

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: November 2, 2021

Media Contacts:

Melanie Schwarz

406-670-9364 melanie@corridormg.com

City Administrator Chris Kukulski

406-581-7026 kukulskic@billingsmt.gov

Billings Residents Pass Public Safety Levy

Billings voters have passed the 2021 Public Safety Mill Levy. The levy will generate an additional \$7.1 million in public safety funding. These new dollars will add the following personnel and resources:

- 28 full time employees to the Billings Police Department; 14 sworn officers and 14 civilian staff positions
- 13 full time employees to the Billings Fire Department; two fully staffed Medical Response Teams, a Deputy Fire Marshal, Logistics Officer and Fire Protection Engineer
- Three attorneys, an additional judge, two paralegals and needed support staff for courts/legal departments
- Three new code enforcement officers

Additionally, part of the levy dollars will go towards mental health and substance use disorder services. For a homeowner of a median value home (\$217,000) this will add \$8.33 per month to their property taxes.

Mayor Bill Cole said, “Thank you to the Billings residents for passing this levy. This shows the community’s commitment to our police, fire, legal and code enforcement efforts. Passing this levy brings resources that will make our city safer and allow us to address the long-standing need for many of our departments.”

Billings most recently passed a public safety mill levy in 2020. The 2020 levy was designed to “repeal and replace” the levy from 2004, recalculating to 60 mills instead of a fixed dollar amount. Billings City Council was transparent that the 2020 levy would only allow the city to maintain the status quo, and there would be a need for another levy to add resources in the 2021 election.

The City of Billings would also like to thank the partners that worked diligently to get information out to the voters through the well-organized group, “Citizens for a Safer Billings”. This group, led by Billings business leaders and the Billings Chamber of Commerce, worked in tandem with the city to assist in providing information, presentations and media. The work of “Citizens for a Safer Billings” shows in the results tonight and the city is extremely grateful for their participation and resources.

“We appreciate the Billings citizens who supported the needs of our growing city by voting for the public safety mill levy. Coming to the residents of our city two years in a row was a big ask and we are grateful they said yes,” said city administrator, Chris Kukulski. He added, “on behalf of the Billings City Council and the city administration, I assure all Billings residents that the dollars committed by passing this levy will go directly to improving our public safety through increased personnel and resources helping us all to secure a safer city.

-END-