

**THE COMMON COUNCIL  
CITY of HARDIN, MONTANA**

**PUBLIC HEARING:** Adoption of Updates and Revisions to the City of Hardin Subdivision Regulations was opened at 6:07 p.m. by Mayor Riley Ramsey.

Present at the hearing were:

Council Members: Steven Hopes, Clayton Greer, Chris Sharpe, George Toyne, and Jeremy Krebs

City Staff: Finance Officer/City Clerk Andrew Lehr, Public Works Director Michael Hurff, Jr., Deputy City Clerk Angela Zimmer, and City Attorney Jordan.

Also present physically and by virtual meeting: Several members of the public

Mayor Ramsey asked if there were any questions.

Corrina Kirschenmann-Kuntz reported Forrest Mandeville, Planning Advisor for the City-County Planning Board, is online to go over the draft Subdivision Regulations.

Knudsen commended Mr. Forrest Mandeville for going through them. He noted from his overview it does seem to be legally sufficient.

Greer asked about the age of mobile homes, 1976 is written in the regulations (page 6 of the draft); adding Council adopted a twenty- year limit. Mandeville noted it can be replaced.

Laurie Tschetter voiced her thoughts about the age of mobile homes than can be brought into the City and noted she thinks the twenty-year rule is a little bit outdated now.

Knudsen referenced City Code 11-1-2-36 subsection E.16 – 20 year limit on manufactured houses. The subdivision regulations and city code should match, be congruent. There was discussion about having read the document. Ramsey asked what supersedes what. Mandeville noted a clause can be put in if there is a conflict between the Subdivision Regulations and City Code that the City Code definition would trump it. Knudsen recommended to cover the entire set of regulations, not just the one problem on page 6. Generally, City code controls, Subdivision Regulations are secondary. Krebs asked if the City would have to have an additional public hearing if more time is needed to make the decision. Knudsen suggested it is not a minor change; if there is an amendment, it should be put on the next agenda to give the public a chance to review and make comment prior to the action item on the agenda.

Mayor Ramsey asked if there was any comments or questions. There being no further discussion, the Public Hearing adjourned at 6:22 p.m.

**COUNCIL MEETING: The Regular Council Meeting for January 6, 2026 was called to order at 6:30 p.m. with Mayor Riley Ramsey presiding by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.**

The following Aldermen were present: Steven Hopes, Clayton Greer, Chris Sharpe, George Toyne, and Jeremy Krebs. Antonio Espinoza was excused.

Also present: Finance Officer/City Clerk Andrew Lehr, Public Works Director Michael Hurff, Jr., and Deputy City Clerk Angela Zimmer, and City Attorney Jordan Knudsen. Police Chief Paul George, Jr. joined the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Also present physically and by virtual meeting: Several members of the public

**MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS & CLAIMS:** Sharpe made the motion to approve the Council minutes as written for December 16, 2025. Motion seconded by Hopes. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Greer made a motion to approve the claims for January 6, 2026.

	CLAIM No.	Monthly Total
October, 2025	33202	\$ 5,369.70
November, 2025	33203-33206, 33215-33216, 332	534,968.85
December, 2025	33200, 33207-33214, 33218-33219, 33241-33275	128,781.40
January, 2026	33220-33240	<u>2,355.12</u>
<b>Claims Total (Expenditures)</b>		<b>\$ 671,475.07</b>
December, 2025		<u>249,570.80</u>
<b>TOTAL Submitted</b>		<b>\$ 921,045.87</b>

Sharpe seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

**PUBLIC COMMENT: N/A**

**MAYOR:**

Mayor Ramsey read aloud a letter voicing he is excited about taking on the responsibility as Mayor of Hardin.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Personnel Policy/City Policy:**

Mayor Ramsey reported the City will be updating committee assignments.

**Sewer & Water:**

**Law Enforcement:**

**Streets & Alleys:**

Hopes reported Alley Clean Up started yesterday.

**Parks & Playgrounds:**

Krebs reported the City is currently waiting to hear back on the delivery and installation date for the pavilion. (Police Chief Paul George, Jr. joined the meeting.)

**Finance/Landfill:**

**Resolutions & Ordinances:**

**SPECIAL COMMITTEES:**

**PETITIONS & COMMUNICATIONS:**

Mayor Ramsey reported the City received information for Newly Elected Officials Training and a Newsletter form the Montana Department of Transportation.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS: N/A**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Council Committee Appointments were reviewed. Sharpe noted he would like to step down as the Chairperson for the Impact Fee Advisory Committee since he is no longer Chairperson for the Sewer and Water Committee. Krebs motioned to approve the following committee appointments (read by Mayor Ramsey): Hopes as Chairperson of **Sewer and Water, Streets and Alleys** – add Toyne, No change to **Resolutions or Ordinances, Landfill** – Replace Massine with George Toyne, **Law Enforcement** – add Toyne, **Parks and Playgrounds, Finance and City Policy Manual** – No Changes, and Sharpe is stepping down as Chairperson of the **Impact Fee Advisory Committee** with

Clayton Greer as new Chairperson and add Toyne. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Greer nominated Krebs as President of the Board. Greer motioned for approval. Sharpe seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Ramsey noted the City is a member of the 500 Club. Tina Toyne reported she attended the most recent meeting and the next meeting is January 12<sup>th</sup> at noon. Greer volunteered to be the City representative to attend the 500 Club meetings. Knudsen reported the intent is to have a standing committee for Economic Development upon Council approval. Sharpe motioned to create an Economic Development Committee with Toyne as Chairperson, Greer, and Hopes as standing members. Krebs seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Ramsey reported there was a Public Hearing on Draft City of Hardin Subdivision Regulations. Krebs motioned to table and look at it further. Toyne seconded. Corrina Kirschenmann-Kuntz noted Mandeville is available to go over the document either by phone or in person. Mandeville reported he used The Montana Association and Counties 2023 updated model document, making changes specific to the City of Hardin and updating to 2025 legislative changes. He provided a brief overview of subdivisions. There was further discussion about the draft. On a voice vote the motion passed. (4/1) Sharpe voting Nay.

Lehr reviewed the Sewer Loan, Resolution NO. 2425, for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Project. The loan from Rural Development (RD) will pay off the short-term State Revolving Fund (SRF) with the long-term fixed loan from RD that will be paid for forty years. This long-term loan is from the original round of funding from RD that was received in 2019. Krebs motioned to approve. Sharpe seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Ramsey reported three bids were submitted for Geotechnical report for the Visitor's Information Center site. Lehr reported the purpose of report is to test the soil conditions on the property. Big Horn County contributed \$15,000 to the project. His request is to go with SK Geotechnical, lowest bidder at \$9,200, for the project. Krebs motioned to approve the lowest bid of \$9,200 with SK Geotechnical. Greer asked about the travel fees. Sharpe noted there was a difference in the letter and the recommendation. Lehr noted he will have to look into it. Krebs withdrew his motion. Sharpe motioned to table the bids. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

### **STAFF REPORTS:**

#### **Public Works:**

Hurff reported: **Landfill** - The new water truck is being repaired under a safety recall and the County will be dumping the canisters at the canister site. **Water Treatment Plant** - They are working on intake meters; he received the Draft Preliminary Engineering Report adding copies will be available at his office for review; and the hill tank liner is doing good. Hurff reviewed a letter that was sent by the water treatment plant to all residents. He noted the letter was required to be sent by the state and referenced unregulated contaminants the state doesn't currently regulate. **Streets** - the crew has been working on the 300-gallon trash cans. The City has not currently received a bill from the County for the blacktop work that was done on Peritsa Creek. **Wastewater Treatment Plant** - Weekly meetings continue to be held on Tuesday mornings regarding the project. **Garbage** - The new garbage truck was repaired under a safety recall. **Parks** - The crew is working to replace broken benches and he is looking into concrete cornhole boards for South Park.

#### **Finance:**

Lehr reported the next pay application from Northcon, Inc. will be presented at the next meeting along with a change order for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Project. The City received \$15,000 from Big Horn County and money from the Pilot Grant for the Geotechnical report. The Lodge Grass Project is currently shut down for the winter season. The City will be applying for a Coal Board Grant to help pay for the Visitor Center and a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) grant to help pay for an updated Capital Improvement Plan. City applied for a Montana Coal Endowment Program (MCEP) grant to complement the CDBG. The city started the ClearGov program that will help with the budgeting process. Bamboo, the new HR software, is working really well; it provides easier access for people to apply for job positions.

**Police:**

Police Chief Paul George, Jr. reported the police department started their new reporting system mid-December; adding the new CAD and Central Square system is already paying for itself. He provided a review of how the system works. Chief George reviewed calls for service; he reported two candidates for Police Officer will go before the Police Commission; and one officer has resigned. There was discussion about the use, certifications, and training of the Police Department K-9.

**Legal:**

Knudsen reported there is a closed session at the end of the Council meeting. He reviewed a report he provided to Council of the amount of cases that came through City Court; eight hundred and eight-five cases in 2025. He noted it is due to the City Police Department; the investment and work with the Police Department has produced a large increase in the number of cases in City Court.

**Economic Development:**

Toyne reported her primary focus has been on coordination, planning, and reporting related to tourism and downtown development. She attended several meetings by zoom and in person. She attended the local 500 Club Meeting in Hardin and the Southeast Montana Tourism Board meeting in Forsyth, MT; and several zoom meetings that focused on tourism related topics that included wayfinding and the visitor center. Toyne reported she has been working on completing the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter report for the Montana Main Street Program and noted she will continue to support tourism initiatives, coordination efforts, and reporting responsibilities and updates as projects move forward.

**RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:**

**Resolution NO. 2425 – Relating to \$2,121,000 Sewer System Revenue Bond, Series 2026; Confirming the Issuance Therof and Security Therefor and Making Certain Designations and Covenants in Respect of the Bond.** The resolution was voted on in New Business. Krebs motioned to approve. Sharpe seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

**Resolution NO. 2426 – Granting A Certain Elected Official Authority to Sign for Bank Account and Certificates.** Greer motioned to approve the resolution. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

**Resolution NO. 2427 – Granting A Certain Elected Official Authority to Sign for Bank Account and Certificates.** Sharpe motioned to approve the resolution. Krebs seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

**Resolution NO. 2428 - Adopting the City of Hardin Subdivision Regulations, January 2026.** The resolution was tabled under New Business with Krebs motioning to table and look into it further. Toyne seconded. On a voice vote the motion passed. (4/1) Sharpe voting Nay.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Jose Funke, resident, asked questions about the Police Commission, a Police Policy Book, and Police Officer s. Knudsen and Police Chief Paul George, Jr. addressed the questions.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

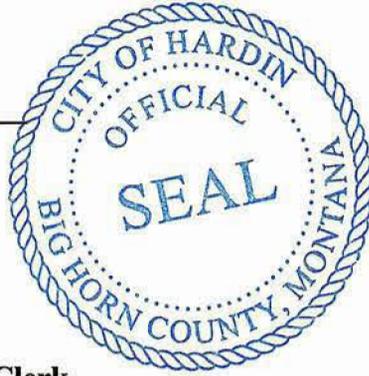
Mayor Ramsey reported Local Government Review Study Commission Meetings are held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month in Council Chambers; Letters of Interest to serve on the City-County Planning Board are due January 9, 2026; a City-County Planning Board Public Hearing for the Newcombe and Somes Variance is scheduled for Monday, January 12, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers; City Offices are closed Monday, January 19, 2026 for Martin Luther King Day; and Business Licenses are due by February 1, 2026. The City of Hardin has the following Job Openings: Full-time positions for Police Officers, Utility Billing Clerk/Cashier, and General Laborer - Landfill.

The Council Meeting Closed at 7:55 p.m. for a CLOSED SESSION – Legal.

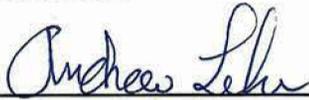
The Closed Session began at 8:02 p.m.

Greer motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

  
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Riley Ramsey, Mayor



ATTEST:

  
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Andrew Lehr, Finance Officer/City Clerk

**THE COMMON COUNCIL  
CITY of HARDIN, MONTANA**

**COUNCIL MEETING: The Regular Council Meeting for January 20, 2026 was called to order at 6:30 p.m. with Mayor Riley Ramsey presiding by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.**

The following Aldermen were present: Steven Hopes, Clayton Greer, Chris Sharpe, George Toyne, Antonio Espinoza and Jeremy Krebs.

Also present: Finance Officer/City Clerk Andrew Lehr, Public Works Director Michael Hurff, Jr., Deputy City Clerk Angela Zimmer, and City Attorney Jordan Knudsen. Police Chief Paul George, Jr. joined the meeting at 6:39 p.m.

Also present physically and by virtual meeting: Several members of the public

**MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS & CLAIMS:** Greer made the motion to approve the Council minutes as written for January 6, 2026. Motion seconded by Hopes. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved. Greer motioned to approve the Public Hearing minutes as written for January 6, 2026. Sharpe seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Greer made a motion to approve the claims for January 20, 2026.

	CLAIM No.	Monthly Total
October, 2025	33202	\$ 15.00
December, 2025	33217, 33276-33298, 33303 33333, 33335-33336	561,168.21
January, 2026	33299-33302, 33305-33311, 33331-33332	152,824.64
February, 2026	33312-33330	1,800.00
<b>TOTAL Submitted</b>		<b>\$ 715,807.85</b>

Hopes seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

**PUBLIC COMMENT: N/A**

**MAYOR:**

Mayor Ramsey noted the Council Committee Appointments will be corrected to have George Toyne as Chairperson of the Economic Development Committee.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Personnel Policy/City Policy:**

**Sewer & Water:**

Hopes reported he and Hurff took a tour of the Wastewater Treatment Plant to look at the hole in the ground; adding it looks like they are doing a good job there.

**Law Enforcement:**

**Streets & Alleys:**

Hopes reported the City crew is working on garbage cans and the dirt pile at the triangle is being moved down to the river when they get a chance and when it is dry.

**Parks & Playgrounds:**

**Finance/Landfill:**

**Resolutions & Ordinances:**

**SPECIAL COMMITTEES:**

**PETITIONS & COMMUNICATIONS:**

Mayor Ramsey reported the City received City-County Planning Board minutes from their meeting of December 8, 2025.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

Mayor Ramsey reported the Adoption of Updates and Revisions to the City of Hardin Subdivision Regulations was tabled at the last meeting. Greer noted he is not sure if the City Code addresses a minimum of five mobile homes in order to have mobile home park. The draft says two mobile homes could be a mobile home park. Knudsen noted he can look into it. It can be modified unless it is based on State Law. Greer motioned to adopt the updated version of the City Subdivision Regulations 2026. Sharpe seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved. (Police Chief Paul George, Jr. joined)

Lehr reported the updated letter for the Geotechnical Bids for the Visitor Center Site will match the bid from SK Geotechnical in the amount of \$9,200. Sharpe motioned to approve SK Geotechnical. Hopes seconded. Carole Fox asked where the money was coming from. Lehr noted Big Horn County contributed \$15,0000 to help the City pay for it and the additional funds came from the Pilot Grant. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Corrina Kirschenmann-Kuntz reported the Public Hearing for the Newcombe and Somes Variance Request was re-published and letters were sent to everyone. The variance would allow the existing homes to be rebuilt in the same footprint, subject to a condition that the property must remain in a single ownership and not be divided. Krebs asked Sarah Somes, relative of one of the applicants, questions. He noted the reason it was tabled is simply because not all neighbors around the property were notified; a requirement of City code. He asked Kirschenmann-Kuntz if all the neighbors within the required distance were properly notified and if there were any objections. She reported they were and there were not any objections. Krebs motioned to approve the Conditional Use Permit (Variance). Greer seconded. On a voice vote the motioned was unanimously approved.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Jeanne Torske, Big Horn County Attorney, was in attendance with Victoria Olson, Jail Commander, Kenny Rogers, Chief Detention Officer, George Real Bird III, County Commissioner, Michael Opie, Accountant, Larry Vandersloot, County Commissioner, and Sabrina Allred, Pre-Trial Misdemeanor Probation Officer to review a presentation for "Big Horn County Detention Center Update". Torske noted jail overcrowding is from the DOC, Department of Corrections, down to local. The County is talking about putting a new jail on the ballot in November; it is up to the Commissioner's to decide. She reviewed reasons why a new facility is needed; crime rate, capacity, design, condition, lack of fire suppression, etc. Torske encouraged everyone to take a tour of the jail. Olson provided additional information about the condition of the jail. Rogers, reviewed an incident, riot, that happened in 2020. Torske reported the Commissioners have talked about doing a regional facility with Carbon and Stillwater Counties. She noted a new facility will provide officer and community safety etc. Torske reviewed estimated costs to build a new facility; adding a new facility would be more cost effective compared to remodeling.

Olson reported the County has been working on starting a jail diversion program, Silver Beds Program. Instead of People being picked up for minor offenses, intoxication, etc. they would be brought to the facility. This will be a voluntary program. She noted the County will build off of this to do a detox center, inpatient /outpatient treatment, this is the first level. Torske added they are getting support from One Health and coordinating with the Hope Center. She noted the County would like to build a facility like they have in Rapid City; their program offers detox through inpatient/outpatient treatment.

Greer asked what the estimate cost to build a new jail was. Olson noted the estimates are eighty-six beds for thirty-eight million dollars and on hundred and sixty beds for fifty-nine million dollars. There was discussion about where a new jail would be built. Espinoza asked if they have looked into beds at the existing prison. Torske noted it is leased to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

There was more discussion about the Silver Beds Program. Knudsen noted the City does not arrest for public intoxication alone; there has to be another underlying offense. It was noted they can walk away anytime; it is voluntary. Toyne asked about how the loitering will be stopped outside of the facility; how will it be controlled. It was noted there will be a supervisor. Krebs noted it is something needed in town, just hopes it isn't abused. Real Bird III reported the County went to Pennington County, Rapid City, South Dakota to see their facility; the County Sheriff has a safe bed, a detox level, and residential treatment. He encouraged the Mayor and Council to visit the facility.

There was discussion about the costs of a contract the county had with Gallatin County; Olson noted it was not fiscally responsible to continue the contract. Mark Kuntz, resident, asked how many additional staff would be needed between the two different plans. Opie noted sixteen employees for the eighty-six beds and eighteen employees for the one hundred and sixty beds; the new design is very efficient and allows minimal staff to have control over the entire facility.

Hurff reported the City received the bill from Big Horn County for the blacktop on Peritsa Creek in the amount of \$30,595.32. He reviewed the scope of the project. Hopes motioned to approve. Krebs seconded. On a voice vote the motion passed. (5/1) Espinoza abstained.

Greer motioned to approve Pay Application #6 from Northcon, Inc. in the amount of \$521,507.25 for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades. Greer motioned to approve. Espinoza seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Greer motioned to approve Change Order #2 from Northcon, Inc. in the amount of \$71,800. The change order was due to cleanup activities that resulted from a sewage spill during upgrades. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Ramey reported Randy Koehn submitted a letter requesting to have the sewer portion of his January utility bill waived, in the amount of \$1,080.15. Hurff reported he would still pay for the water; the break was underneath a gravel road next to a field and he believes it went into the field and dissipated into the ground. Toyne motioned to waive it. Greer seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Matt Smith, PE, PMP, Senior Engineer with Stahly Engineering & Associates, Inc. provided a review of the AE2S Report and Preliminary Engineering Reporting Evaluating the Water System. He reviewed there were modifications, three projects were added within the Industrial Subdivision; I-90 water main connection, Highway 47 water main connection and Railroad watermain connection. There is a priority to do a water main extension near the high school that will increase water for fire supply in that area. He reviewed the amount of treated water that is lost in the plant and within the water distribution system. Smith voiced the water system is in really good shape; the first sentence in the report from AE2S is "this is an excellently maintained system".

Alexandria Edwards, Project Manager for the City of Hardin, reported the City put out a Request for Qualifications for a General Contractor/Construction Manager (GCCM) for Visitor Information Center. The City received two proposals; Langlas & Associates and Jackson Contractor Group. She reported Steering Committee Members from the Big Horn Tourism Breakthrough Project evaluated and scored the submissions. There were follow up interviews with each company and Langlas & Associates scored higher. The recommendation is to move forward with Langlas & Associates. Knudsen asked if there was a contract/agreement. Lehr reported there is not a contract now, this is only for the pre-construction portion. Knudsen voiced his concerns with having qualifications, but no proposal. Lehr reported the not to exceed price for Pre-Construction for Langlas & Associates is \$12,000. There was further discussion about the project. Knudsen noted the scope of what was proposed it to help with the bidding process; they will not be the general contractor awarded the bid. Edwards confirmed. Lehr noted they will have the opportunity to bid on the actual contract to do the construction. Vandersloot voiced his recommendation to hire an owners' representative to oversee the project; noting his experience with GCCM projects for the County where architects and contractors work together. Smith, of Stahly Engineering, recommended the City have a representative on board as soon as a contractor is selected. Sharpe motioned to approve Langlas & Associates General Contractors. Toyne seconded. Smith provided the process of how a GCCM works and provided an example; adding they provide advice on the most cost- effective way to build and they put out the bid packets for the individual bids. He noted they, Stahly, like GCCM contracts. On a voice vote the motion passed. (5/1) Espinoza voting Nay.

**STAFF REPORTS:**

**Public Works:** N/A

**Finance:**

Lehr reviewed the Quarterly Investment Report for the First Interstate Bank Investment Account.

Lehr reported the quarterly report for the Lodge Grass Project has been turned in; the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding was extended to the end of June 2026 for the project; and he reviewed the remaining funds available from ARPA. The City will be putting a Healthcare Request for Qualifications out to bid in the next few weeks and the ClearGov program is close to going live.

**Police:**

Police Chief Paul George, Jr. reviewed calls for service. He reported the K-9 was deployed on a call. Officers Stafford and Jake Kinder completed Field Officer Training and are certified. The Police Commission meeting that was scheduled for last week had to be cancelled; there are currently two candidates that will go before the Commission. There was discussion about training and procedures.

**Legal:**

Knudsen reported there several members of the Local Government attended a meeting with Big Horn County about Rocky Mountain Power (RMP) back taxes. They currently owe \$5.9 million in total; they offered to settle their tax bill in the amount of approximately \$640,000. The offer was rejected by the County and City. Knudsen reported he met with the Big Horn County Attorney's Office to discuss which entity is ultimately responsible for making the decision to forgive the taxes. He noted there was not a clear direction from those meetings, but believes Big Horn County or the Montana Department of Revenue are responsible because the City does not have any taxing authority. It was reported the next meeting is scheduled for February 24th at 10:30 a.m.

**Economic Development:** N/A

**RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:**

**Resolution NO. 2428 - Adopting the City of Hardin Subdivision Regulations, January 2026.** Greer motioned to approve the resolution. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

**Resolution NO. 2429 – Adopting the Preliminary Engineering Report Evaluating the Water System for the City of Hardin.** Sharpe motioned to approve the resolution. Espinoza seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

**Resolution NO. 2430 – Authorizing Submission of Montana Department of Commerce Coal Board Application in Support of the Purchase of a Dump Truck.** Greer motioned to approve the resolution. Espinoza seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

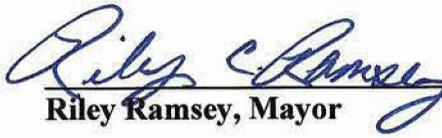
**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

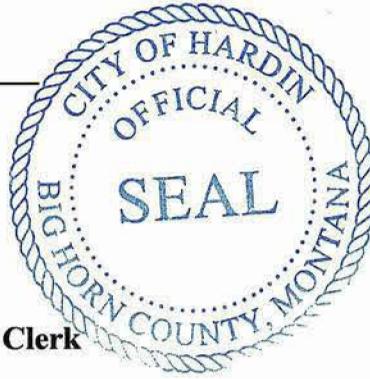
Jose Funke, resident, questioned why he was not selected for the City-County Planning Board.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

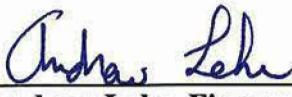
Mayor Ramsey reported a meeting for the Local Government Review Study Commission Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 21, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.; Business Licenses are due by February 1, 2026; and Letters of Interest to serve on the City-County Planning Board has been re-opened and are due on February 4, 2026. The City of Hardin has the following Job Openings: Full-time positions for Police Officers, Utility Billing Clerk/Cashier, and General Laborer - Landfill.

Greer motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

  
Riley Ramsey, Mayor



ATTEST:

  
Andrew Lehr, Finance Officer/City Clerk

**THE COMMON COUNCIL  
CITY of HARDIN, MONTANA**

**COUNCIL MEETING: The Regular Council Meeting for February 3, 2026 was called to order at 6:30 p.m. with Mayor Riley Ramsey presiding by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.**

The following Aldermen were present: Steven Hopes, George Toyne, Clayton Greer, Jeremy Krebs, Antonio Espinoza. Chris Sharpe was excused.

Also present: Finance Officer/City Clerk Andrew Lehr, Public Works Director Michael Hurff, Jr., Attorney Jordan Knudsen, Economic Development Director Tina Toyne and Police Chief Paul George, Jr.

Also present physically and by virtual meeting: Several members of the public

**MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS & CLAIMS:** Mayor Ramsey reported there is a correction on the minutes of the Council meeting for January 20, 2026. The minutes have “silver beds” listed, it should be “sober beds.” Hopes motioned to approve the minutes for January 20, 2026, with the correction. Motion seconded by Greer. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Greer made a motion to approve the claims for January 20, 2026.

	CLAIM No.	Monthly Total
December, 2025	33354-33355, 33360, 33380-33382	\$ 111,469.72
January, 2026	33338-33353, 33356-33357, 33361-33379	66,637.07
February, 2026	33358-3335	<u>575.12</u>
<b>TOTAL Submitted</b>		<b>\$ 178,681.91</b>

Hopes seconded. George Toyne voiced that the City is paying a lot for camera rent in the vehicles and interview room and asked if there was an option to purchase that equipment. Chief George believes the equipment is owned, but the unlimited storage and maintenance is all covered in the agreement. Chief George stated that if anything happens (to the equipment) it would all be covered under the agreement and be replaced. Toyne voiced that it just seems like \$30,000 is a lot and doesn't include the body cameras. Chief George noted that the storage is all covered, while others charge ala carte and charge for storage. The license plate readers (LPRs) are also included in this. Body cameras get a refresh every few years that come with the cost. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

**PUBLIC COMMENT: N/A**

**MAYOR:**

Mayor Ramsey reported that the City will be working with the County to further discuss dispatch and open the discussions again. Prior to the next Council meeting, there will be a Law Enforcement Committee Meeting at 6:00p.m., two County Commissioners plan to attend.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Personnel Policy/City Policy:**

**Sewer & Water:**

Hopes reported that the Lift Station is doing good. Water Plant is running alright. Toyne commented there was a discrepancy on the survey of the land at the waste water plant. There was discussion on who would be responsible for paying for that service. It was determined that Stahly and HDR will absorb that cost.

**Law Enforcement:**

Espinoza reported there will be a Law Enforcement Meeting prior to the next Council meeting at 6:00 p.m.

**Streets & Alleys:**

Hopes reported that potholes are currently being fixed. The triangle is being cleaned up. The millings pile will be removed this Spring, during warmer weather. City staff have been putting garbage cans together.

**Parks & Playgrounds:**

Krebs reported pavilion manufacturing is now complete; they will deliver the building Monday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>. They will need a telescopic handler, which we were aware was needed. The City is paying for that equipment. It will be installed the week of February 23<sup>rd</sup>. LumberZacs provided a price to rent the necessary equipment when the South Project began, since it has changed ownership, and will need to contact the new owners to obtain the current price and if renting the equipment is feasible.

**Finance/Landfill:**

**Resolutions & Ordinances:**

**Economic Development:**

**SPECIAL COMMITTEES:**

**PETITIONS & COMMUNICATIONS:**

Mayor Ramsey reported there is a document in the packet from the Montana Liquid and Gas Pipeline Association regarding Tactical Pipeline Response Training.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** N/A

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Lehr reported the Sewer System Revenue Bond, Series 2026 is the formal paperwork for the City to move the current interim State Revolving Fund (SRF) Loan to the 40-year RD fixed-loan. The resolution was approved at a prior Council meeting. Hopes motioned to adopt the Sewer System Revenue Bond, Series 2026 – Rural Development (RD), seconded by Greer. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Lehr reviewed Northcon, Inc. Pay Application #7 in the amount of \$508,547.16 for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Project. Krebs motioned to pay Northcon, Inc. Pay App #7 in the amount of \$508,547.16. Espinoza seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved. Krebs exited the meeting.

Lehr reviewed the IMEG Services Agreement (Wayfinding) - \$14,000. The City of Hardin completed the Wayfinding Plan in 2024; however, it did not include defined documentation to hand to a sign company to fabricate the signage. The City of Hardin received a grant from the Montana Main Street program in the amount of \$40,000 for sign installation this year. Toyne made a motion to approve the IMEG Services Agreement (Wayfinding) in the amount of \$14,000, seconded by Espinoza. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Lehr reviewed the GPS Audio Tour Platform Proposal - \$19,825. The City of Hardin received a grant from the Montana 250 Commission in the amount of \$20,000 to develop an audio tribute to locations within the county. Two companies provided proposals. Open Audio Tour reflects a lower price but is unable to provide audio equipment. TravelStorysGPS has worked with DestinationiQ in the past and was recommended to conduct this project. Greer made a motion to approve GPS Audio Tour Platform Proposal – TravelStorysGPS in the amount of \$19,825, seconded by Hopes. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Knudsen reviewed the Hardin Visitor Info Center – Contractor Contract. Knudsen shared that Alexandria and himself met with Cushing Terrell to further discuss this contract. Cushing Terrell had a concern that Langlas has not provided a General Contractor Construction Manager fee percentage for Phase 1 costs. Knudsen also has concerns about the listed language in A133 and A201, as they are not aligned. Jason Hubbard shared that Cushing Terrell, City of Hardin, and Langlas have scheduled a meeting to further understand the scope of Phase 1. With that information, Langlas can provide a fee amount. Jason stated that Langlas will accommodate language in A133 and A201 as requested. Knudsen recommended to table the discussion. Hopes motioned to table the Hardin Visitor Info Center – Contractor Contract, seconded by Greer. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Lehr reviewed the 2025 Annual Financial Report (AFR). The General Fund ended fiscal year 2025 with a total fund balance of \$1,797,000. This represents a reserve compared to actual expenditures of 16 months. Lehr also reviewed metrics related to financial performance, such as the amount of times current assets can pay current liabilities in the larger funds. Lehr reviewed the statement of cash flows in the proprietary funds, noting that each fund had positive cash flows from operations with the exception of the water fund. Greer motioned to approve the 2025 Annual Financial Report (AFR), seconded by Hopes. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

### **STAFF REPORTS:**

#### **Public Works:**

Hurff reported that the compactor was down at the landfill for a bit. CAT performed computer work on it, while City staff were able to perform maintenance. The landfill plans to burn the tree pile in early February; permits have been secured. The County has been by to dump the canister site, appearing to be taken care of. The Water Treatment Plant meter is running again. Hurff noted this will need to be upgraded in the near term and will need to be budgeted. The electrician looked through the cabinetries in the intake building. The newer air compressor is being serviced at the river intake. Trevor is obtaining quotes for a different type of motor for the compressor. Hurff noted pothole fillings have begun. Three garbage trucks are running. Hurff noted the guys cut down tree limbs that public works were concerned about following the recent windstorms. Water Distribution Pump House – pumps have been adjusted and are pumping at the max rate. The rotating assembly is expected to be replaced in February, and inventory has been evaluated. Espinoza commented that the pit looks nice and asked if the Public Works Superintendent has attended training in the past. MACRS is offered to Public Works Departments. March 30<sup>th</sup> – April 2<sup>nd</sup> in Great Falls. This is available to City and County governments.

#### **Finance:**

Lehr reported that two Coal Board Grants have been submitted, one for the Visitor Information Center construction costs and another for a City Dump Truck. Currently working on a METAP Grant for the Volunteer Fire Department to purchase equipment. Waste Water Project in May plan to close SRF A and B and the next RD Loan. Lehr stated there is no update from the Lodge Grass Project as they are in winter shutdown.

#### **Police:**

Police Chief Paul George, Jr. reported there have been 668 calls for service in the past 30 days. Security checks at 213, traffic stops 138, improperly parked vehicles 29, welfare checks 25, intoxicated subjects 17. Officer Welch is in Helena for Active Shooter training; the course is free. Police Officer applicant was approved by Police Commission during the meeting. Officer Garcia started academy training on Monday. Have seen an increase in DUI's. Intend to provide 2025 stats during the next council meeting.

#### **Legal:**

#### **Economic Development:**

Toyne reported the Pilot Tourism Grant Steering Committee continues to meet monthly, and project meetings continue. Toyne will be attending the Visit Southeast Montana Meeting, virtually, this month. City of Hardin was awarded \$40,000 through the Montana Main Street Program for Wayfinding Implementation Phase 1 and \$20,000 through the Montana 250 Commission for a Big Horn County Audio Tour. Toyne attended the 2026 Economic Outlook Seminar and plans to report during a future council meeting.

**RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Al Sargent shared a history of the 500 Club and plans for this year's club entertainment, during the Little Bighorn Days celebration in June. The 500 Club is planning to have the Oak Ridge Boys perform this year's entertainment. Al is encouraging the City of Hardin to consider being a 500 Club Member in 2026. The cost is \$500 to be a member. The City was a member in 2025; membership dues are coming up in March. The next 500 Club Meeting is 2/9 at 12:00 p.m. noon at the Sargent Center; anyone is welcome to attend. A community member shared that Forsyth didn't want to charge for their fair entertainment, but they did start charging and now they get big names with the money they acquire.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Mayor Ramsey reported the Local Government Review Study Commission Meeting is on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month, located in the Council Chambers. February time is to be determined. Business and Pet Licenses are due by February 1, 2026. Letters of Interest to serve on the City-County Planning Board are due February 4, 2026. Hardin Community Blood Drive at First Alliance Church on February 5, 2026. The Local Impact Fee Advisory Committee has opened letters of interest for a community member to serve on that committee. The City of Hardin has the following Job Openings: Full-time positions for Police Officers and General Laborer.

Greer motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:29 p.m. Espinoza seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

  
Riley Ramsey, Mayor



ATTEST:

  
Andrew Lehr, Finance Officer/City Clerk

**THE COMMON COUNCIL  
CITY of HARDIN, MONTANA**

**COUNCIL MEETING: The Regular Council Meeting for February 17, 2026 was called to order at 7:01 p.m. with Mayor Riley Ramsey presiding by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.**

The following Aldermen were present: Steven Hopes, George Toyne, Clayton Greer, Jeremy Krebs, Chris Sharpe, Antonio Espinoza.

Also present: Finance Officer/City Clerk Andrew Lehr, Public Works Director Michael Hurff, Jr., Economic Development Director Tina Toyne, Attorney Jordan Knudsen and Police Chief Paul George, Jr.

Also present physically and by virtual meeting: Several members of the public

**MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS & CLAIMS:** Greer made the motion to approve the Council minutes as written for February 3, 2026. Motion seconded by Hopes. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved, Sharpe abstained.

Greer motioned to approve the Closed Meeting minutes for February 3, 2026. Motion seconded by Hopes. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved, Sharpe abstained.

Greer made a motion to approve the claims for February 17, 2026.

	CLAIM No.	Monthly Total
December, 2025	33409	\$ 90.00
January, 2026	33383-33390,33392-3394,33397-33408 33411-33423, 33431	70,737.29
February, 2026	33391,33395,33410,33424-33430	<u>2,877,087.02</u>
Claims Total (Expenditures)		<b>2,947,914.31</b>
January, 2026		<u>361,764.54</u>
<b>TOTAL Submitted</b>		<b>\$ 3,309,678.85</b>

Chris seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

**PUBLIC COMMENT: N/A**

**MAYOR:**

Mayor Ramsey reported that he has a desire to get the dispatch agreement moving.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Personnel Policy/City Policy:**

**Sewer & Water:**

Hopes reported concrete work was performed today and will continue.

**Law Enforcement:**

Espinoza reported a Law Enforcement Meeting was held at 6:00 p.m. today.

**Streets & Alleys:**

Hopes reported garbage cans will have to be tracked down with the wind today. Mike will share more information during his report.

**Parks & Playgrounds:**

Krebs reported a corn hole equipment bid was provided in the packet, and will be discussed. The pavilion is scheduled to be installed next Monday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>. Randy Koehn has agreed to let the city use the Telehandler. This should be done by end of next week.

**Finance/Landfill:**

**Resolutions & Ordinances:**

**Economic Development:**

**SPECIAL COMMITTEES:**

**PETITIONS & COMMUNICATIONS:**

Mayor Ramsey reported there are documents in the packet from Montana Municipal and an MMIA Newsletter. City County Planning Board Minutes are included in the packet.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** N/A

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Mayor Ramsey reported several letters of interest for the City/County Planning Board position were received. Mayor Ramsey recommended Karleen Pitsch to the City/County Planning Board. Krebs motioned to vote Karleen Pitsch on the City/County Planning Board. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Krebs presented equipment to be purchased for the South Park Project, Lockwood Pre-cast cornhole boards for a price of \$5,712.50. The cornhole boards will be concrete, won't run off and hopefully won't be destroyed. There will be four sets, including pavers. They are 2x2 concrete on each side so people aren't walking on the grass. The slab will be large enough that players will not have to throw from the grass, but will be on the concrete slab. Krebs reported in his research a cornhole board was \$1,700 plus shipping. The recommended supplier to purchase from is located in Lockwood, MT. Lockwood Precast will deliver for \$312.00, Krebs voiced that was a reasonable amount. Lockwood Precast can't place the cornhole boards exactly where we need them, as they would be driving on the grass. They weigh 600 pounds per corn hole board. Krebs reported that he and Hurff have talked about excluding the horseshoe pits, since there is horseshoe pits currently installed at South Park. Further, excluding horseshoes being thrown near where kids are playing in the water will be safer for the community. It was confirmed there is enough money in the budget to purchase at \$5,712.50. Krebs motioned to purchase the Cornhole Boards from Lockwood Pre-Case, seconded by Hopes. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved. It was noted that funding for this project is through a grant. There is a \$150k grant from Land Water Conservation funds, therefore no general funds will be used. With this purchase, the project is under budget and may be able to fund other items in the park. Fox asked can we get a grant for our streets. Lehr was noted that only a certain amount of funding from the State from Gas Tax is provided to the City for street improvements. There aren't typically grants for just streets, unless the City is interested in taking on more debt. Land Water Conservation funds are typically tied to public areas and parks. The signage at the park will include who the project was funded by. Krebs noted he believes that kids will appreciate the items being installed.

Knudsen reported on the Big Horn Hospital Detainee Hospital Bill in the amount of \$89,943.22. Knudsen discussed the jail has a policy stating an inmate must be medically cleared before entering the jail. Knudsen also provided some history of the situation: for the past 3 years the hospital has been sending medical bills to the City. The majority of them included pre-existing conditions that were chronic or other. Sometimes the City gets a medical bill for a couple hundred and sometimes it is \$3,000 - 5,000. The City met with the county in November 2025 and met with the hospital at the same time. The Hospital didn't understand what the parameters where, and have since defined them. The Hospital has a policy that if someone complains of chest pains, they must administer care. This is where there is conflict of law. MT Law states pre-existing condition, the City does not pay. This leads to question who is responsible to pay. Generally, it makes sense to that individual or their insurance. Federal Law, which applies to the hospital, states if someone arrives in the company of Law Enforcement, that cannot be charged to Medicaid or IHS. We are at cross-roads at State Law (City) and Federal Law (Hospital). The discussion in November was it's not fair to the Hospital or the City to pay these charges. The Hospital offer is the following:

There is an outstanding bill of \$89k, the Hospital has asked the City to pay 53 percent of that bill, as that is the current agreement the Hospital holds with Big Horn County. That percentage has been extended to June 30, 2026, at which time it will need to be negotiated. Knudsen noted the first presented bill had many more charges; it has since been cleaned up. The outstanding bill is not a bill to or for the City, it is an outstanding bill for charges over the past 3 years. Knudsen stated the City is not obligated to pay this outstanding balance. Lehr reported that \$25,000 was budgeted in the Grants and Contributions line item in the Public Safety Fund, which is not enough to cover the current outstanding balance. George expressed utilizing the Police Department budget would not be preferred. Espinoza agreed, reporting that the Chief budgeted for the Police Department based on needs of the department to function throughout the year. Knudsen shared the jail does not have the authority to impose this on the Sheriff's Office or the City Police Department, they cannot shut the door on either department. Discussion regarding alternative funds to pay the balance was discussed. Krebs suggested the City return to the Hospital with a counter, stating \$25,000 was budgeted, that is the only amount the City has available to pay this balance. Knudsen explained the County did share they received a bill with the 53 percent deduction and they agreed to pay it. Services at alternative locations, such as One Health and IHS were discussed. The Hardin Police Department can go onto the reservation with an arrested individual, but cannot legally go off the reservation, which eliminates IHS as an option, and One Health is not available all day. George explained there was discussion at the County level to potentially use the County Health Nurse or obtain an in-house nurse. Knudsen explained the timeline with the hospital, given discussion regarding the 3-year accrual of bills. Edwards asked does this obligate the City to future payments if it is paid now. Knudsen shared there is no language committing the City to future bills. There is language that says it will be accepted until June 2026, but that is it. Krebs motioned to offer \$25,000, as that is what has been budgeted for, Hopes seconded. On a voice vote, the motioned passed. (5/1) Espinoza voting Nay.

Hurff reported on the Landfill Compactor Repair at \$12,936.89. The City had a repairman work on the compactor. Greer and Hurff requested a discount and the company verbally agreed to \$2,000 if paid in a timely manner. It was not provided in writing in time for the meeting, but the City can look forward to a \$2,000 discount. Toyne motioned to authorize payment for up to \$12,936.89, with authority for Hurff to negotiate for a lower price. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote, the motioned was unanimously approved.

Lehr reported on the Cash Pledge Report. End of December 2025, main Checking Account \$59,321. City Court \$30,941.10. Flex Account \$3,536.37. First Interstate CDs \$2,006,576.76. Enough to cover \$3.5M and \$6.3M in pledge for those accounts. Landfill Trust does not require a pledge, but the combined accounts were \$1.6M. \$3.2M in the Main Investment Account, which is covered by the US Government and does not require a pledge. US Bank Trustee Accounts \$360,000. \$250,000 is covered by FDIC. \$87,017.45 covered by the Surety Bond that covers the Trustee amounts over FDIC. Little Horn State Bank – Lehr will discuss with LHSB at the end of the quarter. There is \$1,700,000 that needed to be covered by a pledge or a letter of credit. About \$50,000 short for what is covered. Otherwise, all other accounts were covered by Pledge or FDIC at the end of December. Hopes motioned to approve the Cash Pledge Report as presented, Greer seconded. On a voice vote, the motioned was unanimously approved.

Lehr reported on the Quarterly Financial Report. The report was created in the ClearGov program. The report typically takes Lehr 3-4 days to prepare, this format took 3 hours to complete. Data had to be sent to ClearGov, then it's imported into the system and cleaned up by ClearGov. Lehr explained each of the accounts included in the report, what has been received and what is still expected, versus the budgeted amount. Greer motioned to approve the Quarterly Financial Report as presented, seconded by Hopes. On a voice vote, the motioned was unanimously approved.

## **STAFF REPORTS:**

### **Public Works:**

Hurff reported the picnic tables for South Park will be put together soon, with the gazebo being installed next week. Streets have been helping the landfill with the ash road and have completed removing material from the triangle. All 3 garbage trucks are running. The landfill burned the tree pile earlier this month and the compactor is running great. There are 7 curb stops on the repair list for the Curb Stop Program and the program is still working great for the residents

Waste Water – Hurff met with Dax last week and created a Work Change Directive for the waste water project. It was proposed to utilize 3 In-House 14-inch HMI Monitors that cost \$1,000-

\$1,200 each. The spec sheet calls for an Allen-Bradley 10-inch for \$8,000-\$10,000 each. 3 screens for Allen-Bradley come up to \$24,000. If In-Control In-House 14-inch monitors are used, the total would be around \$3,000. With the In-House screens, we can replace with a cheaper option, instead of Allen-Bradley. The Plant PLCs will remain on Allen-Bradley software, regardless of the data system. Additionally, Councilman Toyne and the City Staff met on February 17<sup>th</sup> with the Project Team. They are pouring concrete down there. Plan to have concrete work done by St. Patrick's Day. Hurff reported there were rebar inspection issues, Stahly pushed back and is working to get that remedied. A discussion on stainless steel sleeves also occurred, Stahly will have a sit-down meeting on that topic. A couple RFIs on the UV building from the contractor.

Water Treatment had an In-Control inspection at the Water Plant. The City has a contract for In-Control for regular inspections. Hurff reported the checklist and recommendations from the inspection. Received a letter from DEQ, stating the City needs to continue to monitor for Total Organic Carbon. The City is currently in compliance, no extra sample costs at this time. Wastewater Treatment Plan anticipating compressor issues, will bring quotes to a future council meeting.

Montana State AWOUA Regulations nominated Trevor Lutt for the Operators Momentous Award.

Espinoza asked if the City sold the millings, located on the triangle. Hurff explained he contacted CJ Yochum, and was told the pile wasn't worth anything. Jason Gasvoda was contacted, he shared they aren't worth anything, but may be able to haul them off at no charge.

Hopes asked if the broken concrete benches at the parks will be replaced. Hurff explained when summer help returns, those benches will be changed out or replaced in the parks.

**Finance:**

Lehr reported the Lodge Grass Project is still in winter shutdown and reviewed funding expended on the project as of December. The City has received funding from Rural Development to make the payment to U.S. Bank for the SRF Interim Loan. The City received \$15,000 from MCEP (Montana Coal Endowment Program) towards the Water PER, the remaining balance was paid by ARPA money. Received \$45,000 from the Eastern Montana Initiative (EMI) Grant which was used to make updates to the depot. Total project included additional funds from the County and the City. The City was awarded \$30,000 from the MCEP Planning grant to partially fund a Capital Improvement Plan. The AFR was accepted by the State. January property taxes received were \$774,605, most of which is TIFD (Tax Increment Finance District).

**Police:**

Police Chief Paul George, Jr. reported over the last 30 days 664 calls for service. Security Checks 220, Traffic Stops 130, Improperly Parked Vehicles 34, Welfare Checks 23. Federal Funded Single-Man Traffic Unit goes into service February 23<sup>rd</sup>. Offer Stafford was selected to the SHADE Unit "Strategic Highway and Aggressive Driving." Being Federally funded, Officer Stafford will educate the public on safe driving habits, enforce DUI laws, reduce DUI and collision rates and enforce traffic laws. The State has approved the Police Department to purchase the equipment that was requested through that grant, which included nine Preliminary Breath Tests (PBTs). Chief wrote a letter to the State, regarding the speed message trailer. It was accepted with no corrections; the State has drafted a letter to the Federal Government. The trailer will capture motorist data, which Officer Stafford will download and utilize for his traffic study and enforcement.

Chief reported the State has mandated that every Police Department in the State of Montana utilize the Step Overtime form, created by the Chief, and the process in which Drew maintains the finances.

Chief explained roadblocks that have been encountered with graffiti abatement in using individuals on probation, related to Worker's Comp Coverage. The solution is to work with students at the High School who are seeking community service hours. Chief is developing a form to be utilized and Officer Stafford is developing a plan to cover the graffiti. Seeking to collect donations for the equipment, otherwise will be paid for through the Code Enforcement department. There will be some Officer overtime due to supervision. Dollar General is working with their

management to abate graffiti on the back of the building with a mural, which will be done by students. Council discussed the cost of labor through the jail and the roadblocks within that model.

**Legal:**

**Economic Development:**

**RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Hardin High School Indian Club – inviting the City of Hardin to be a partner for the upcoming community powwow on May 10, 2026 at the Hardin High School Gym. Seeking donations in any form. Recognition: Poster placement (business name and logo), verbal recognition during sponsor announcements and potential Tax Credit benefit. Please make checks payable to Hardin High School Indian Club Powwow. 721 N Miles Ave. Hardin, MT 59034. For questions, please contact Club Sponsor Robyn Shield 406-606-2749.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Mayor reported the Local Government Review meetings are the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month. Business and Pet Licenses were due 2/1. Impact Fee Advisory Committee – receiving letters of interest through 2/18.

Law Enforcement Committee Meeting – Friday 2/20 at 5:45pm at the City Council Chambers. Planning an additional meeting on Thursday 2/26 at 9am (tentative).

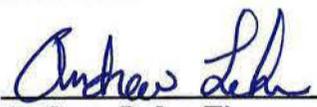
The City of Hardin has the following Job Openings: Full-time positions for Police Officers.

Greer motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 p.m. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

  
Riley Ramsey, Mayor



**ATTEST:**

  
Andrew Lehr, Finance Officer/City Clerk

**THE COMMON COUNCIL  
CITY of HARDIN, MONTANA**

**COUNCIL MEETING: The Regular Council Meeting for March 3, 2026 was called to order at 6:30 p.m. with Mayor Riley Ramsey presiding by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.**

The following Aldermen were present: Steven Hopes, George Toyne, Clayton Greer, Jeremy Krebs, Antonio Espinoza. Chris Sharpe was excused.

Also present: Finance Officer/City Clerk Andrew Lehr, Public Works Director Michael Hurff, Jr., Economic Development Director Tina Toyne, Attorney Jordan Knudsen and Police Chief Paul George, Jr.

Also present physically and by virtual meeting: Commissioner Larry Vandersloot, Commissioner Lawrence Big Hair, Attorney Jeanne Torske, and several members of the public.

**MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS & CLAIMS:** Greer made the motion to approve the Council minutes as written for February 17, 2026. Motion seconded by Hopes. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Hopes motioned to approve the Closed Meeting minutes for January 6, 2026. Motion seconded by Espinoza. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Greer made a motion to approve the claims for March 3, 2026.

	CLAIM No.	Monthly Total
December, 2025	33438	\$ 76.66
January, 2026	33432, 33500	522,527.56
February, 2026	33433-33437, 33439-33446, 33470, 33478-33499, 33501-33503	709,381.25
March, 2026	33447-33469, 33471-33477	<u>65,064.98</u>
<b>TOTAL Submitted</b>		<b>\$ 1,297,051.45</b>

Hopes seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

**PUBLIC COMMENT: N/A**

**MAYOR:**

Mayor Ramsey reported he is pushing hard to get loose ends tied up for dispatch.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Personnel Policy/City Policy:**

Mayor Ramsey reported there will be future discussion on this in the next couple of weeks.

**Sewer & Water:**

Hopes reported the Wastewater Treatment Plant Project is coming along great and Mike has a hard drive with photos of the project.

**Streets & Alleys:**

**Law Enforcement:**

Espinoza reported he talked with the Chief and he will be sharing a department update during his report.

**Parks & Playgrounds:**

Krebs reported the cornhole boards have been ordered and should be delivered in the next couple of weeks. Pavilion delivery – it was supposed to be delivered last Monday, then pushed to

Wednesday, then yesterday and now they are saying tomorrow. Krebs added he hopes to see it delivered tomorrow.

**Finance/Landfill:**

**Resolutions & Ordinances:**

**Economic Development:**

**SPECIAL COMMITTEES:**

**PETITIONS & COMMUNICATIONS:**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

Hardin Visitor Info Center – Langlas & Associates Contract

Attorney Knudsen reported the document is repetitive and the most current version is not reflected throughout the document, specifically in Exhibit #1. The Exhibits reflect the previous versions of the contract. For legal, we can approve A133 and A201 with changes to litigation and negotiations on the price with the most current version of the contract to be updated throughout the rest of the documents. Motion by Hopes to approve A133 and A201 with changes to litigation and negotiations on the price with the most current and clean version of the contract to be updated throughout the rest of the documents. Motion seconded by Espinoza. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Mayor Ramsey reported the payment to the 500 Club was made for 2025, now there is a 2026 payment for Little Bighorn Days 2026. Motion by Greer to approve the \$500 contribution to the 500 Club. Motion seconded by Hopes. Krebs asked what budget this amount comes from. Lehr stated it comes from the Council budget in the General Fund. Hopes expressed he discussed this with Lehr prior to the meeting. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Lehr reported on the RD 1780-27 Loan Resolution - \$2,562,000. The document is a standard form RD requests that Council vote on and approve. This has not been discussed at Council, and therefore it was brought to Council to approve. Motion by Krebs to approve RD 1780-27 Loan Resolution. Motion seconded by Hopes. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Ramsey reported the 911 iNet Contract - \$55,000 was discussed during the Committee Meeting this evening. It was voted on during the Committee Meeting to table the discussion. Motion by Espinoza to table the 911 iNet Contract. Motion seconded by Greer. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Ramsey reported Ken Woody addressed the City of Hardin for a Business License Reimbursement Request, through a letter. The request explains he was billed 2022-2025 as a Pawn Shop, but they are not an actual Pawn Shop. Therefore, they paid an extra \$50 each of those years. Lehr reported that City records reflect it was overpaid in 2023, 2024 and 2025 in the amount of \$150 total for those 3 years. Motion by Greer to approve the return of \$150. Motion seconded by Hopes. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Ramsey reviewed the Barry Damschen Contract – Amendment NO. 32 in the amount of \$ 7,800. It was identified as a standard document. Lehr reported there is a \$300 increase from the year prior. Motion by Greer to approve Barry Damschen Contract – Amendment No. 32. Motion seconded by Hopes. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Lehr reviewed the Northcon, Inc. Pay App #8 - \$659,057.25. He reported the engineer reviewed this and recommended payment. Motion by Toyne to pay Northcon, Inc. Pay App #8 in the amount of \$659,057.25. Motion seconded by Espinoza. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Ramsey reported no Letters of Interest for the Impact Fee Advisory Committee were received. It will be reopened for another couple of weeks with closing date or two Tuesday's from now.

Mayor Ramsey reported the Interlocal Dispatch Services Agreement was left on the agenda, if the document was finalized for the Council Meeting. Discussion regarding approval with the

changes occurred. Attorney Knudsen expressed he would prefer if all additions were prepared and available for public review prior to approval. Motion by Espinoza to table approval until the contract is prepared with final verbiage. Motion seconded by Hopes. Mayor Ramsey asked Big Horn County Commissioners if this agreement was discussed during the March 17<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting and March 12<sup>th</sup> Commissioners Meeting, if that would tie things up. Commissioners agreed. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

City of Hardin Project Manager, Alexandria Edwards reviewed the website proposals and shared the demos that have been held over the past few months. Edwards shared the 2027 ADA compliance will be satisfied by any of the proposed companies, however, additional costs would occur. The City Staff recommendation is to move forward with Revize. Lehr requested that the cost be spread over multiple fiscal years, Revize was able to provide that. They also provide an update of the website after Year Four. Lehr explained the differences between a standard, premium, or migration package. Revize also has their own propriety software and management system, where they would be available outside of business hours. Toyne asked what the city currently pays for website. Lehr responded at \$50 per month. Edwards shared that the City has received approval to register as a .gov and our current platform does not support .gov registry. Motion by Hopes to move to Revize, using Drew's recommendation for payment plan. Krebs asked if this was budgeted for in this year. Lehr responded there is enough in his Administrative Budget that this year could come from that until the next fiscal year budget is prepared. Motion was seconded by Greer. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Edwards reviewed the history with Cushing Terrell for Architectural services for the Big Horn Visitor Information Center. The proposed contract would provide Construction Administration services for Phase 1 of the Center. Costs associated with this project are covered through the Pilot Community Tourism Grant through the Montana Department of Commerce. Knudsen did review the contract with no suggested edits. Toyne asked what Phase 1 provides. Edwards explained restrooms, vestibule, lobby area, mechanical/electrical rooms, and the parking lot. Additional grant funding for Phase 2 has been applied for. Motion by Toyne to approve the Cushing Terrell contract. Motion seconded by Espinoza. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

## **STAFF REPORTS:**

### **Public Works:**

#### **Finance:**

Lehr reported Request #4 through the Pilot Community Tourism Grant was received in the amount of \$82,888.91. The City has currently spent \$108,237 through the grant so far, with \$123,960 remaining. The Year Two award is \$1M then gradually phases out if the final 3 years of funding are received. The Lodge Grass draw for the months of November and December were received in the amount of approximately \$289,000. They should be seeing movement on that project here soon. The City received the School Resource Officer payment from the school for the first half of this fiscal year. The Rural Development 3<sup>rd</sup> request for funding will be submitted after this meeting, remaining grant funding is \$3,421,179. US Bank, Trustee for the TIF District will be generating our March 2026 Debt Payment. The City has not received the notice for the exact amount.

#### **Police:**

Police Chief Paul George, Jr. reported over the last 30 days there were 620 calls for service. Security Checks 219, Traffic Stops 91, Improperly Parked Vehicles 53, Welfare Checks 25 and 17 animal complaints. Chief George provided documentation regarding the December 31, 2021 to present statistics for the Police Department. Violet Crime has decreased 60% since mid-2023. Burglaries have decreased 90% since 2023. Community Engagement and Modernization – the department is continually engaged in community activities. Community Easter Egg Hunt, Trunk or Treat, Birthday Visits, proactive patrolling and more. The body cameras, dash cameras and LPR systems have been helpful to the community. No true vehicle theft in city limits since obtaining the LPRs. Since the Chief has been with the city, more than \$400,000 in funding has been brought into the department. Officer Stafford is generating a plan for graffiti abatement with the High School students. School, Safety and Cooperation – when the letter to Council was typed, there had been no reported assaults within the school in this academic year. Chief shared that Hardin is ranked #2 safest city in Montana according to a Safe Cities SafeWise report.

Council discussed a parked car near Railway and the length of time a vehicle can be tagged. Greer expressed the color of the warning tags that are placed on improperly parked vehicles are

not visible. Chief expressed that the warning notices are white to express the difference from the actual citation, which is orange.

**Legal:**

**Economic Development:**

Toyne reported she attended the Executive Board and regular Board meetings for Visit Southeast Montana to stay connected and aligned on regional tourism efforts. For the tourism grant, Toyne has been evaluating other visitor information center models to guide the development of our own. She attended the Tourism Committee meeting to keep ongoing efforts coordinated and participated in the three-week Reimagining Rural Series, which focused on practical, achievable improvements for Hardin. More than 20 communities applied for the online series. She has met with a couple of local businesses to talk through opportunities and ways we can support their next steps. Conversations continue with USDA and the Beartooth staff about programs available to assist business owners. She checked in with IMEG on the implementation of the Wayfinding Project and with DestinationiQ to begin work on the Passport program for local assets.

**RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:**

**PUBLIC COMMENT: N/A**

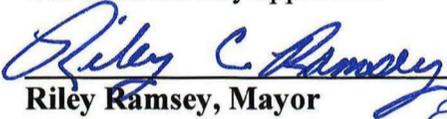
**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Mayor Ramsey reported the Local Government Review meetings are the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month. Knudsen announced a non-regular meeting would be held March 11<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. City County Planning Board will have a Public Hearing on March 9 at 7 p.m. at the Chambers.

The City of Hardin has the following Job Openings: Full-time positions for Police Officers and General Laborer.

Toyne asked the Chief how many Police Officers are still needed to be at full staff. Chief explained that there are technically two, but he and the Mayor are discussing this further.

Greer motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:19 p.m. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

  
Riley Ramsey, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
Andrew Lehr, Finance Officer/City Clerk

