

RESOLUTION 21-11014

**A RESOLUTION OF INTENT TO COMMIT FUNDS DIRECTED TO A
PUBLIC SAFETY PLAN IN CONCERT WITH YELLOWSTONE COUNTY
AND THE STATE OF MONTANA TO ADDRESS VIOLENT CRIME IN
BILLINGS, YELLOWSTONE COUNTY, MONTANA**

WHEREAS, violent crime in Billings has increased by over 70% during the COVID-19 pandemic in both 2020 and 2021; and,

WHEREAS, the Courts are experiencing backlogs due to this increased crime and due to COVID-19 related processes; and,

WHEREAS, these court backlogs have resulted in criminal defendants remaining in pretrial or pre-revocation hearing status longer, resulting in more criminal defendants being released pretrial or pre-revocation hearing because of jail occupancy limits and because defendants are released into the community for a longer time.

WHEREAS, the National Police Services Survey conducted between October 2020 and December 2020 indicates that only 31% of 3000 households in Billings felt safe in downtown Billings at night compared to 74% who felt safe in their neighborhood at night; and,

WHEREAS, a Billings Chamber of Commerce survey between April 2021 and May 2021 indicates that 89% of businesses responded that their business was impacted by public safety issues and concerns and 53% were impacted moderately or greatly; and,

WHEREAS, Billings is experiencing economic instability related to an increase in COVID-19 related crime, including violent crime; and,

WHEREAS, more law enforcement is needed to address the crime increase and more prosecutors and more criminal defense attorneys are needed to reduce case backlogs; and,

WHEREAS, considering these challenges, the State of Montana has indicated a willingness to aid Billings and Yellowstone County by dedicating up to \$2 million of its ARPA funds for the next three years to address pandemic-related issues resulting in increased crime, court backlogs, and extended pre-trial or pre-revocation hearing status of defendants; and,

WHEREAS, the Billings City Council intends to work cooperatively with the State of Montana and Yellowstone County to address these issues by committing an additional \$1 million to fund resources for law enforcement and prosecution services over the next three years.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BILLINGS, MONTANA:

The City Council intends to dedicate an additional \$1 million to fund resources for law enforcement and prosecution services over the next three years starting January 1, 2022, in coordination with Yellowstone County dedicating an additional \$1 million and the State dedicating \$2 million of its ARPA funds to temporarily provide for supplemental resources within the criminal justice systems of the City of Billings and Yellowstone County.

APPROVED AND PASSED by the Billings City Council this 25th day of October, 2021.

CITY OF BILLINGS



By: William A. Cole
William A. Cole, Mayor

ATTEST:

By: Denise P. Bohlman
Denise Bohlman, City Clerk