

Government Study Review Commission Meeting

November 26, 2024 5:15 p.m.

Meeting minutes summary

IN attendance: Carolyn Dawes, Commission Member; Randy Mercer, Commission Member; Jason Stevenson, Commission Member; Jordan Knudson, Ex-Officio Member, Mayor Joe Purcell.

Meeting was called to order by Mayor Joe Purcell

First order of business established a temporary Presiding officer. The Commission appointed Carolyn Dawes as temporary Presiding Officer.

Next order of business was establishing by-laws to agree on at the next meeting. Suggestions made to find templates intended for by laws on the University website. Once examples are agreed upon in the next meeting. Electing more permanent officers for the commission will move forward.

Discussion on time for public comment on the meetings from the public. Allowing minutes of speaking time.

Review of the budget proposed and discussion of how money will be spent as the commission moves forward. Discussion on training needs, travel stipends for training, and supplies.

Discussion of adopting a timetable for the plan the study commission will follow that will need to be published to the public. The established time table is 90 days which is the end of February to publish the time table to the public.

Next meeting is scheduled for December 18th, 5:30 p.m at City Hall.

Meeting adjourned.

Hardin Local Government Review Study Commission

December 18, 2024 Meeting Minutes

At 5:30 p.m., Temporary Presiding Officer Carolyn Dawes called the meeting to order. Present were Commissioners Carolyn Dawes, Jason Stephenson and Randy Mercier. Also present was Jordan Knudsen, ex-officio member.

No members of the public were present for Public Comment.

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the previous meeting of November 26, 2024, and seconded. A voice vote was called, and the motion passed unanimously.

Dawes called up the first order of business, establishing bylaws. The commission discussed waiving formal parliamentary procedure to begin editing a basic template of proposed bylaws. A motion was made by Jason Stephenson to waive the procedure, which was seconded. A voice vote was called, and the motion passed. The commission then proceeded to edit the proposed bylaws, section by section, with 'friendly' amendments allowed. The proposed template being a set of bylaws from a water/sewer district, required numerous changes to titles and duties. The commission then discussed officer positions for the commission. The commission agreed that there should be four officers: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. After numerous edits, the draft of the proposed bylaws was approved for the next meeting.

Dawes then called the second agenda item, the election of permanent officers. Dawes was nominated to be the Chair. There were no other nominations, nominations were closed, and Dawes was elected to be Chair upon a voice vote. Jason Stephenson was nominated to be Vice-Chair. There were no other nominations, nominations were closed, and Stephenson was elected to be Vice-Chair by voice vote. Jordan Knudsen was nominated to be Secretary. There were no other nominations, nominations were closed, and Knudsen was elected Secretary by voice vote. Randy Mercier was nominated to be Treasurer. There were no other nominations, nominations were closed, and Mercier was elected Treasurer by voice vote.

Chair Dawes then called the third agenda item, the time table for official dates and publication. Stephenson suggested that due to the time spent on the bylaws, the commissioners should each take the time table home, and bring back proposals at the next meeting. The commissioners discussed further. Stephenson moved that each commissioner take the time table home and fill out proposed dates and return with the table at the next meeting. Dawes seconded the motion. A voice vote was called, and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioners then discussed the next meeting date. Knudsen reported that commissioners agreed at a previous meeting to have meetings on the third Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. The commission agreed that January 15, 2025 would be the next meeting date.

Stevenson moved to table the remaining items on the agenda until the next meeting. Mercier seconded the motion. A voice vote was called, and the motion passed unanimously.

Stephenson moved to adjourn. Mercier seconded. A voice vote was called, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Approved this 15th day of January, 2025.


Carolyn Dawes, Chairperson

Hardin Local Government Review Study Commission

February 19, 2025 Meeting Minutes

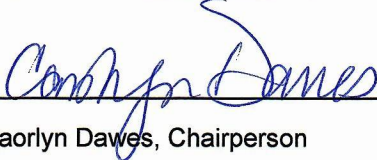
At 5:35 p.m., Chairperson Carolyn Dawes called the meeting to order. Present were Commissioners Carolyn Dawes, Randy Mercier.

No members of the public were present for Public Comment.

Carolyn stated that because there are only two commissioners present, Carolyn stated that she would reschedule the meeting to February 26, 2025 at 5:30. Randy agreed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:37 p.m.

Approved this 19 day of March, 2025



Carolyn Dawes, Chairperson

Hardin Local Government Review Study Commission

February 26, 2025 Meeting Minutes

At 5:47 p.m., Chairperson Carolyn Dawes called the meeting to order. Present were Commissioners Carolyn Dawes, Jason Stephenson and Randy Mercier. Also present was Jordan Knudsen, ex-officio member.

No members of the public were present for Public Comment.

Carolyn moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting of January 15, 2024, and Randy seconded. A voice vote was called, and the motion passed unanimously.

The Chair called up the first order of business, the timetable. Jason stated that he wanted Feb 19, 2025 changed to February 26, 2025 since the meeting was moved. Jason made a motion regarding that change, which was seconded by Randy. Voice vote called, passed unanimously. Publication will be done by Jason.

The discussion then turned to the meeting scheduled for March 19, 2025. Jason set he will get radio announcements done. Carolyn mentioned that people are reading posts, but there's not a lot of interest. Jason wants comments on what goals are so he has talking points for the radio. Carolyn asked how it would be best presented to the public at the public hearing. Randy suggested a printed handout. Carolyn wants to use one of the 15 minute phone calls to the MSU trainer. Randy and Jason agreed that Carolyn could do that. Carolyn stated that she will prepare for the presentation. Carolyn asked what should be put on the presentation. Randy suggested that the MSU trainer may already have something prepared that we could use. Jason stated that we need to show the public which direction committee is headed, and that may get more attention and participation. Carolyn suggested that commissioners get suggestions to Jason by March 7 so that Jason can use them on the radio.

Jason moved that the public hearing start at 6:30 p.m. March 19, following the 5:30 meeting. Randy seconded the motion, and a voice vote was called. The motion passed unanimously.

Jason suggested a special meeting before March 19 to prepare for public hearing. Much discussion was held on the idea. Randy suggested that we meet at 5:00 on March 19th to prepare. Carolyn agreed that everything could be done if we met starting at 5:00 p.m. on March 19. Jason moved to amend the start of the regular meeting to 5:00 on March 19, rather than 5:30 so that the commission could prepare for the public hearing at 6:30. Randy seconded. A voice vote was called, and the motion passed unanimously.

Carolyn stated that the hearing will be at city council chambers. Jason thanked everyone for moving the February 19 meeting to February 26.

Jason moved to adjourn the meeting. Randy seconded. A voice vote was called, and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

Approved this 19 day of March, 2025



Carolyn Dawes, Chairperson

Hardin Local Government Review Study Commission

March 19, 2025 Meeting Minutes

At 5:05 p.m., Chairperson Carolyn Dawes called the meeting to order. Present were Commissioners Carolyn Dawes and Randy Mercier. Also present was Jordan Knudsen, ex-officio member.

A member of the public was present, but no Public Comment was made.

Carolyn moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting of February 19, 2025, and Randy seconded. A voice vote was called, and the motion passed unanimously.

Carolyn moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting of February 26, 2025, and Randy seconded. A voice vote was called, and the motion passed unanimously.

Carolyn stated that the remaining time until the Public Hearing at 6:30 would be used to prepare for the hearing, and to work on her presentation.

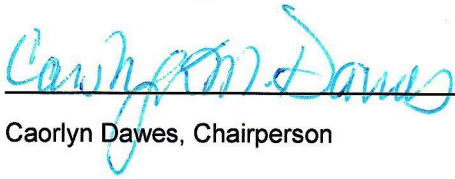
No further business was conducted, and Randy moved to adjourn. Carolyn seconded the motion. A voice vote was called, and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 5:09 p.m.

The commission members then worked on the presentation until the Public Hearing.

The Public Hearing was held at 6:30, and two members of the public attended. No additional business was conducted by the commission at the hearing.

Approved this 16th day of April, 2025



Carolyn Dawes, Chairperson

Hardin Local Government Review Study Commission

April 16, 2025 Meeting Minutes

At 5:41 p.m., Chairperson Carolyn Dawes called the meeting to order. Present were Commissioners Carolyn Dawes and Jason Stephenson. Randy Mercier was absent. Also present was Jordan Knudsen, ex-officio member.

No members of the public were present, and no public comment was made

Jason moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting, March 19, 2025, and it was seconded by Carolyn. A voice vote was called, and the motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 1, Discussion of Public Hearing, was called as the first order of business. Carolyn discussed possible future meetings with the Chief of Police, or other business owners to gather more input.

Jason reminded the commission that ordinances couldn't be changed.

Jason then discussed pending legislation in the Montana Legislature, and requested the changes to a self-governing form of government.

Carolyn and Jason discussed whether the commission should recommend a self-governing charges, or whether the recommendation should be to keep the same form as currently used.

Carolyn suggested inviting some city administrators to the next commission meeting.

Carolyn then suggested that the commission should recommend a self-governing charter government with the same mayor/council format.

Jordan and Jason and Jordan then discussed the differences and problems of self-governing versus general powers government.

Jason suggested that the chief of police position should be elected. After a brief review of the Montana Code, Jordan stated that he didn't think that position could be an elected position, but must be appointed.

Jason and Carolyn suggested that each meet with the Chief of Police, the Mayor, and other supervisors within the City to get additional input.

Jason stated that Randy should talk to the City Finance Officer, Carolyn should talk to the Chief of Police, and Jason volunteered to talk to the Mayor. Carolyn agreed.

Carolyn asked when the next meeting was scheduled, Jordan replied May 21, 2025.

No further business was conducted, and Jason moved to adjourn. Carolyn seconded the motion. A voice vote was called, and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

Approved this 21 day of May, 2025



Carolyn Dawes, Chairperson

Hardin Local Government Review Study Commission

May 21, 2025 Meeting Minutes

At 6:33 p.m., Chairperson Carolyn Dawes called the meeting to order. Present were Commissioners Carolyn Dawes and Randy Mercier. Also present was Jordan Knudsen, ex-officio member.

Three members of the public were present: George Real Bird III, AJ Espinoza and Harry Kautzman.

Public Comment: AJ Espinoza asked how many meetings the commission has had, and Jordan reported that this was the fifth meeting so far.

Randy moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting of April 16, 2025, and Carolyn seconded. A voice vote was called, and the motion passed unanimously.

Reports of outreach activities: Carolyn then reported that she did not get a hold of the Chief of Police, but had met with the Sheriff of Big Horn County. Carolyn reported on the Sheriff's opinion on government authority. Jason Stephenson was not present to report on his meeting with the Mayor of the City of Hardin

Next outreach activities: Carolyn stated that she has had no other responses from the public. Randy suggested mailers, and Carolyn supplemented with perhaps doing postcards. Carolyn suggested she may get a list of addresses of electors from the Big Horn County Election Office. Carolyn stated that she will call the MSU Local Government office to see how other cities have done mailers and surveys. Further discussion about what should be on the mailers, such as a QR code that leads to a survey, a website, or meeting dates. AJ Espinoza commented that something in the Original Briefs may be helpful to notify the public. Carolyn then discussed talking at a meeting of city council or the county commissioners to help spread information about the meetings. Jordan agreed that the Briefs would be a good idea, and that maybe the Briefs would print a QR code to a survey, rather than postcards. A question was raised about the commission's budget. Jordan informed the commission members that they had about \$14,000 allocated this fiscal year, and there's another fiscal year coming and the city council will decide how much to allocate during the upcoming budget meetings.

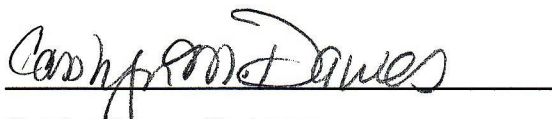
The commissioners then decided they needed a treasurers report to see how much money was left this year. Randy, the treasurer, will provide a treasurer's report at the next meeting.

The commissioners then suggested that they will report back at the next meeting on the costs of surveys, and who can develop them for the commission.

The next meeting is June 18, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

No further business was conducted, and Randy moved to adjourn. Carolyn seconded the motion. A voice vote was called, and the motion passed unanimously.

Approved this 18 day of June, 2025



Carolyn Dawes, Chairperson