

Ennis Town Commission Meeting  
February 26, 2026  
6:15 P.M.  
Ennis Town Hall  
328 W. Main Street

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:15 PM.
2. Roll call of the council found Commissioner Ranson, Way, Hankins, Abernethy, and Hardy present.
3. Mayor Roberts led the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Approval of Meeting Minutes 2/12/2026: Commissioner Way moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Hardy seconded the motion. All commissioners present voted in favor.
5. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items: Mayor Roberts informed those present of the new camera and microphone system and stated that the podium would no longer be used. Members of the public wishing to comment were asked to raise their hand, be recognized by the Chair, and then proceed with their remarks. No public comment was made on non-agenda items.
6. Claims: Commissioner Way inquired if the town uses Starlink services. Mayor Roberts confirmed that it is, and noted that she is working with DIS to obtain quotes from Three Rivers Communications. Commissioner Way also asked about the "global cable" listed in the claims. Eric explained that it is a power cord for the new generator, intended for use during power outages. Myron Wallmow questioned why there was an interest charge on the Chase Card. Mayor Roberts clarified that the interest charges resulted from claims being paid only once per month, causing occasional late payments. She further noted that this card and account will be closed and paid off with either this claims cycle or the next. Myron Wallmow also asked whether all computers previously used for IT purposes had been returned. Mayor Roberts stated that, while she does not have a complete inventory list to confirm, she believes all equipment has been returned. Commissioner Way motioned to approve the claims. Commissioner Hankins seconded the motion. All commissioners voted in favor. Motion carried, unanimous vote.
7. Scheduled Matter
  - a. Appointment of Bob Bailey to the Planning Board: Commissioner Hardy noted that Bob Bailey has served on the Tree Board for several years and has provided professional services to him over an extended period. He expressed that Mr. Bailey would be an excellent addition to the Planning Board. There are currently two open seats on the Planning Board; Susie Sprout serves as a nonvoting member. Commissioner Hardy motioned to appoint Bob Bailey to the Planning Board. Commissioner Way seconded the motion. All commissioners voted in favor. Motion carried, unanimous vote.
  - b. Ability Montana Presentation, Who we are at Ability Montana, Camp Bullwheel - Adaptive Fly Fishing in Montana: Scott Birkenbuel, Chief Executive of Ability Montana, provided an overview of the organization, explaining that it is a center for independent living for people with disabilities. He distributed a brochure detailing the center's mission, which is to empower individuals with disabilities to live as independently as they choose in their homes and communities. Mr. Birkenbuel thanked Mayor Roberts for the opportunity to present to the Council. He noted that the Varney Bridge area was donated to Ability Montana, allowing

them to offer adaptive fly fishing trips using specialized equipment. Lacy Keller, Independent Living Program Manager, shared that she is a long-time community member and highlighted the importance of accessibility in the town to ensure inclusion for all residents. She noted that Ability Montana can provide resources to assist the town in making decisions to improve accessibility and provided the Council with accessibility guidelines. Hailey Kowalsky shared a report from an audit walk of the town, highlighting areas that currently lack ADA accessibility. She explained that Ability Montana hosts monthly meetings to discuss accessibility issues in the community, which are open to all residents and particularly beneficial for people with disabilities. Hailey invited the Council and Mayor to attend the next meeting. Lacy Keller also mentioned that Ability Montana can assist the town in writing grants for future accessibility projects. Ricky Burns, ADA Coordinator, reviewed accessibility guidelines in greater detail and discussed various scenarios that may present challenges for individuals with disabilities. He emphasized that creating an accessible community requires collaboration between the town and Ability Montana. Both the Council and the Ability Montana team expressed enthusiasm for developing a working relationship to enhance accessibility within the town. Mayor Roberts thanked the Ability Montana team for attending and sharing their insights.

- c. Personnel Policy Manual - MMIA Employee Benefits Program - Job Descriptions: Mayor Roberts introduced this agenda item to initiate discussion and noted that there was no intention to request a vote from the Council at this time. The Personnel Policy Manual was developed using a template provided by MMIA, along with updates from West Yellowstone's 2024 manual. The Police Department is included in the manual, as the department has not been abolished. Commissioner Abernethy inquired about the potential benefits of adding an HSA-qualified plan for employees. Mayor Roberts shared that the document circulated on the drive for Council review is a form completed for the previous year's insurance and emphasized that the form is due by April 16, 2026. Susie Sprout noted that the insurance plan for new hires in Public Works was updated when job descriptions and wages were revised. The Council discussed definitions of full-time versus part-time employment. Mayor Roberts requested that employees and Council members submit edits to the policy manual section by section, intending to complete the update within the next few months. Commissioner Hardy suggested reviewing the Mayor's position to determine eligibility for benefits. Mayor Roberts will consult with MMIA regarding procedures and benefits for elected positions. During the discussion, Commissioner Hankins requested that the mill rates be converted to dollar amounts. Myron Wallmow commented that taxpayers are ultimately funding these programs, which Mayor Roberts acknowledged. Mayor Roberts emphasized that the Council should consider how the insurance program and the Personnel Policy Manual coordinate with each other as updates proceed.
- d. Resolution to establish surcharges for Excessive BOD/TSS: Mayor Roberts brought this item to the Council for discussion regarding situations of excessive wastewater and elevated BOD (Biochemical Oxygen Demand) and TSS (Total Suspended Solids) levels, which can have negative effects on the river. A graph illustrating the town's wastewater system was shared, noting that the current lagoon system is one of the few in the state that discharges directly into a river. Mayor Roberts explained that when BOD or TSS levels exceed acceptable limits,

the Public Works Department must take corrective action. The national household cap is 200 BOD and 250 TSS. Montana municipalities vary widely in how they establish excess surcharges; Mayor Roberts shared examples of Livingston and Darby, with the Council agreeing that Livingston's approach appears the easiest to implement. Eric, Public Works Director, recommended setting the surcharge threshold at 400 BOD or TSS. Mayor Roberts noted that surcharges can be itemized on water bills for transparency. The pretreatment ordinance, designed to prevent excessive waste levels, was read aloud. Eric added that it is common for businesses to submit monthly testing reports. Commissioner Abernethy suggested defining industrial businesses within the town to identify which businesses may contribute to excess BOD/TSS levels. Carla Smith inquired about the duration of the pretreatment ordinance; it was created in 2019, and there have been ongoing efforts to address noncompliant businesses. Discussion also included the potential removal of business licenses for violations. The Council and Mayor agreed to continue considering this matter and will vote on the resolution at a future meeting.

8. Commission Comments:

**Commissioner Ranson:** Expressed appreciation for the developing relationship between the town and Ability Montana to improve accessibility in the community.

**Commissioner Way:** Reported a concern from a customer of his business regarding cars parked behind the library and inquired if the town could address potential liability issues.

**Commissioner Hankins:** No report.

**Commissioner Abernethy:** No report. Requested a graphic showing the town's wastewater processing system.

**Commissioner Hardy:** Stated that the town needs to continue work on the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and suggested including a plan for a new wastewater treatment plant.

9. Mayor Comments: Mayor Roberts reported ongoing work with Nuvei and Black Mountain to ensure the new payment portal is ready for launch. She noted that Jodi Rogers submitted the financial report to the Department of Administration on time and is continuing to correct the ARPA account. Mayor Roberts successfully collected water and sewer hookup fees from a property owner and plans to revisit meter pricing to make it more reasonable. She is also working on compliance for short-term rentals and will send a letter to remind business owners to properly manage trash.

10. Unscheduled Matters: Any item(s) not listed for the current meeting with the of such discussion shall be to decide if to schedule the item(s) for discussion/vote on a subsequent agenda.

11. Adjourn: Commissioner Ranson motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Hardy seconded the motion. All commissioners voted in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Brennah Bench



**Brennah Bench, Clerk**



**Lisa Roberts, Mayor**

