

A REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING OF THE LEWISTOWN CITY COMMISSION ON MAY 18, 2026 WHICH WAS HELD AT THE CENTRAL MONTANA COMMUNITY CENTER AND STARTED AT 7:00 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairman Buehler called the meeting to order.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chairman Buehler asked everyone to stand and say the Pledge to the Flag.

ROLL CALL

Present were Commissioners: Bowser, Buehler, Hewitt, Robertson, Shaver and Warren. Commissioner Day was absent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Robertson asked the minutes be moved to the next meeting for approval. There appears to be some inaccuracies and needed corrections.

COURTESIES

There were none.

PROCLAMATIONS

There were none.

BOARD AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Bowser reported the Ordinance Committee and the Library Board will meet on Wednesday this week.

Commissioner Buehler reported the Central Montana Foundation will meet May 26th for their annual meeting. This is open to the public and the main item will be the awarding of the major grants.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

City Manager Phelps reported on the following items:

Last week, the City Manager attended the Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Advisory Committee meeting to discuss a forthcoming TIF application for the potential purchase of property intended to be used for downtown parking. The Urban Renewal Plan identifies the need for public improvements within the district, including the development and implementation of a comprehensive downtown parking strategy that addresses employee parking and residential overnight parking needs. The Plan also emphasizes goals related to reducing blight and enhancing public spaces, including creating a more pedestrian friendly downtown environment and increasing green space opportunities. Currently, the City has an offer on property that includes several contingencies, including funding

approval through the TIF district and final approval by the City Commission. The TIF application is scheduled to be presented to the TIF Board later this week. Commissioner Robertson confirmed this is a very tentative item. Commissioner Robertson commented that Commissioner Warren made the suggestion of Mike's Detailing Shop and the need for more parking. Commissioner Robertson explained he has been on the TIF Board for many years and the board struggles to find ways to address parking. The lot could provide between fourteen and eighteen parking spots downtown. Commissioner Robertson stated he thinks this is a pretty unique opportunity and the Commission should at least look at it.

The City is also partnering with a professional marketing group to design and implement a comprehensive hiring and workforce recruitment campaign aimed at attracting qualified applicants across multiple departments. The campaign will focus on increasing community awareness of employment opportunities with the City, highlighting the benefits of public service and promoting Lewistown as a great place to live and work. As part of this effort, the City will utilize a variety of outreach strategies, including digital advertising, social media engagement, targeted recruitment efforts, expand the applicant pool, and support long term workforce development needs for the organization.

Community members are encouraged to follow the City's Facebook page for updates, job postings, campaign materials and additional information as the initiative moves forward.

Central Montana Transportation Study open house is Tuesday, May 19th from 4 pm to 6 pm at the Civic Center.

The opening day for the swimming pool is June 6th. Lifeguard training is getting started and pool passes and swim lessons will be sold on May 27th and 28th. The pool is still in need of some lifeguards.

City Manager Phelps stated the update on the wastewater plant is that the engineer is finishing up the design for the biosolids upgrades. The next step is submitting the design to DEQ for their approval prior to bidding. Currently, the engineers estimate for the project is 2.9 million and the City is exploring funding opportunities for the project.

City Manager Phelps reported that she submitted the follow up information requested by DEQ regarding the recent compliance inspections. The City has received confirmation that DEQ has no additional information on the storm permit and have not heard back on the wastewater plant itself.

There is an ordinance and audit committee meeting this week.

The Planning Commission will be meeting in June and the first item on their agenda is the bylaws.

PUBLIC COMMENT – non agenda items

Mr. John Carlson, 314 4th Ave N, commented on the citizen participation guidelines on the agenda.

Another citizen stated he does not to state voice who he is. The same citizen spoke about the Fourth Amendment right.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Robertson made the motion to approve the consent agenda and Commissioner Hewitt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The consent agenda was the acknowledgment of the claims that have been paid from May 1, 2026 to May 15, 2026 for a total of \$132,424.71

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

1. Discussion and action on awarding the East Fork North Lease for up to three years

City Manager Phelps explained the City owns property up around the East Fork Dam. The property is divided up into 3 different leases. All three properties are up for lease. The East Fork North Lease is property located north of the dam. The City received two bids to lease the property. One from Brook Zibell in the amount of \$1,100 and the second bid from Levi King in the amount of \$1,000. The lease gives guidelines as to how many animal units are allowed. This is a three-year lease with the option to lease an additional three years. The proposal for both bids is that the property would be used for grazing. Commissioner Hewitt made the motion to approve awarding the East Fork North Lease to Brooke Zibell and Commissioner Bowser seconded the motion. Commissioner Shaver confirmed there were two bids for the same property and City Manager Phelps answered yes. Commissioner Shaver asked if this is property the City really needs to own. City Manager Phelps answered the property is part of the flood control for East Fork Dam that was done in the 70's. Commissioner Buehler asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for and City Clerk took a roll call vote with all being in favor of the motion.

2. Discussion and action on awarding the East Fork South Lease for up to three years

City Manager Phelps explained this property is located south of the dam and is a larger parcel and there are three little tracts that can be hayed. There is a minimum bid of \$1,000 per year or price per ton whichever is higher. The City received two bids one from the Williams Family and the other from Levi King. The Williams Family bid is \$1,425 per year for the full six and the option to auto renew for another four. Levi King bid \$1,500 per year for three years. Mr. King's lease intent would be to repair fences, but does not really address weed control. Commissioner Hewitt made the motion to award the East Fork South Lease to Williams Family as proposed. The motion died due to lack of a second. Commissioner Warren made the motion to award the East Fork South Lease conditionally to Levi King as long he is willing to repair fence and weed abatement and Commissioner Robertson seconded the motion. Commissioner Buehler asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for and City Clerk took a roll call vote with all being in favor of the motion.

3. Discussion and action on awarding the East Fork East Lease for up to three years

City Manager Phelps explained this parcel is located east of Red Hill Road and it doesn't have water. The minimum bid for this property lease is \$600. City Manager Phelps further explained the City received two bids the first one is from Levi King for \$800 per year and the second one from Gary Barta for \$650 per year. City Manager Phelps stated both bidders are adjacent

property owners and both would use the parcel to rotate livestock. It was stated the City Manager Phelps reported that Gary Barta has leased the property in the past. It was stated that Gary Barta's intended use of the property was clearer. Commissioner Bowser made the motion to accept the bid from Gary Barta in the amount of \$650 per year and Commissioner Hewitt seconded the motion. Commissioner Buehler asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for and City Clerk took a roll call vote with Commissioners Bowser, Buehler, Hewitt, Robertson and Warren voted in favor and Commissioner Shaver voted against.

4. Discussion and action on approving Resolution No. 4222, a resolution of the City of Lewistown, Montana, adopting the bylaws for the Lewistown Tax Increment Advisory Committee

City Manager Phelps explained the recent legislative changes to the tax increment financing board. It is now considered a tax increment financing advisory committee. The City Commission has passed resolutions previously to rename the board to the advisory committee and all members have been appointed or reappointed to comply with the legislative changes. The TIF advisory committee recommend Commission approval of their bylaws. Commissioner Robertson made the motion to approve Resolution No. 4222, a resolution of the City of Lewistown, Montana, adopting the bylaws for the Lewistown Tax Increment Advisory Committee and Commissioner Hewitt seconded the motion. Commissioner Buehler asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for and City Clerk took a roll call vote with all being in favor of the motion.

5. Discussion and action on approving Resolution No. 4223, a resolution approving an application from Washington Square Condos, for TIF funds made to the Lewistown Tax Increment Advisory Committee

City Manager Phelps explained the property owners of the Washington Square condos have submitted an application requesting the TIF committee to partner with them to replace a small section of concrete. The advisory committee approved the application up to \$925. Commissioner Warren made the motion to approve Resolution No. 4223, a resolution approving an application from Washington Square Condos, for TIF funds made to the Lewistown Tax Increment Advisory Committee and Commissioner Robertson seconded the motion. Commissioner Buehler asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for and City Clerk took a roll call vote with all being in favor of the motion.

6. Discussion and action on appointing Allison Monnier to the Lewistown Tax Increment Finance Advisory Committee

City Manager Phelps explained that Allison Monnier is a commercial loan officer at Stockman Bank and is interested in serving on the TIF/TED advisory committee. Allison Monnier does serve on other community boards; she would be a great asset to this board especially as we move forward with TIF loans. City Manager Phelps stated there really is a need for some of the members to have a strong banking background. The advisory committee does recommend

Commission approval of Allison Monnier. Commissioner Robertson made the motion to approve appointing Allison Monnier to the Lewistown Tax Increment Finance Advisory Committee and Commissioner Hewitt seconded the motion. Commissioner Buehler asked if the committee vacancy was publicly advertised. Commissioner Robertson answered he believes it was. City Manager Phelps answered this committee is administered by Snowy Mountain Development. Commissioner Buehler asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for and City Clerk took a roll call vote with all being in favor of the motion.

7. Update on the timeline process of the Planning Commission implementation

Commissioner Warren has asked questions about consolidating or eliminating boards. A resolution will have to be passed to dissolve any boards that would be consolidated under the Planning Commission. There are statutory guidelines that require certain applications to be handled within certain timelines. City Manager Phelps explained that at the end of 2025 the City and County entered into an interlocal agreement that laid out the consolidation. The City County Planning Board and the Board of Adjustments would become the new Planning Commission. The existing boards will have to be dissolved. The composition of the Planning Commission will be nine members with four representatives each from both the City and the County. The ninth member will be a representative from the Fergus County Conservation Board. It is planned that the first meeting of the Planning Commission will be the third Thursday in June at 5:30 pm here at the Council on Aging. Commissioner Shaver made the motion to authorize the City Attorney to prepare a filing for the district court to examine the process that allowed the Board of Adjustments to make decisions on variances on the Spring Street apartments and Commissioner Warren seconded the motion. Commissioner Shaver stated the Board of Adjustments was not to consider precedents and every variance is a new case. Commissioner Shaver stated there was no hardship with regard to the land. Commissioner Buehler confirmed it was a review of the process and not a review of the appeal. Commissioner Shaver answered yes. Commissioner Buehler asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for and City Clerk took a roll call vote with Commissioners Bowser, Buehler, Robertson, Shaver and Warren voted in favor and Commissioner Hewitt voted against. Commissioner Hewitt explained they have hired an attorney for the people affected in the surrounding area.

CITIZENS' REQUESTS

Mr. Stephen Hamilton, 1016 W Broadway, asked if the commission packets were available online or if there is a listserv to get the information automatically. Mr. Hamilton commented that he has been in the Commission's seat before and know that serving is challenging and often thankless. Mr. Hamilton thanked the Commission for there willingness to serve.

A citizen read a portion on the Declaration of the Independence.

COMMISSIONER'S MINUTE

Commissioner Bowser asked that citizens walking the trail with pets to be cognizant of the wildlife and keep dogs on leashes.

Commissioner Shaver explained the commission asks for citizens names when speaking at the meeting because the Commissioners work for the citizens of Lewistown. Commissioner Shaver stated it is a courtesy to the Commission to give your name and address.

Commissioner Warren reported he has received emails regarding code enforcement in Ward I due to parking issues.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Buehler adjourned the meeting.

Dated this 18th day of May, 2026.

Danielle Buehler, Commission Vice Chairman

ATTEST:

Nikki Brummond, City Clerk