

**A REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING OF THE LEWISTOWN CITY COMMISSION ON
DECEMBER 15, 2025 WHICH WAS HELD AT THE CENTRAL MONTANA COMMUNITY
CENTER AND STARTED AT 7:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Day called the meeting to order.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Day asked everyone to stand and say the Pledge to the Flag.

ROLL CALL

Present were Commissioners: Day, Buehler, Hrubes, Spika and Terry. Commissioner Robertson participated virtually and Commissioner Hewitt was absent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Day stated that without objection and based on the corrections the minutes for December 1, 2025 are approved.

COURTESIES

There were none.

PROCLAMATIONS

There were none.

BOARD AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Spika reported there is a Snowy Mountain Development Board meeting on December 18th. Commissioner Spika stated she will attend and will get a report to the Commission for the next meeting.

Commissioner Terry reported the Central Montana Foundation will not be meeting in December.

Commissioner Buehler reported the Library Board met on November 19th and there will be a Library Board meeting December 17th at 1 pm. The Friends of the Library are working on organizing the Library Chili Bowl. The Chili Bowl will be held during the winter fair.

Commissioner Day reported the Park and Recreation Board did not meet in December. The multipurpose facility at Frank Day Park is going well.

Commissioner Robertson reported the Airport Board met on December 3rd. There will be a few public projects that are moving ahead with funding. There is a large taxiway reconstruct and maintenance project, which is sealant the runways. There is a large new door for the hangar. Commissioner Robertson reported there will be two private hangars constructed this summer in the executive hangar area. The Airport has two large snow blowers and the airport is in better shape than in previous years.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

City Manager Phelps reported on the following items:

The next Commissioner meeting will be held on January 5, 2026. There will be a training session held during the Committee of the Whole for the first meeting of the year.

Election for the Commissioner Chairman and Vice Chairman will be held, as well as, board appointments. Please put some thought into your current appointments and schedules. Included in the packet was a list of the boards and their regular meeting times.

The City Office will be closed both December 24th and December 25th for the Christmas holiday.

The ice-skating rink has already been busy with ice skating and hockey games. The Lewistown Ice Skating Association does have tournaments scheduled for the first 2 weeks in January. The schedule for the rink is available on the Lewistown Ice Skating Association's Facebook page.

Sewer rates are set to increase in January. The sewer ordinance included incremental increase for the next 2 years. This will show up on the bills received in February. The details of the increase are: Residential Base Rate Charge will increase from \$19.75 to \$20.00 per EDU; Commercial Base Rate Charge will increase from \$21.75 to \$22.00 EDU; and Sewer Use Charges will increase from \$8.50 per 1,000 gallons of water used to \$8.75 per 1000 gallons on water used.

Just a reminder to everyone that fireworks are allowed on New Year's Eve from 10 pm on December 31st to 12:30 am on January 1st.

There have been 2 declared snow events. Prior to the ordinance going into place the Police Department hung flyers on the effected properties, informing them of the changes to the snow routes. There is information on our website and Facebook. The City Office has received a lot of questions regarding snow plowing and have seen an improvement on compliance with these new regulations. We will continue to follow up on how things are going.

PUBLIC COMMENT – non agenda items

There were none.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Buehler made the motion to approve the consent agenda and Commissioner Terry seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The consent agenda was the acknowledgement of the claims that have been paid from December 1, 2025 to December 11, 2025 in the amount of \$417,724.93

***REGULAR AGENDA – Resolutions, Ordinances & Other Action Items:**

1. Discussion and action on awarding a bid to Griffith Construction for an emergency sewer line replacement near the Civic Center

City Manager Phelps explained the public works department discovered about a block of sewer line that had extreme infiltration. The sewer department was unable to camera the line to see

what the issues were as well as clear the line. City staff put out a bid for the emergency work and reached out to the following contractors VH Contracting, Griffith Contracting and Do All contracting. City Manager Phelps stated Griffith Contracting was the only one to submit a bid for the project. City Manager Phelps stated the bid is \$55,000 for a half of block and did consult with the engineers and they feel it is a fair price. Commissioner Terry made the motion to approve awarding the bid to Griffith Construction for an emergency sewer line replacement near the Civic Center and Commissioner Buehler seconded the motion. Commissioner Day asked for questions from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for and the City Clerk took a roll call vote with all being in favor of the motion.

2. Discussion and action on approving Resolution No 4215, a resolution clarifying collection of assessment for Tourism Business Improvement District No. 1

City Manager Phelps explained she has been working the Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) regarding the collecting non paid assessments. This resolution would allow the TBID board to file a lien for nonpayment. City Manager Phelps reported that she has worked with the City Attorney and TBID board. City Attorney Tyler West explained this resolution lays out that the board of trustees does have the power to collect. The resolution specifically talks about the authority to file a lien. City Attorney West explained the TBID board has been discussing other avenues or ways to collect, but want to make sure that everybody's on notice and all trustees that are part of the district know if they don't pay there will be consequences. Commissioner Buehler made the motion to approve Resolution No 4215, a resolution clarifying collection of assessment for Tourism Business Improvement District No. 1 and Commissioner Hrubes seconded the motion. Commissioner Day asked for questions from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for and the City Clerk took a roll call vote with all being in favor of the motion.

3. Discussion and action on approving a one-year extension of the City Manager Contract

Commissioner Day explained the Commission recently conducted the annual City Manager evaluation and as a result specific goals have been outlined and the City Manager has embraced these goals and looks forward to working with the Commission for the good of the City. City Manager Phelps stated her existing contract has a 90-day window to start the negotiations. The Commission felt it was in the best interest of the City staff and Commission and get something in front of the Commission prior to year end. City Manager Phelps stated this is a one year contract extension and there are no modifications or changes to the existing contract. Commissioner Spika made the motion to approve a one-year extension of the City Manager Contract and Commissioner Buehler seconded the motion. Commissioner Robertson stated he has spent a great deal of time considering whether we should renew the City Manager's contract for what term and when. Commissioner Robertson further stated there are three reasons why he believes the City Manager contract should be renewed now. Commissioner Robertson read the following: First the Commission just completed the City Manager's annual review and while there are some issues that were of concern, the Commission all agreed to put in place a plan for improvement with very specific short- and long-term expectations. The plan has deadlines that reach well into 2026, which clearly suggests that Holly's tenure as City Manager would continue for at least the

next year. Commissioner Robertson reported if Holly fails to make those improvements, then he will be the first person to suggest the Commission not extend the contract further. Commissioner Robertson commented for the Commission to put in place formal expectations and then shortly thereafter reconsider to end employment for Holly would not be consistent or in keeping with the Commission plan for improvement. Second, while Commissioner Robertson has heard from a few constituents with concerns about the City Manager's performance in general and quite a bit of coffee clutch talk and grumbling. Commissioner Robertson stated he has not heard many specific accusations of failure that can be laid squarely and solely on the City Manager. Commissioner Robertson further stated there have been suggestions of financial mismanagement, as some have suggested due to the Department of Administration's (DOA) accusations based on the City's recent audits, when thoroughly researched, fade away as report formatting errors for which the DOA has not provided proper guidance, in his opinion. Commissioner Robertson stated typical audit findings such as separation of duties are nearly impossible to avoid with a small staff such as the City of Lewistown. Commissioner Robertson further stated, yes, the City can do better in reporting to the DOA, and it is now and will do better in preparing for those audits. However, accusations of any material financial failures have been proven false by the Montana League of Cities and Towns (MLCT) and he has seen no proven suggestion for financial mismanagement. Commissioner Robertson stated can the City Manager and the City do a better job of communicating with the public? Most certainly and plans are in place in that regard within the plan for improvement generated from the City Manager's most recent review. The Commission will hold everyone responsible for improvements in this regard. Commissioner Robertson commented that as he looks at the departments within the City he sees successes, not failures this past decade. The City has strong Fire and Police departments. The Park and Recreation Department has seen many great improvements and the Library continues to be a spectacular community and regional asset. Commissioner Robertson stated the Public Works Department, while constantly being put under pressure for weather, budget constraints and numerous state and federal agencies provides us a great community to live in. Commissioner Robertson stated the third and most significant reason why he feels the Commission should renew the City Manager contract now relates to experience and relevant observations. This Commission, as it is made up today, has the most relevant experience with which to judge the worthiness of a short-term contract extension for the City Manager. Commissioner Robertson commented that he holds great hope for the abilities of the incoming Commissioners. Commissioner Robertson further commented he would never make judgement of their abilities in advance to their work on this Commission. Commissioner Robertson stated he is confident that the new Commissioners will do their best to get up to speed and contribute as quickly as possible. Commissioner Robertson stated that one to two months prior to the end of the City Manager's contract will not provide adequate basis for an informed vote, in his opinion. The current Commissioners have years of experience in their roles and have given the City Manager repeated annual reviews and are uniquely qualified to make this decision for the citizens of Lewistown. Ms. Patty Turk, 519 E Evelyn, addressed the Commission stating she was a City Commissioner for 17 years and thanked them for extending the City Manager's contract and thinks it is in the best interest of the City. Mr. Ken Shaver, 639 NE Washington, stated he heard a rumor about the City Manager contract coming up awfully quickly and as

Commissioner Robertson mentioned he thought he might be taking the decision away from the incoming Commissioners and Mr. Shaver stated he kind of agreed with that then realized he doesn't know the City Manager. Mr. Shaver commented he has been analyzing what is going on in the City, it is a structural problem and not the City Manager's problem. Mr. Shaver commented it is important that the Commission doesn't just let her go right now, but give the incoming Commissioner's a chance to evaluate the position. Commissioner Day asked for questions from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for and the Clerk took a roll call vote with all being in favor of the motion.

CITIZENS' REQUESTS

There were none.

COMMISSIONER'S MINUTE

Commissioner Hrubes stated he has really enjoyed serving on the Commission and the four years has been an incredible learning experience for him on +how a structured government agency functions.

Commissioner Buehler thanked the weather for giving us a nice initial challenge with the snow removal and then being very kind in melting our streets. Commissioner Buehler thanked the outgoing Commissioners for their dedication to the community. Commissioner Buehler stated that she has served on the Commission for two years and has learned something for each Commissioner and is excited to attend the Commission meetings and discuss important topics for this community.

Commissioner Terry thanked the other outgoing Commissioners. Commissioner Terry thanked Commissioner Hrubes for his heart and his dedication to the people that he serves.

Commissioner Terry commented that Commissioner Hrubes always brought such a good and positive mindset and believes Commissioner Hrubes heart makes the Commission much better and the City of Lewistown as well.

Commissioner Terry thanked Commissioner Spika for being incredibly intelligent and it's always wonderful to hear her insight. Commissioner Terry thanked Commissioner Spika for her time served and that is was an honor serving with both Commissioners Hrubes and Spika.

Commissioner Terry commented those Commissioners sticking around are going to do a great job. Commissioner Terry stated the incoming Commissioners are in great hand because they are very dedicated to their job and to the City and will continue to do super wonderful things.

Commissioner Spika commented it has been an interesting wild four years it's gone by fast in a lot of ways and really slow in other ways. Things have changed a lot for the City since Commissioner Spika joined the Commission. Commissioner Spika stated she has enjoyed getting to know everyone and impressed at how much care there is even if she disagreed with something. Commissioner Spika further stated you can tell everybody cares what they're doing, cares about the people, cares about the community and makes time to listen and learn and try to make a difference.

Commissioner Robertson thanked everyone for their time and effort. Commissioner Robertson stated it has been an honor to sit with you and learn from you and get some wonderful feedback and friendship.

Commissioner Day thanked all the Commissioners for their time. Commissioner Day commented speaking for herself it was an honor to extend the City Manager contract. Commissioner Day stated she doesn't think the City has anyone more passionate and caring that is leading our City. Commissioner Day further stated she appreciates that there have been some really good opportunities these last two years for the Commission to really dig deep with issues and hold accountability and really grateful for what we have learned and gone through.

City Manager Phelps thanked everyone for the dedication and service to the community and welcomed the new Commissioners.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Day adjourned the meeting.

Dated this 15th day of December, 2025

Loraine Day, Commission Chairman

ATTEST:

Nikki Brummond, City Clerk