



**Jeremy Keene**

Director  
Public Works &  
Mobility Department

### Director's Message

We know Missoulians rely on us to solve problems. When the storm tore through town with extraordinarily high wind speeds on the evening of July 24<sup>th</sup>, our crews responded immediately, working through the night to clear blocked streets, prevent public contact with downed power lines, and provide key services despite the power outages.

The storm tested our emergency response, and our systems and people showed remarkable resilience. The entire wastewater treatment plant ran on backup power for 13 hours, and 18 well or booster pumping locations ran on generators, some for several days! Our team worked 24 hours a day to monitor conditions and respond to requests for assistance. Our Streets team worked closely with Parks, Fire, and the County Office of Emergency Management to assess and remove hazardous trees and debris, and Garden City Compost extended hours and accepted storm debris free of charge.

None of this happens by accident. Resilience comes from preparation, training, and experience. The commitment of our Public Works team, combined with our investment in robust systems, enabled us to meet the storm's challenges head-on. Thank you for trusting us to serve Missoula. As always, we welcome your feedback. Please feel free to reach out to us at [publicworks@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:publicworks@ci.missoula.mt.us).

### Public Works & Mobility's Response to Unprecedented Wind Storm

The wind storm that hit Missoula on July 24, 2024, called a "derecho," involved wind speeds ranging from 80 mph recorded at the airport to 109 mph on Mount Sentinel, according to the National Weather Service. These strong winds knocked down trees and power poles to an extent we've never encountered in Missoula. Public Works & Mobility staff jumped into action immediately after the storm to ensure residents had access to the essential services our department provides.

**Water.** As soon as the storm was over, Missoula Water staff were out checking on water well, booster pump, and tank sites. Many were difficult to access due to downed trees and powerlines, but staff made it to all sites equipped with backup generators. They continued to refuel the generators every few hours. They also improvised to reroute radio communications when some key sites lost communications due to downed trees.

We only have enough generators to meet average day demands, not peak demand. Since the storm occurred during the time of year when water usage is almost at its peak, we were very concerned that we would not be able to produce enough water to keep our tanks from emptying. In response, we asked our customers to restrict water usage. We wanted to make sure everyone continued to have water available to meet basic needs, and given the number of downed power lines, we also needed to ensure water was available in case the Missoula Fire Department needed it to fight fires.

**Streets.** Meanwhile, Streets staff were responding to the many reports of blocked streets, many of which had powerlines in the mix. They put up barricades to prevent travel on these



Street Maintenance crews assisted in removing storm debris from residential drop sites.

*Continued on page 4*

## McKinley Lake Dam Removal Pilot Project a Booming Success!

During the summer of 2024, Missoula Water and its project partners completed a pilot project to decommission the dam on McKinley Lake in the Rattlesnake Wilderness Area. The years-long process included direction and approvals from the U.S. Forest Service, assistance from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Trout Unlimited, and the Montana Conservation Corps and funding from Missoula Water and various grants.

The dam was removed as the first major project to address recommendations from the *2018 Rattlesnake Dams Feasibility Study*, which identified repair needs at City-owned wilderness lakes as well as the on-going maintenance of these remote sites and their dam infrastructure.

Removal of the dam on McKinley Lake was done in accordance with strict guidelines from the U.S. Forest Service due to various restrictions for equipment and tool use in a wilderness area. How the required equipment and materials were transported to the site (mule train), and how the area would look once work was done were also part of the decommissioning plan and process.

City utility engineer-in-training Triston Firth spent multiple days camped at the site and said of the project, "Working in such a remote location brings its challenges. Constantly changing weather conditions and the duration of project were demanding. But, despite these drawbacks, we now know there's a way for us to complete future wilderness dam projects."

Moving forward, City staff will continue to work with our project partners to determine future dam removal or rehabilitation work. Future projects are also dependent on funding availability.

The City of Missoula took over ownership of ten lakes and dams in the Rattlesnake Wilderness Area as part of its purchase of Mountain Water in 2017. That resulted in the utility needing to maintain the sites and all dam structures. City staff make trips up to these remote sites each summer; engineers inspect the dams, and Missoula Parks & Recreation staff help clear spillways and maintain vegetation. This is a costly endeavor, so for the past few years, the water utility has been looking into removing or rehabilitating the dams since they have not been used for municipal water supply for several decades. The McKinley Lake dam removal was a pilot project to test the difficulty involved with dam removal and to analyze the results following the removal.

Learn more about this project, and see photos and video at [www.engagemissoula.com/rattlesnake-wilderness-dams](http://www.engagemissoula.com/rattlesnake-wilderness-dams).



*Explosives were used to remove large portions of the dam structure. The remaining restoration work was done by hand by City staff, Trout Unlimited staff, and Montana Conservation Corps members. Photo credit: Jason Jaaks/Resources Legacy Fund*

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### Leaf Collection Begins Early November



The City's Street Maintenance & Operations Division plans to begin its annual leaf collection program on Tuesday, November 5, 2024, weather permitting.

To prepare for leaf collection, please have leaves in the street no more than 2 or 3 days before your scheduled pickup. Rake them into long, narrow piles up next to the curb but not in the bike lane or driving lane.

**See our website for more detailed instructions, the work schedule map and the latest updates:**

[www.ci.missoula.mt.us/3069/Leaf-Collection](http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/3069/Leaf-Collection).

### Stay Informed

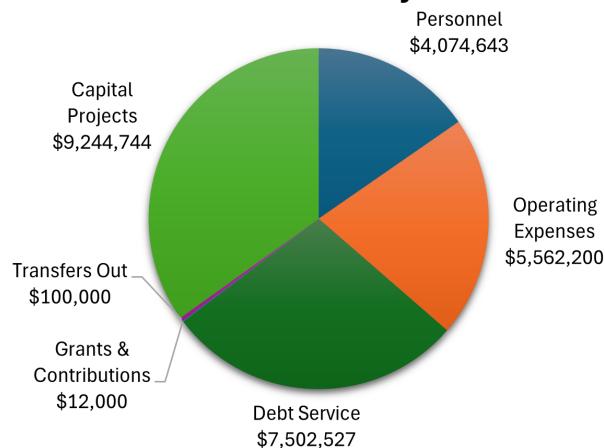
Find out about City news and events, projects in your neighborhood, and other important information:

- **Subscribe** to one or more of the City's Notify Me lists at [www.ci.missoula.mt.us/list.aspx](http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/list.aspx) for City-related messaging.
- **Follow** us on social media: Facebook — @MissoulaPWM and Instagram — MissoulaCityPublicWorks
- **Sign up** for Smart911 at [www.smart911.com](http://www.smart911.com) to receive *emergency only* messages.
- **Visit** [www.ci.missoula.mt.us](http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us) for City events, news, and other information.

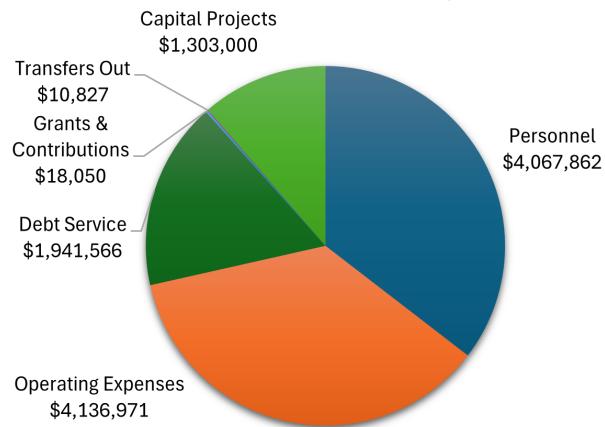
## Utility Rates: How Each Budget is Distributed

If you've ever wondered how the revenue from your utility bill is spent, we've provided the charts below to show our total expenditures for each utility from fiscal year 2024, which ended June 30, 2024. The City's Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater utilities are all enterprise funds, meaning the money collected for that utility must be spent in operation of that utility.

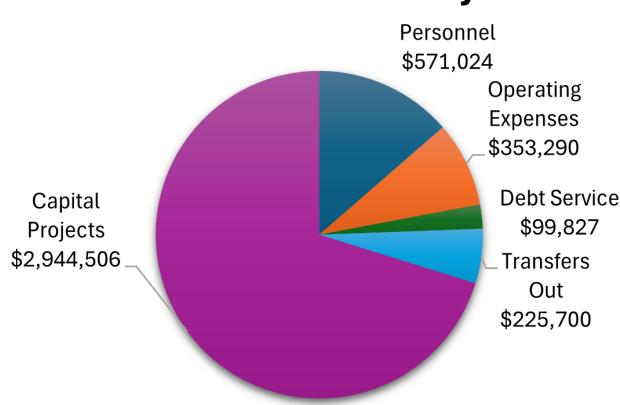
### Water Utility



### Wastewater Utility



### Stormwater Utility



## Help Prevent Localized Flooding on Your Street

You can help safeguard our environment and prevent localized flooding by keeping your curb and gutter free of leaves and other yard debris. When leaves and debris block these essential drainage areas, water cannot flow properly, leading to potential flooding and pollution of our waterways.

Here's how you can make a difference:

- Clear Curb and Gutter:** Regularly remove leaves, grass clippings, and other debris from the curb and gutter in front of your property.
- Dispose Properly:** Use yard waste collection services or composting options to manage your leaves and debris responsibly.
- Report Issues:** If you notice blocked storm drains or excessive debris in public areas, report it to the Stormwater Utility to ensure timely maintenance. (Use this QR code → → or call 406-552-6379.)



Your actions help maintain clean water and reduce flooding risks for everyone in our community. Let's work together to keep our streets and waterways safe and healthy!



Clear leaves and yard debris from blocking storm drains.

## New Sidewalk or Driveway? Protect It!

If you had a new sidewalk or driveway installed in the last two years, help preserve the surface by taking the following measures:

- Do not use salt or chemical deicers! They will deteriorate the broomed surface for the first two years after installation.
- Use sand (recommended) or kitty litter instead.
- Scoop off snow and slush as quickly as possible to prevent ice build up.

**Remember**—you are responsible for keeping your sidewalk clear of snow, ice, and debris. See [www.ci.missoula.mt.us/2848/Sidewalk-Snow-Removal](http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/2848/Sidewalk-Snow-Removal) for details.

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streets. Others worked to get traffic signals on major streets back up by connecting them to generators when there was no power. During storm cleanup, our crews worked with Missoula Parks & Recreation staff to remove trees and large branches from streets so that emergency services and residents could get where they needed to go. Streets crews also hauled off debris from the drop-off sites to make room for more residential storm debris.

**Wastewater.** Out at the wastewater treatment facility, our employees were making sure backup power was available to operate the treatment plant. Other staff members responded to calls from people who didn't know they had a Septic Tank Effluent Pump (STEP) system or didn't realize that they needed to restrict their water usage during power outages when they are on a STEP system. This was especially important when the power was out for several days in some neighborhoods.

**Garden City Compost.** The compost facility has received more than 35,000 cubic yards of storm debris to date. Staff members have worked many, many hours moving and grinding this huge amount storm debris they have received and continue to receive. They will use as much of this material as possible in the process to produce compost.

Residents responded to the storm aftermath and cleanup in an overwhelmingly positive way, allowing Public Works & Mobility Department staff to do our work as quickly and efficiently as possible. Thank you, Missoula!



*Garden City Compost staff helped collect information from residents who brought in their storm debris.*



**Open Saturdays thru November!**

**Hours**

Monday - Saturday  
8 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
(products loaded until 4 p.m.)

Closed Sundays & legal holidays

**1125 Clark Fork Lane • 406-552-6619**

[www.ci.missoula.mt.us/2089/Garden-City-Compost](http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/2089/Garden-City-Compost)

Present this coupon for:

**\$5 off any cubic yard purchase  
of Compost or Topdress**

May not be combined with any  
other offers



## Utility Loan Programs

The Utility Loan Programs were updated on July 24, 2024. The Water Line Loan Program offers eligible property owners up to \$3,000 in loan forgiveness, subject to availability. The loan forgiveness is an incentive for customers with an active leak to replace their line instead of making a "band-aid" repair.

The Sewer Line Loan Program increased the income eligibility to 120% of the Missoula County Area Median Income. Please visit [www.ci.missoula.mt.us/2856/Utility-Assistance-Programs](http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/2856/Utility-Assistance-Programs) to learn more.

## Contact Us

### Utility Emergencies

! **Water Lines:** 406-552-6700  
**Sewer Lines or STEP Systems:** 406-552-6600

### Utility Bill Payment

**Online:** [www.ci.missoula.mt.us/2716/Pay-Your-Utility-Bill](http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/2716/Pay-Your-Utility-Bill)  
**Drop Boxes:** 435 Ryman St. & 1345 W. Broadway  
**Mail:** P.O. Box 5388, Missoula, MT 59806  
**Phone:** 866-790-7218  
**Customer Service:** 406-552-6700 or email [watercs@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:watercs@ci.missoula.mt.us)

### Division Contacts

**Missoula Water:** 406-552-6700  
**Stormwater:** 406-552-6379  
**Wastewater:** 406-552-6600  
  
**Garden City Compost:** 406-552-6619  
**Missoula City Cemetery:** 406-552-6070  
**Street Maintenance:** 406-552-6360  
**Engineering:** 406-552-6769  
**Transportation Planning:** 406-552-6670  
**PWM Administration:** 406-552-6769

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[www.ci.missoula.mt.us/403/Public-Works-Mobility](http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/403/Public-Works-Mobility)