karl stated that he had agreed to pay through the end of 2022 for his three water accounts. It was then up to the town to get their water meters in and start billing the tenants separately. Karl asked Sherry to do the job of Harley to get every tenant signed up for water, they were signed in May of 2023, all but one. Clerk asked for Sherry's help with the exact number of trailers in the court and they are now all signed up. Mayor stated that Karl would like forgiveness for part of these bills, as the city did not do their due diligence. He would rather have us forgive them, than go to court. We have no paperwork on any of this, but he does. History was given about the Post Office and their three apartments. Karl is willing to go to court over this, so it is up to our council to decide. Dennison stated its not up to the council to decide as its not on the agenda. There are two different issues in this case. Before July 2023, three accounts that covered the whole area were being accurately read and divided. The city cannot double bill and should cancel those charges. After July 2023, the city moved into billing each individual personal property, two trailers never received water bills, free water for about two years, seven people that have been paying water bills directly. The current amount is at the minimum charge, it is important to note that the city is the one that is taking a hit, if this went to court, the trailer court would likely have to pay more. The issue is what happens with the water being used, we have a record that water is being used on the property, and we haven't seen any documentation or contract signed by anybody about a verbal agreement or a handshake deal, unless there is some sort of contract from city authority that is agreeing with this arrangement all we have in front of us is that this property has used \$12,000 use of water through three different accounts. Dennison addressed a question by Sherry Danielson. Under law in Montana, they would go after the buyer for not disclosing that there are utilities owed. The remedy is not to get a water bill just excused by the city; the remedy is for the buyer to go after the seller. The issue is that water was used, and the city has contracts, if the city is not making active efforts to collect the water bills, some of the contracts that the city has for bonding could be in jeopardy, so that is the problem. Another issue is that Mr. Rude sold the property, and the city should be talking with the new owners. He sold for contract for deed, that means that city should be dealing with JAB properties LLC and Black Dog Management LLC not Mr. Rude. Karl stated that it's under contract for deed. Dennison stated that Karl has a seller's interest, and the buyer has a possessory interest. Dennison stated at the end of the day unless there is some written agreement/contract that has authority or weight behind it, the laws are clear that the city has to charge people for water that they use. Sherry Danielson asked how the landowner is being charged when mobile homes are using the water, they are real property in the State of Montana. Dennison shared Montana Law is clear the water bills follow the land, the real property. Dennison stated that planted trailers are real property, because they are part of the land, trailers are personal property, if they are a part of the land then they become a fixture of the land. The land and trailer, that's the real property. Mike Ventling asked to define planted. Dennison explained the process of going through the DMV, trailer and land become real property together. Karl said the Town put a timeline on this matter being August 7th. Karl will send a FOIA request tomorrow to demand documentation from the city. The issue is \$12,000 in fees, if there is any documentation that would change anything, can you provide anything. As the Town's documents have been deleted, Karl has shown Terry in good faith some emails, they are time stamped, and show delivered. Mayor stated that he has shown him emails that have been sent and Karl gets a notification that they are received. Councilman Ventling stated that something was done without being approved or voted on by the council. As a Council member we need to follow what our attorney recommends to us, as he is our legal counsel. Dennison restated that the City provided water to a property, and a bill that hasn't been paid. Elton Kirtley asked if legal

action can be taken against the party that is responsible. The mayor stated that, I think we are at a crossroad. Karl will send a FOIA request.

New business was next on the agenda.

Approval for debit card for Romeo Anguiano, public works was next on the agenda. Councilwomen Taylor said that Kirsten Sweet had suggested an actual credit card not debt card should be used. A motion to approve a credit card was made by Councilwomen Taylor, seconded by Councilman Caton. The motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton—aye, Councilman Ventling—aye, and Councilwoman Taylor—aye. Motion Carries.

Stillwater Conservation District—Statement of Facts from Dennison was next on the agenda. Dennison stated that this one is a problem. Dennison gave an overview of the riverbank project. One of the main problems is that the contractor was on the board of Stillwater Conservation. The contractor did not fulfill the contract for the project, and the engineer doesn't have a great history. Dennison asked other engineers around the area for their input about the engineer for the project, and there have been other projects they have done that have been problematic. The contract didn't get finished as it was supposed to. Issues: Trees, topsoil, project are significantly lower than it was supposed to be, and funding issues. The contractors have been paid, the Federal government has closed out the project, so it is up to Fromberg to work with Stillwater Conservation, to finish and fix some of the issues or sue Stillwater Conservation District. Dennison is providing an overview as of right now. If Council would want to go into litigation, Carbon County has suggested that they might join in on that, as they provided funding for this project to be done to protect the County bridge. The specific things left to be done are trees, gravel, topsoil, and 2,000 more trees. Stillwater was selling the trees that were supposed to go to this project, they were paid by the Federal government to buy the trees, and its looking like they got paid by selling the trees that were supposed to planted here, and Stillwaters says we don't have the manpower, or resources. Fromberg signed off that the project was completed, the Federal government has washed their hands, as has Stillwater Conservation. Elton Kirtley asked if anyone has looked into what it would cost to raise the bank, and put in the soil that is needed, would it cost another \$300,000-\$400,000 to fix it right? Mike Ventling gave his account of the project. Dennison stated that it would most likely cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to fix. Don Wilson asked if Fromberg signed off saying it was completed, going forward will this hurt any chances of winning this? Dennison stated that the construction part was completed according to plan, the operation and maintenance piece have not. The original contract was under \$100,000 final payment \$500,000 payment, and the contractor was on Stillwater Conservation board and is a huge conflict of interest. To hire an engineer and see what was actually done out there will be a huge cost, and what still needs to be completed. Elton Kirtley asked a question, Dennison response was to sue a government entity, the Town's insurance company would take over, and we would put a claim into MMIA. Councilwomen Taylor shared that after talking with Aimee Bailey, Carbon Conservation District and Shannon from Fish & Wildlife is that none of the trees and brush are planted correctly, they were supposed to planted in the rocks, as solid rip rap speeds up the water that heads to the bridge. Mike Ventling stated none of the homeowners were ever contacted about the project. Dennison stated that the next step would be to put it on the agenda and see what the city council would like to do about it. City council authority, could jump into litigation, not recommended, you could send a letter to Stillwater Conservation District and work out an agreement, ask for mediation, these are options on how to proceed. The Town of Fromberg doesn't have the funds to independently do this, nor does it look like under the contract the Town needs to do this. Stillwater Conservation District is the ones responsible for this. Stillwater Conservation District has told us they are not doing anything more. Mayor stated that when we signed off, the contractor stated they had built per the engineer's plans, but we didn't get that in writing.

Resolution #542 City Council to authorize a Special Prosecutor to be appointed as Special Deputy City attorney to Review Conflict Cases was next on the agenda. Councilwomen Taylor motioned to approved Resolution #542, seconded by Councilman Ventling. The motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton– aye, Councilman Ventling--aye and Councilwoman Taylor – aye. Motion carried.

Approval of the write-off Bulk Water Bills amounts, that were unable to forward, no sufficient address (NSF), clerk would like to remove from system. Councilwomen Taylor asked if these could be turned over to collections. Dennison stated the Town needs to have this in agreement. There are steps that need to be taken. Councilwoman Taylor motioned to table, until we get some more information. Dennison stated that we need to find them and get them served.

Approval of the Clerk to attend Montana League of Cities and towns annual conference in Billing on October 15th -17th. Councilman Caton moved to approved clerk to attend conference, Councilwoman Taylor seconded. The motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton– aye, Councilman Ventling--aye and Councilwoman Taylor – aye. Motion carried.

Mayor opened a public hearing.

Ordinance #529, Second Reading of an ordinance of the Town of Fromberg to regulate the use and discharge of Fireworks within Town limits was read out loud by the mayor. Councilwomen Taylor motioned to approve Ordinance#529, seconded by Councilman Caton. The motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton– aye, Councilman Ventling--aye and Councilwoman Taylor – aye. Motion carried.

The consent agenda was next on the agenda. A motion to approve the Consent Agenda was made by Councilman Caton, seconded by Councilwomen Taylor. The motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton--aye, Councilman Ventling--aye and Councilwoman Taylor – aye. Motion Carries.

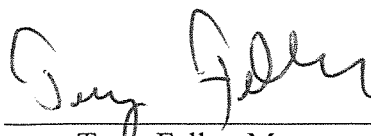
Town Attorney Dennison Butler was here for questions. Elton Kirtley had questions about the river project with there being a conflict of interest with the contractor, could there actually be a recovery of funds that could go towards the project to get it done properly. Dennison, yes. There is a criminal case pending based on the conflict of interest and the amount of money that was out there. Don Wilson asked about sending letters out to people living in trailers, and residential letters have been sent out. Elton Kirtley, asked about Shaw, is someone living in the trailers. Elton Kirtley mentioned water and gas lines and shut offs.

Public Works Mark Seyler will be done on this week. TCT was hitting lines all over town. He learned about Main sewer hookup with Stateline on East River Road. Mike Ventling discussed School Street hookup. Romeo needs to stock up in the shop fittings, saddles, curb-stops. He would like to get rid of comp time and get overtime. Councilwomen Taylor would like to refer to Kirstin Sweet regarding this matter. As he has stepped into the position of Public Works Director he asked about a pay increase, the mayor stated that the town needs to advertise the Public Works Director position and it will come with a certain rate, and if you are the chosen candidate this will be your rate. Councilwomen Taylor said we have a resolution in place for raises.

Town Clerk Auch reported that she was working on the Lien letters, last lien letters were done in 2015. Budget will be the next on the list of things to do.

A motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Ventling and seconded by Councilman Caton. The motion carried with the votes as follows: Councilman Caton—aye, Councilman Ventling--aye and Councilwoman Taylor – aye.

Adjourned at 8:49 pm



Terry Feller, Mayor

ATTEST:



Michele Auch, Town Clerk