

Local Government Study Commission #5

Monday, January 8th, 2024 @ 5:30 PM

Council Chambers – City Hall

The meeting was called to order by DC Orr at 5:30 pm. The pledge of allegiance was performed.

The following members were present:

- DC Orr – Temporary Presiding Officer
- Vincent Backen
- Hugh Taylor – City Council Liaison
- Karen Dinkins

1. Timeline

- The initial discussion centered around the frequency of the meetings.
Motion to meet on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday every month was made by Karen Dinkins. Seconded by Vincent Backen. **Motion passed.**
- **Action Item:** DC Orr will have a draft timeline for the next meeting.

2. Budget Items

- Hiring a secretary for minutes and document creations was discussed. Vince read MCA 7-3-183. Vincent recommended we write a list of qualifications needed for the position. Calculating two meetings a month figure 8 hours for meetings and minutes as well as documentation preparation. Estimate of 40 hours per month with a pay rate of \$12 per hour. Qualifications to include computer skills including all the Microsoft Office products (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.) Hugh has a template application.
 - **Action Item:** DC Orr will write up qualifications and estimated hours per month. He will get the to Hugh Taylor who will have Charlotte/LeAnn have publish.
- Vincent Backen discussed MCA 7-3-181 Conduct of Business. Item 2 indicates the study commission shall maintain a written record of its proceedings and its finances. This record is open to inspection by a person at the office of the study commission during the office hours determined by the governing body by resolution after a public hearing and only if consented to by the presiding officer.
 - **Action Item:** Karen Dinkins will put together a 3-ring binder of Agendas and minutes that will be open for review at any time. Hugh Taylor will talk to LeAnn about the webpage as this would be an open record.
- DC Orr talked with the newspapers about cost. The Western News charges \$7.25 per column inch and the Montanian provided a list of sizes with rates. Also, election costs are part of the budget.
 - **Action Item:** Vincent Backen will talk with Melanie Howell (Election Administrator) about the cost of an election in June of 2026.
- DC Orr is currently the temporary presiding officer. The commission needs to vote on a permanent presiding officer. This will be on the next agenda.

3. Approve minutes

- DC Orr is currently the temporary presiding officer. The commission needs to vote on a permanent presiding officer. This will be on the next agenda.
- **Motion** to approve the minutes of the November 19th, November 25th, December 5th and December 18th, 2024, meetings. Seconded by Karen Dinkins. **Motion passed.**

Public Comment: John Bebee approves of the minutes.

4. Public Engagement

- The City Website was discussed earlier in the meeting.
- The Budget must be published within 90 days of the first meeting. Additionally, a public meeting must be held within 30 days of publishing the timetable.
- DC Orr requested time at the City council meeting to report on the work of the commission.

5. Bylaws

- The training session in Whitefish provided a template for bylaws.
 - **Action Item:** DC Orr will email the template for the bylaws to the commission members.
- The commission may adopt rules also.
- A presiding officer and a co-chair need to be voted on at the next meeting.

6. Charter Review

- A review of the Charter was initiated. Discussion began regarding the City Council agenda and the difficulty getting an agenda item on the agenda. MCA 2-2-135; 2-2-144 and 2-2-145 Retaliation were reviewed. An Ethics Committee should be established and included in the Charter.
 - **Action Item:** Each commission member will bring Ethics Committee suggestions to the next meeting.
- Vince Backen discussed Attorney General opinion 1995 Volume 46 Opinion #12 regarding Water rates.
- Hugh Taylor mentioned Council Policies & Procedures. Appointments to Boards & Commissions by majority vote of the Council should be considered.

Public Comment: John Bebee needs to look in every direction. Transparency is important and a review of the judicial branch is important. Charter 4.01. He suggested asking Melanie how many registered voters are in the City. John also can start a Facebook page for the Review Commission page in 5 minutes. This all goes back to Rules of session. First order of business should be to establish Rules & Bylaws.

General Comments from the commission and future agenda items: No general comments.

Motion to adjourn by Karen Dinkins. Second by DC Orr. **Motion passed.** The meeting adjourned at 7:26 pm.