



MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CITY COMMISSIONERS

9/17/2025 - MINUTES

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BISMARCK BOARD OF CITY COMMISSIONERS & THE BURLEIGH COUNTY COMMISSION

AGENDA

1. Call to Order

The Board of City Commissioners and Burleigh County Commission met on September 17, 2025, at 5:00 PM in the Tom Baker Meeting Room, City/County Office Building, 221 North Fifth Street, Bismarck, North Dakota. City Commissioners Connelly, Cleary, Risch, Zenker, and Mayor Schmitz were present. County Commissioners Bakken, Munson, Woodcox, Schwab, and Chair Bitner were present.

2. Public Comment

The following citizens offered their thoughts on the ETA:

- Trent Wangen
- Robert Field
- Tom Persico
- Tamara Unterseher
- Nancy Jackson
- [Public Comment received prior to meeting](#)

3. Utility Capital Charge Presentation

Michael Mart, Director of Utility Operations, provided an overview of how infrastructure costs are assigned to newly annexed properties through two main mechanisms: Costs Held in Abeyance and the Utility Capital Charge (UCC). He explained that costs held in abeyance are primarily used for regional stormwater and street improvements. These costs are associated with infrastructure already constructed, such as drainage systems and stormwater ponds and are applied to properties outside the city limits that benefit from these improvements. When those properties are annexed into the city, the costs are assigned based on the square footage of the lot area. Director Mart noted that this method is no longer used for water and sewer infrastructure, which shifted in 2019 to the UCC system. The UCC is a one-time charge paid at the time of development or water meter installation, designed to cover the cost of connecting to the city's water treatment, transmission, and wastewater systems. The fee varies depending on the size of the water meter, with typical sizes being ¾-inch for residential and larger meters for commercial

properties. Director Mart emphasized that while stormwater costs may still be held in abeyance, water and sewer costs are now fully covered by the UCC.

- [Presentation](#)

4. Planning Task Force Discussion

The Commissions discussed the need for a Planning Task Force and the general consensus of the group is to have the discussion at the Bismarck-Burleigh Commissions Committee rather than creating a task force.

5. Proposed ETA Map Amendments

Daniel Nairn, Acting Community Development Director, presented Bismarck's growth phasing plan, which guides city expansion over the next 50 years based on a map used since 2014 and aligned with the 2022 Comprehensive Plan. The plan divides the extraterritorial area (ETA) into three zones: the Urban Service Area for development within 25 years with city services; the Urban Reserve Area for longer-term growth; and a new Airport Buffer Area to limit development near the airport. The city's historic growth rate projects a need for over 4,000 acres by 2075. To address public concerns, the city proposes removing largely rural residential areas from the ETA, eliminating 95% of homes currently regulated by the city while preserving land needed for future urban growth. Acting Director Nairn emphasized the ETA's role in protecting land for urban development and discouraging rural subdivisions that complicate city expansion. He explained density differences between urban and rural areas and noted that some rural development remains allowed in the Urban Reserve. Concerns about overlapping jurisdiction and "donut holes" were addressed, with Acting Director Nairn clarifying that ETA designation is mainly administrative and does not impact emergency services. An interactive online map is available for residents to check their property's ETA status. Acting Director Nairn also provided a demonstration of how to use an interactive map that the Community Development Department created for residents to view the proposed new ETA boundaries.

- [Presentation](#)

6. Adjourn

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 6:38 PM.