

**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the age of mobile homes than can be brought into the City and noted she thinks the twenty-year rule is a little bit outdated now.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>
Claims Total (Expenditures)		\$ 671,475.07
December, 2025		<u>249,570.80</u>
TOTAL Submitted		\$ 921,045.87

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 12th 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 4th 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 Thereof 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.

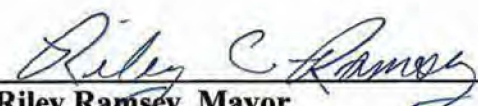
ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mayor Ramsey reported Local Government Review Study Commission Meetings are held the 3rd 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.

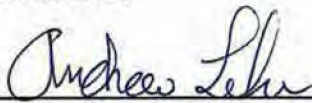
The Closed Session began at 8:02 p.m.

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


Riley Ramsey, Mayor



ATTEST:


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
TOTAL Submitted		\$ 715,807.85

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.

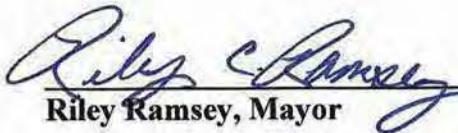
PUBLIC COMMENT:

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

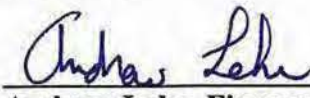
ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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>
TOTAL Submitted		\$ 178,681.91

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 23rd. 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 23rd. 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 30th – April 2nd 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:

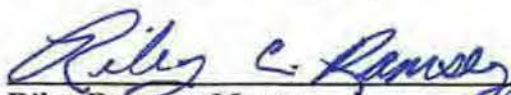
PUBLIC COMMENT:

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.

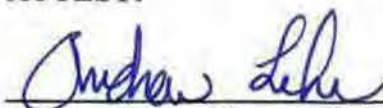
ANNOUNCEMENTS:

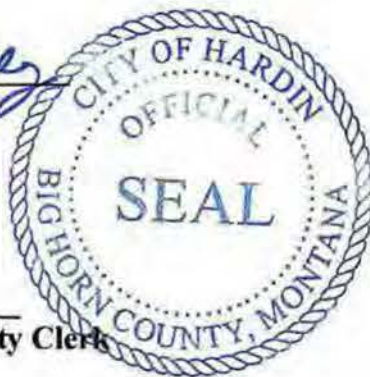
Mayor Ramsey reported the Local Government Review Study Commission Meeting is on the 3rd Wednesday of each month, located in the Council Chambers. February time is to be determined. Business and Pet Licenses are due by February 1, 2026. Letters of Interest to serve on the City-County Planning Board are 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)		2,947,914.31
January, 2026		<u>361,764.54</u>
TOTAL Submitted		\$ 3,309,678.85

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 23rd. 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 17th 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 Laultt 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 23rd. Officer 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.

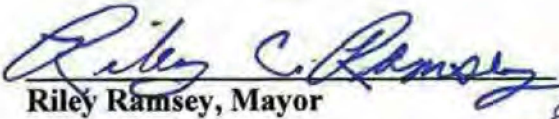
ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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

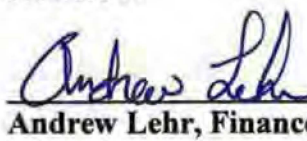
Law Enforcement Committee Meeting – Friday 2/20 at 5:45pm at the City Council Chambers. Planning an additional meeting on Thursday 2/26 at 9am (tentative).

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>
TOTAL Submitted		\$ 1,297,051.45

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 17th Council Meeting and March 12th 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 3rd 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

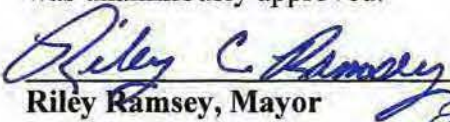
ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mayor Ramsey reported the Local Government Review meetings are the 3rd Wednesday of each month. Knudsen announced a non-regular meeting would be held March 11th 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



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

COUNCIL MEETING: The Special Council Meeting for March 12, 2026 was called to order at 6:00 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, and Antonio Espinoza.

Also present: Finance Officer/City Clerk Andrew Lehr, Attorney Jordan Knudsen and Police Chief Paul George, Jr.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT: N/A

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Dispatch

Interlocal Agreement with Big Horn County

Mayor Ramsey reported he attended the Big Horn County Commissioners Meeting earlier in the day, in which changes to the agreement were made. Changes included changing the contract end date from 6/09/2029 to 6/09/2030 and correcting verbiage regarding "roads" versus "county roads." Additionally, under "Damages" a change was made regarding unilateral termination of the contract. Toyne asked Commissioner Vandersloot why 2030 versus 2029, when the contract requires the contract to be reviewed every five years. Commissioner Vandersloot responded he prefers even years and the five-year review is to ensure the agreement is reviewed on a timely basis. Attorney Torske shared that Commissioners serve a six-year term, without a five-year review, you could theoretically have a commissioner in office who never has the opportunity to comment on the agreement. Espinoza asked if the contract was on an automatic renewal. Attorney Torske stated there is an automatic renewal clause written into the contract, but there is requirement it is to be reviewed by the parties every five-years. Mayor Ramsey confirmed the repeater will be in place and the contract would be in place prior to April 9th. Commissioner Vandersloot stated that Redtail is ready to go.

Motion by Espinoza to approve the Interlocal Agreement with Big Horn County as written. Motion seconded by Hopes.

Sharpe asked what other costs are included in this agreement. It was discussed that the School District and City of Hardin will each pay \$1,000 for the use of the land. The County is paying \$3,000.

On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Redtail Communications Equipment and Installation Quote - \$28,356

Mayor Ramsey reported he reached out to another company, to obtain a second quote. There was not a response from the second company. Therefore, one quote has been provided to council. Discussion regarding who uses Redtail versus other providers in our area occurred. Mayor Ramsey stated that Redtail uses Motorola and can get the job done in the timeframe we are requesting. Krebs stated that effort to obtain a second quote occurred, and others have been happy with Redtail. Greer asked if the repeater will be used or new. Mayor Ramsey stated the repeater is a used repeater, but confirmed it's a good repeater that will be sufficient for our needs. Toyne asked where the State Site discussions are currently. Police Chief Paul George Jr. shared that discussions are continuing regarding the State Site and there will be work required from the City, County, and State to make it happen. Mayor Ramsey reported there is a difference on the sub-total for the quote that was provided to the City. Programming of PD Radios for \$1,008 is the difference, however, a quote was necessary for the meeting, therefore Brian stated he would honor the \$28,356. Chief stated that he spoke with Brian and there is no need for Redtail to physically touch the PD Radios, it's something that can be done remotely, therefore, there might be a price reduction associated to that cost in the quote. Toyne asked if the FCC charge is an estimated cost. It was determined that the FCC charge is variable.

Motion by Krebs to approve Redtail Communications Equipment and Installation Quote, not to exceed \$28,356. Motion was seconded by Hopes. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

911 iNet Dispatch Contract Decision

Motion by Espinoza to terminate the 911 iNet Dispatch Contract. Motion seconded by Hopes. Krebs asked when 911 iNet service ends. It was discussed it will be active through April 9, 2026.

Attorney Knudsen asked if the motion is to terminate the current contract, or if the motion is to not renew.

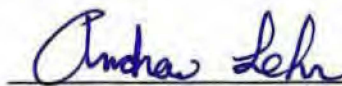
Motion by Espinoza to withdraw the motion to terminate 911 iNet Dispatch Contract and motion to not renew the 911 iNet Contract. Motion seconded by Hopes. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

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

**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, Chris Sharpe, and Antonio Espinoza.

Also present: Finance Officer/City Clerk Andrew Lehr, Public Works Director Michael Hurff, Jr., Economic Development Director Tina Toyne, Deputy City Clerk Angela Zimmer, Attorney Jordan Knudsen and Police Chief Paul George, Jr. (6:39 p.m.)

Also present physically and by virtual meeting:

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS & CLAIMS: Hopes made the motion to approve the Council minutes as written for March 3, 2026. Motion seconded by Greer. On a voice vote the motion passed. (5/1) Sharpe abstained.

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

	CLAIM No.	Monthly Total
January, 2026	33505, 33507-33511, 33513-33527, 33529-33542, 33544-33546, 33548-33550, 33553	\$ 108,554.23
March, 2026	33506, 33528, 33543, 33547, 33551-33552, 33554	<u>1,149,942.87</u>
Claims Total (Expenditures)		\$ 1,258,497.10
February, 2026		<u>250,638.56</u>
TOTAL Submitted		\$ 1,059,135.56

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

PUBLIC COMMENT: N/A

MAYOR:

Mayor Ramsey read correspondence he received from Mike Enright, Administration of the Hardin Generating Station Power Plant. The correspondence noted they are reducing their workforce at the facility and provided an overview of potential development opportunities.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Personnel Policy/City Policy:

Sewer & Water:

Streets & Alleys:

Hopes reported the City crew has been out chasing garbage cans from the winds; they also have been putting garbage cans together, cleaning smaller ditches, and cleaning water drains.

Law Enforcement:

Parks & Playgrounds:

Krebs reported the pavilion, in South Park, finally made it here; the crew finished it on the 11th. He added it turned out great and reviewed the cost noting the City got a good deal. Krebs reported the corn hole boards will be here soon.

Finance/Landfill:

Resolutions & Ordinances:

Economic Development:

Toyne reported the City Economic Development Director, Tina Toyne, provided letters of support for multiple projects, she attended a Coal Board Meeting in support of City projects they were applying for, and participated in virtual meetings that included Montana Main Street, Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority and a Passport Program Destinies demonstration. She completed a site walk through at the Depot that included a review of the window installations, she met with the County Economic Development director, and held a Remaining Rural Steering Committee to coordinate ongoing initiatives.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES:

Mayor Ramsey reported changes he wanted to make to the Law Enforcement Committee. He removed Espinoza; Toyne agreed to be Chairperson of the Committee. Ramsey asked Hopes if he would also be on the committee. Hopes agreed.

Krebs asked if another member could be added to the Parks and Playgrounds Committee. Greer voiced to add him to the committee.

PETITIONS & COMMUNICATIONS:

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: N/A

NEW BUSINESS:

Mayor Ramsey reported the City received a recommendation from the City-County Planning Board to approve updates to the City of Hardin Zoning Ordinance. (Police Chief Paul George, Jr. came into the meeting) Knudsen noted the majority is changing the phrase from manufactured home to mobile home to line up with recent changes from the legislature. There is a change to height restriction and the other significant change is related to accessory dwelling units "mini homes". There was discussion about the changes. Greer motioned to approve. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved. Knudsen reported he will draft a formal ordinance for the changes.

Mayor Ramsey asked Knudsen to discuss the Agreement for Legal Services. Knudsen reported he is running for County Attorney. He put a clause in the agreement that if he is elected, the agreement will terminate and the City will have to seek another City Attorney. He added the termination would encompass the law firm, Knudsen & Knudsen, PLLC. Greer motioned to approve. Krebs seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Ramsey reported the City received a letter from the Hardin Volunteer Fire Department requesting a contribution in the amount of \$15,000. Lehr reported the HVFD is requesting their grant for the year. Krebs motioned to approve the contribution of \$15,000. Greer seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Lehr reviewed the Event Notice – Continuing Disclosure for the Tax Increment Finance District (TIFD). Greer motioned to accept. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Lehr reviewed the Landfill Closure & Post-Closure Estimates provided by Barry Damschen Consulting, LLC. Krebs asked if the City is collecting the minimum coal ash payment every month. Lehr noted Rocky Mountain Power asked if the City could suspend billing; he referenced the contract and the amount they currently owe. There was further discussion about current taxes owed by the power plant. Greer motioned to approve the Landfill Closure & Post-Closure Estimates. Krebs seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

STAFF REPORTS:

Public Works:

Hurff reported the City received a letter from the company that supplies chemicals for the Water Treatment Plant; the cost increase will be around ten percent.

Kristi Wedel, Utility Billing Clerk, is working on a new map program, Diamond Maps. The program allows maps to be brought up out in the field on phones or ipads. He reviewed how the program works, the time it will save, and the low cost.

Hurff reported the curb stop reimbursement program is working great and he provided an update on the Waste Water Treatment Plant Project.

Finance:

Lehr reported last Thursday, he, Hurff, Tina Toyne, and Alexandria Edwards attended the Coal Board meeting in Billings, MT; the City was awarded \$200K for a dump truck. The grant application for the Visitor Information Center, in the amount of \$500K, was not awarded. The first debt payment to Rural Development Loan, for the Waste Water Treatment Plant Project, was made last month; the payment is \$6,024 every month for the next forty years. Lehr provided an update on the Lodge Grass Project; the contractor will be submitting a final pay application that will go before Council. The City received the last pay out of the City of Hardin Minimum Allocation Grant, for the water projects the City has been doing, in the amount of \$19K and the City received the third quarter Entitlement tax payment from the state.

Police:

Police Chief Paul George, Jr. reviewed calls for service. He reported Officer Joshua Garcia will be graduating from the academy next month and two officers will be going to the academy when Officer Garcia returns. The Easter Egg Hide is coming up; folks can sign up on the link on Facebook.

Hopes asked about the process for tagged vehicles. Chief Paul George, Jr. reviewed the process.

Legal:

Economic Development:

RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Cody Meeks reported he is here to talk about the zoning ordinances and changes. He noted he has been in the cannabis industry for over ten years and he is looking for the opportunity to open another dispensary in Hardin. He would like to see the zoning changed to allow them into commercially zoned areas.

Jose Funke, resident, asked Knudsen if the police policy book is ready for the public to be able to receive. Knudsen reported the City has a Hardin Police Department Policy Manual; Funke would have to submit a request and it will be gone through to decide which portions are public and which are not. Funke asked more questions about the Police Department; Knudsen and Police Chief Paul George, Jr. responded to the different questions.

Meeks noted he went to the City-County Planning Board meeting last week; he noted he believes the 312 dispensary itself is outside of the buffer zone. He requested for a hundred percent confirmation do they need to have one of the only two dispensary licenses. He wants to know how he can go about trying to get a third license into the City if they are taking that license. Mayor Ramsey addressed, with Meeks, a conversation they had on the phone.

Laurie Tschetter voiced her concerns about the recent incident on Rankin Drive; she noted there was a report it was on Arrowhead. The incident was not in Arrowhead. She added her sign is maintained on her side of the park; it is time people recognize it is split. Krebs asked Knudsen if it is in City ordinance that trailer courts have to have signage. Knudsen noted they have to have signs and a map. Mayor Ramsey noted code enforcement would have to send them a letter. Police Chief Paul George, Jr. noted the ordinance requires a lot from everybody; it is specific. There was further discussion about signage and news reporting about the incident on Rankin.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

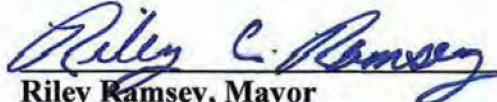
Mayor Ramsey announced the following employee anniversaries: Merle Johns, 9 years; Teresa King, 1 year; Ross Miller, 7 years; and Michael Stimpson; 28 years.

Mayor Ramsey reported Request for Proposals for Employee Group Benefits Coverage are due Tuesday, March 24, 2026 by 3:00 p.m.; Sump Pump Reminder from April through September; the Easter Egg Hunt is scheduled for Saturday, April 4, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. in Heimat Park; Alley Clean Up is scheduled for Monday April 6, 2026, please have items out early; Weed Mowing Bids are due Wednesday, April 8, 2026 by 2:00 p.m. Letters of Interest to serve on the Police Commission will be advertised next month; and the Local Government Review meetings are the 3rd Wednesday of each month.

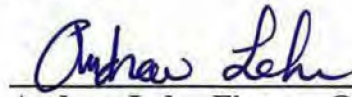
The City of Hardin has the following Job Openings: Full-time position for Police Officers and Part-time position for Court Clerk I-III

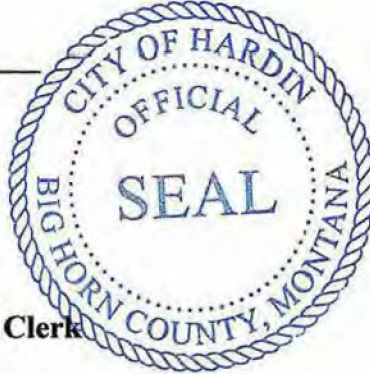
The Council Meeting closed at 8:01 p.m. for a CLOSED SESSION – Personnel.
The Closed Session began at 8:05 p.m.

Greer motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. Sharpe 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 April 7, 2026 was called to order at 6:39 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, and Antonio Espinoza.

Also present: Finance Officer/City Clerk Andrew Lehr, Public Works Director Michael Hurff, Jr., Deputy City Clerk Angela Zimmer, 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 motioned to approve the Law Enforcement meeting of February 17, 2026 as written. Motion seconded by Sharpe. On a voice vote the motion passed. (5/0) Espinoza stepped out of the meeting at 6:40 p.m. Hopes motioned to approve the Special Council Meeting of March 12, 2026. Motion seconded by Greer. On a voice vote the motion passed. (5/0) Espinoza was not present. Greer made the motion to approve the Council minutes as written for March 17, 2026. Motion seconded by Hopes. On a voice vote the motion passed. (5/0) Espinoza was not present. Espinoza re-joined the meeting at 6:42 p.m. Greer motioned to approve the Closed meeting minutes of March 17, 2026 as written. Sharpe seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Greer made a motion to approve the claims for April 7, 2026.

	CLAIM No.	Monthly Total
February, 2026	33577	\$ 7,029.36
March, 2026	33555, 33578-33579, 33581-33589, 33592. 33593, 33595-33644	1,718,466.90
February, 2026	33558-33577, 33590-33591	<u>2,475.12</u>
Claims Total (Expenditures)		\$ 1,725,496.26
March, 2026		<u>275,742.78</u>
TOTAL Submitted		\$ 2,001,239.04

Toyne asked for clarification on the claim for the K-9 Working Dog International LLC. Lehr noted it is the second to final payment for the dog.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT: N/A

MAYOR:

Mayor Ramsey reported the City should be switching over tomorrow for the dispatch system with the County.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:
Personnel Policy/City Policy:**

Sewer & Water:

Hopes reported he took a small tour of the wastewater treatment plant to check it out. He provided an update on the progress.

Streets & Alleys:

Hopes reported the City crew had the street sweeper out before the snow; they are doing alley clean-up; they have been putting garbage cans together, and cleaning water drains.

Law Enforcement:

Toyne reported the committee discussed animal control and getting a facility to house cats and start investigating a euthanasia program for animals that are left after five days. The consensus is to send a notice out to all people selling alcohol in the city to not sell to people who are intoxicated. Knudsen noted he will look into euthanasia; he has a call into the Board of Veterinary Medicine and will do what he can to find out legally what the options are.

Toyne noted there is a gentleman in town that is working at the drain granaries and fairgrounds helping them get rid of pigeons; he catches them and sells them.

Parks & Playgrounds:

Krebs reported everything for the South Park Project is getting wrapped up; the cornhole boards did come in; they haven't been set. He noted he would like to start the planning for a Grand Opening. He reviewed some tentative dates that would not interfere with other events in town.

Finance/Landfill:

Greer reported he and Hurff are working on the septic tank at the landfill.

Resolutions & Ordinances:

Economic Development:

Toyne reported the City Economic Development Director, Tina Toyne, is currently attending a Montana Economic Development Association (MEDA) meeting in Helena; she attended the Certified Regional Development Corporation meeting with Beartooth RC&D, held in Hardin; she continued discussions with local business owners regarding potential use of buildings for onsite signage and advertisement opportunities; she met with Destination iQ to discuss promotional strategies for Little Big Horn Days; she is exploring several program options that may provide future funding opportunities for the Visitor Information Center; working ongoing collaborations with Travel Story in preparation for a mid-June launch; working on the Infill and Redevelopment for Housing Project and working on the Industrial Park Development Initiative.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES:

PETITIONS & COMMUNICATIONS:

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Mayor Ramsey reported the City received correspondence back from the Big Horn Hospital regarding the offer from the City made in good faith to settle in full in the amount of \$25,000 for detainees. The letter said it is well below what their cost is. Espinoza noted the City doesn't have to pay it. Krebs asked if there is an obligation to pay. Knudsen reviewed State Law; provided examples of circumstances; hospital regulations; and the conflict of Federal and State Laws. Knudsen references a discussion the City had with the hospital last fall noting the hospital acknowledged the City is not responsible. The hospital sent the first offer for fifty-three percent and Council responded asking if they would take less; \$25,000. The hospital rejected the counter-offer. There was further discussion about billing, etc. Chief Paul George, Jr. noted they combined all the bills that generated this. There was further discussion. Sharpe noted his proposal is to pay \$25,000 now and a payment of \$5,000 bi-annually. Knudsen proposed to send a contract with the check. Sharpe motioned to send check for \$25,000 and a payment of \$5,000 bi-annually. There was further discussion of the dates for the bi-annual payments. Greer seconded. Sharpe amended the first motion to pay the amount of \$25,000 with the amount of \$10,000 in December of each year with a contract of four years. It was clarified they will be made in good faith. Greer seconded. Toyne noted he feels the City should pay more to the hospital. After further discussion there was a voice vote. The motion passed. (5/1) Toyne voting Nay.

NEW BUSINESS:

Hurff reported he received pricing for a butterfly valve for the water intake building in the amount of \$6,737.85. He received another quote it the amount of \$7,658.15. He requested approval of the quote in the amount of \$6,737.85; the City will have to cover delivery, wiring and installation. Richard Jefferson, Water Treatment Plant Operator, provided information about the current pumps. Krebs motioned to approve. Espinoza seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Ramsey reported a few people have approached him about a towing rotation. Greer noted he read the documents and agrees with how it is written and he is with the Police Chief; it is

up to the Police Chief to meet those criteria's and the handling of how it is done, the letter was well written; adding he is going with the Chief of Police. Sharpe and Espinoza both voiced they side with Greer and the Chief. Toyne asked for clarification; if everyone is held to the same standard; given the opportunity to correct the problem. He asked if this was given to that one company. Police Chief Paul George, Jr. noted multiple times and provided a review of the issues. Sharpe noted the letter noted there were several confrontations that were recorded on body cameras. Krebs noted there should be a committee meeting about this. He would like to see a policy. Knudsen reported by law the City is not required to have an equitable rotation system. Chief Paul George, Jr. noted that doesn't mean they haven't been operating in the sense of equitableness; they had both companies on subject to call; equity was not an issue. Hopes noted he would like to look at the policy. Sharpe noted the Chief has written the policy and made decisions; weighed the benefits and cons; we are abiding by our policy. Knudsen noted it is not a legal issue, the issue is how far the policies of a board that sits up here will go down into the discretion of any office; that can cause repercussions in any department. Corrina Kirschenmann-Kuntz, via Zoom, asked if the towing companies have signed guidelines, if not, they can sign the rules and regulations and if not followed they would be removed from the list. Espinoza asked of the tow company can come in when a new Chief is in place; he and Krebs agreed that they shouldn't take any action now. Krebs motioned to table. Espinoza seconded. Sharpe noted he stands behind it today; he would rather vote on it today. On a voice vote, the motion passed. (4/2) Greer and Sharpe voting Nay.

Cole Kirschenmann, Pastor of Gateway Christian Center, noted two years ago they held the Take Him With You event at Wilson Park and they plan to do it again; give away bikes and encourage kids and families to have communication skills. He requested road closure from 10th Street to the end of the Mormon Church property and noted they will take care of the portable restrooms. Krebs motioned to approve the request to include the portable restrooms. Espinoza seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Ramsey noted Rocky Mountain Power requested for the Landfill Agreement suspension of services. Krebs reviewed the timeline of when they came into the City; tax exempt for the first ten years and then were re-assessed where they paid lower taxes, etc. He is not in favor of it at all if they can't pay their back taxes in addition to the amount they still owe for ash. Hopes agreed. Lehr reported they are behind \$3.2 million dollars in taxes to the City, a little over \$1,300 across the scale and they owe \$193,706 for the monthly fee. There was discussion about their request. Sharpe noted they are in breach of contract. Krebs noted he does not want to suspend services. Toyne made the motion to send them a demand letter to pay in full to include taxes. Espinoza seconded. There was further discussion. Knudsen asked Council to consider a closed session. Toyne amended his motion to authorize Knudsen to send a demand letter that the City will not consider suspending their contract without them paying their bill in full. Espinoza seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Krebs motioned to approve Pay Application #9 from Northcon, Inc. in the amount of \$927,804.19 for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades. Sharpe seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Hopes motioned to approve Pay Application #7-2 from Western Municipal Construction, Inc. in the amount of \$604,288.87 for the Lodge Grass Project. Lehr reported that this will be the final pay application from Western Municipal since all equipment has been purchased. Greer seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Ramsey reported there have been discussions to give the Police Department Officers a wage increase. He reviewed the proposed Police Department Wage Matrix; adding the new matrix would add \$2.00 to the current pay for all officers. Chief Paul George, Jr. noted the current matrix is outdated and examples of how officers would experience a wage increase under the current matrix. He created a pay scale; getting rid of one officer position in the department to spread the money between the current positions. There was discussion about how the matrix works. Ramsey noted the matrix needs an amendment to change \$3.00 per hour to \$2.00 hour for current officers and for officers that complete the academy. Espinoza motioned to approve with the amendment. Sharpe seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Officer Edward Stafford (via Zoom), on behalf of Officer Jake Kinder, reported Kinder was approached with the opportunity for the community to host the Special Olympics Torch Run. He reviewed details of the temporary road closures as the officers, volunteers, and athletes take to the

streets. Officer Laurie Welch noted the school will be involved. The event is scheduled for May 10, 2026 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Knudsen noted he wanted Council to be aware of the event. Sharpe motioned to approve. Greer seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Lehr reviewed the Letter of Credit from Little Horn State Bank as a pledge to funds held at the institution. Hopes motioned to accept the Letter of Credit. Greer seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

STAFF REPORTS:

Public Works:

Hurff reported he attended a conference in Great Falls last week 45th Annual MACRS Conference. He shared some of the content from the conference that included advice on leadership, how to encourage growth and investment of our employees, and communication with employees and the public. There were classes on roads and road rehabilitators.

Finance:

Lehr reported the city submitted and received the fifth request of the Pilot Tourism Grant in the amount of \$17,802.65 and will be submitting the sixth request this week. Lodge Grass signed their return to work certification for the contractor to continue working on their project and the City will be submitting their first quarter request that will include the payment of \$604,288.87 to Western Municipal Construction, Inc. for that project. He noted the project target end date is June 18, 2026 with final completed of July 18, 2026.

Police:

Police Chief Paul George, Jr. reviewed calls for service. Officer Joshua Garcia graduates the Montana Law Enforcement Academy (MCLA) on April 21, 2026. He reported the Easter Egg Hide was an outstanding success, eighty-five kids; forty housed participated.

Police Chief Paul George, Jr. announced he is leaving Hardin; his last day is April 23, 2026. He noted he extended an offer to stay on part time as a resource and to help the City find a new Chief of Police. The City has a great team at the Police Department. He voiced he has had a good honest three years here; loves the community; has been invested in the community since day one and will be invested even once he leaves.

Legal:

Knudsen reported the total case numbers in City Court last year ended at nine hundred and twenty-five total; eight hundred and eighty-five by officer cases. In the first fourteen weeks of this year the court is at two hundred and ninety-two cases if that kept up it would be almost eleven hundred cases just by officers. He wanted to let it be known the good work the police department is doing and extended a "Thank You" to the Chief for his time here; for his work; adding the numbers prove what he has done, Thank You.

Economic Development:

RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

Resolution NO. 2431: Establish Wages for Hardin City Police Department Employees.

Knudsen noted the effective date on the resolution is incorrect; it can be amended to a different date if Council chooses. There was discussion regarding the effective date. Hopes motioned to approve for the effective date to be April 5, 2026. Greer seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Ordinance NO. 2026-01: Amending City Code Reflecting Legislative Changes to Accessory Dwelling Units and Mobile Homes. Knudsen reported these are the changes presented to the City by the City-County Planning Board; previously approved by Council. Carol Foxe asked what the changes were. Knudsen provided an overview. Sharpe motioned to approve Ordinance 2026-01. Greer seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT: N/A

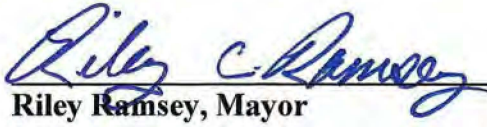
ANNOUNCEMENTS:

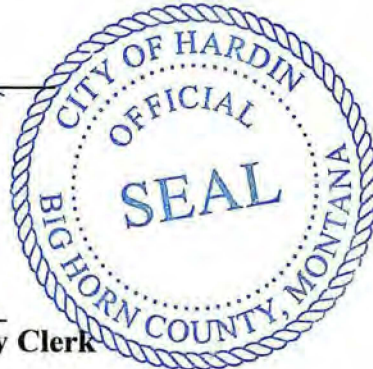
Mayor Ramsey reported the Sump Pump Reminder is from April through September; Weed Mowing Bids are due Wednesday, April 8, 2026 by 2:00 p.m.; the Hardin Community Blood Drive is scheduled for Thursday, April 9th - 12:45 to 5:45 p.m. at First Alliance Church; Letters of

Interest to serve on the Police Commission are due April 16, 2026; Request for Proposals for Employee Group Benefits Coverage are due Friday, April 24, 2026 by 3:00 p.m.; and Local Government Review meetings are the 3rd Wednesday of each month.

The City of Hardin has the following Job Openings: Full-time position – Police Chief

Greer motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 p.m. Sharpe 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 April 21, 2026 was called to order at 6:34 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, and Antonio Espinoza.

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

Also present: Several Members of the Public

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS & CLAIMS: Hopes motioned to approve the Law Enforcement meeting of April 7, 2026 as written. Motion seconded by Sharpe. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved. Greer motioned to approve the Council Meeting of April 7, 2026. Motion seconded by Hopes. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Greer made a motion to approve the claims for April 21, 2026.

	CLAIM No.	Monthly Total
January, 2026	33556, 33671	\$ 2,325.00
March, 2026	33645-33656	35,109.56
April, 2026	33657-33660, 33663-33667, 33669-33670, 33673-33678	<u>56,704.24</u>
TOTAL Submitted		\$ 94,138.80

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

PUBLIC COMMENT: N/A

MAYOR:

Mayor Ramsey reported Chief George, Jr. put the message out that the City has moved to the Central Dispatch. He extended appreciation to the City, County, City Attorney Knudsen and Big Horn County Attorney Jeanne Torske for the work they did with the agreement. Chief George reported the former dispatch will stay active for a while; if someone were to dial the previous dispatch number, (406) 665-7900, it will forward to Big Horn County Dispatch 911. It was noted the Text to 911 will still remain active.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Personnel Policy/City Policy:

Mayor Ramsey reported he is looking to make updates to the City Personnel Policy Manual.

Sewer & Water:

Hopes reported the butterfly valve is expected to come in soon for the Water Intake.

Streets & Alleys:

Hopes reported the City crew has been street sweeping and blading alleys.

Law Enforcement:

Toyne reported the City is currently looking for a new Chief of Police and working through animal control.

Parks & Playgrounds:

Krebs reported the cornhole boards are expected to be installed in South Park in the next few weeks; Big Sky Lawn Care is spraying for weeds in the parks and City employee Markus Takes The Horse is getting the parks ready for Mother's Day. Krebs noted he is working on setting a

grand opening date for the South Park Project. The YES Coalition and Big Horn County Library have expressed interest in being part of the Grand Opening.

Finance/Landfill:

Greer reported he and Hurff are working on the sewer system at the landfill.

Resolutions & Ordinances:

Economic Development:

Toyne reported the City Economic Development Director, Tina Toyne, attended a call with SK Geotechnical to review completed work and attended a project update with Cushing Terrell (CTA) and Langlas & Associates regarding the Visitor Information Center. She attended a stakeholder's update for the 150th Commemoration of the Little Big Horn Battle; attended a debriefing ~~for a~~ with the state concerning the Cities CDBG application that was submitted; and she completed the Montana Main Street Quarterly Report.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES:

PETITIONS & COMMUNICATIONS:

Mayor Ramsey reported the 911 Dispatch is back to Central Dispatch and a free Bike Rodeo for kids is scheduled for Saturday, May 16, 2026 from 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. at Big Horn Public Health Department.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Mayor Ramsey reported there was discussion at the last meeting about the Police Department K-9, Thundra ♡. The only option was to send her back to the trainer; she left today. He signed a transfer affidavit today for the transfer and the possibility of a credit of up to \$15,000; she will be evaluated and the credit will be determined. Mayor Ramsey made the recommendation to Council for the release of the K-9 asset. Greer motioned to approve. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mayor Ramsey reported there was discussion about the feral cats; there was a lot of information received. Toyne voiced to continue to investigate the options.

Mayor Ramsey reported a letter was received from Big Horn County Commissioners; requesting an amendment of Section 6 of the Interlocal Agreement Creating a 9-1-1 Advisory Board. Big Horn County Attorney Jeanne Torske reported as a commission and the County they are working on requirements for appointment. She noted Commissioner George Real Bird III mentioned the Hardin Volunteer Fire Fighters are on the dispatch board; the County wanted to approach the 911 board and add an addendum to the agreement, by adding a member to represent Rural fire areas. The Commissioners would like a voting member, ex-officio. The other item in the letter; it is the County's understanding that during negotiations they were going to put one member of the County, a County Commissioner, and one member of the City Council on there, the 911 Board. They would like to Clarify if there needs to be a residency requirement for members of the public. The member appointed by the County is intended to be a County Commissioner and the member appointed by the City is intended to be a member of Council. She added, it is not in the letter, but clarifying if there needs to be a residency requirement for members of the public that are appointed. There was discussion about fire district representation. Knudsen asked if there have been petitions to establish fire districts. Torske noted not formally; they have people that have approached them about it. Knudsen asked about waiting until they get a petition. He hesitates to add language for rural fire districts if the petitions do not pass; amend an agreement for districts that do not exist. There was further discussion about who could be appointed to represent the districts. Knudsen noted when he drafted the agreement, the appointment from the City could be anyone from the City, leave it open. Vandersloot noted his understanding was it would be one Council member and one Commissioner. Mayor Ramsey, he understood one Council member and a community member. Torske noted she wanted clarification on what the Council and Commission meant when they said member from the County appointed by the County, one member from the City appointed by the City. She understands the position of Knudsen leaving it open for more flexibility. There was further discussion. Knudsen read Section 6, page 2, of the Interlocal Agreement regarding appointments to the 9-1-1 Advisory Board: "one from the County appointed by the County, one from the City appointed by the City, one member of the public appointed by the County, and one member of the public appointed by the City. Knudsen noted the

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

COUNCIL MEETING: The Regular Council Meeting for May 19, 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, Antonio Espinoza and Jeremy Krebs. Chris Sharpe was excused.

Also present: Finance Officer/City Clerk Andrew Lehr, Public Works Director Michael Hurff, Jr., Economic Development Director Tina Toyne, Deputy City Clerk Angela Zimmer, and Attorney Jordan Knudsen.

Also present: Several Members of the Public

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS & CLAIMS: Hopes motioned to approve the Council Meeting of May 5, 2026 as written. Motion seconded by Greer. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Greer made a motion to approve the claims for May 19, 2026.

	CLAIM No.	Monthly Total
March, 2026	33792	\$ 45.00
April, 2026	33750-33751, 33753-33761, 33763-33769 33771-33776, 33779-33781, 33785-33788 33790, 33794-33800, 33801, 33804	140,472.59
May, 2026	33752, 33770, 33777-33778, 33791 33802-33803, 33805	<u>24,110.63</u>
TOTAL Submitted		\$ 164,628.22

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

PUBLIC COMMENT: N/A

MAYOR:

Mayor Ramsey noted Police Chief applications are being reviewed. He reported the Interim Chief of Police resigned today, his last day is tomorrow. A new Interim Chief will be appointed this evening. Knudsen noted he requested for Council to appoint an Interim Chief today; the functioning of the Police Department cannot wait. A formal appointment can be done at the next meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Personnel Policy/City Policy:

Sewer & Water:

Hopes reported there was a committee meeting about larger uses of water and how much money the City is losing. He noted the Sewer Plant is doing good.

Streets & Alleys:

Law Enforcement:

Toyne reported the City will be posting new positions and he noticed yard signs have been put out for people to clean their yards. Espinoza asked how many officers does this leave the City now. Ramsey reported there are four.

Parks & Playgrounds:

Krebs reported he is working on an announcement for the South Park Grand Opening. The colored flyer will be the one noticed and the black and white version will be on t-shirts. The

sponsors on the flyers are not official yet. The Grand Opening is scheduled for Saturday, June 20, 2026 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. He provided information on activities for the event.

Mayor Ramsey reported Krebs has been working diligently on the event; he is donating funds from his budget to the event.

Finance/Landfill:

Greer reported the septic tank drain field is being worked on at the Landfill.

Resolutions & Ordinances:

Economic Development:

Toyne reported the City Economic Development Director, Tina Toyne, is currently in Anaconda for meetings, she has been working diligently attending meetings.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES:

PETITIONS & COMMUNICATIONS:

Mayor Ramsey reported the City received the Newsline Newsletter and information on the Draft Statewide Transportation Improvement Program from the Montana Department of Transportation. The City received a letter from the Crow Tribe Executive Branch.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: N/A

NEW BUSINESS:

Mayor Ramsey reported Friends of the Depot submitted requests for Little Big Horn Days 2026. Hopes motioned to accept what they need. Greer seconded. Krebs asked if they were asking for the same as last year. Alexandria Edwards, Committee member of Friends of The Depot, reported the structure of the letter is the same as last year with a little different content, less roads will be closed. She noted they understand the state will need to be contacted for additional street closures and they are asking for six portable restrooms this year. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Pilot Tourism Grant – Visitor Information Center. Nick Bowers with Cushing Terrell explained the current financial state of the Visitor Information Center. Jason Hubbard, with Langlas General Contractors, accompanied Bowers. Bowers explained when Langlas was onboarded; budgeted exercises took place that revealed the full scope of a building would be difficult within dollars available. Two options were presented to the Steering Committee that would allow for the same goals to be obtained as set forth in the grant, Bowers explained the 5 goals developed through a 3-hour work session with Steering Committee and community members. The site layout, developed by Cushing Terrell, is the Master Plan to be conducted over several years, as funding becomes available. Bowers explained where elements of the Master Plan came from, such as the Native plants and circular elements to nod to a teepee ring.

The proposed revised plan is moving away from a building, developing the site, pulling utilizes and improving the landscaping. It would transform into more of an advanced park, reserving the construction of a building for a later date. The City did submit for Coal Board funding but were not awarded. Pivoting to landscaping reduces costs that were allocated for office equipment and costs associated with architect design fees and contractor fees. Those costs have been reallocated to landscaping efforts in the proposed revision. Additionally, Langlas has reduced their fee from 6% to 5%. These changes have kept the project within the identified budget in Year 1 and Year 2.

Council Discussion: Toyne: At the end of Year 2, do we have a building on site? Bowers – The site will be developed at the end of Year 2. Krebs voiced he would rather have a building than \$800k into landscaping. Greer expressed it would cost additional buildings and costs to take care of the site. Toyne felt the cart was before the horse, and the landscaping would be ruined during the construction. Bowers explained where the stage area for the building construction would be, and the efforts to be made to reduce damage to the developed areas. Toyne asked about the soil report that was conducted on the site; Bowers explained the cost associated to the foundation of the building increased considerably. There is considerable over-excavation that needs to be performed to construct a building. The results from the Geotechnical Report were received at the time Langlas was being onboarded for Pre-Construction services. Hubbard explained the proposed foundation solution, given the results of the report.

Krebs expressed he would not like to spend 800k on landscaping. Toyne asked about the rising construction costs, Bowers and Hubbard explained it is between 3%-5% annually. Bowers explained there is an area of the site that is considered sacrificial, as the lay-down area for the contractors would be staged immediately north of the building. Bowers explained that discussions with Hubbard and his team identified that location would be least disruptive to the work that would have already been done at that point. Everything along Mitchell would remain functional during the construction, with the proposed plan. Krebs asked what the price for just a building, without landscaping and asphalt, would be. Bowers explained that a building without landscaping and asphalt could be obtained within the Year 1 and Year 2 budget, however, the building would be a small footprint of an informational area, two restrooms, a small mechanical space, and concrete at the entrance, everything else would remain as is. The total cost to construct the full Master Plan is \$4.7 million today. The Pilot Community Tourism Grant, through the Montana Department of Commerce is \$2.75 million; the City of Hardin is contracted for \$1.25 million. Alexandria explained we don't want to create a space that cannot be developed further if we were to not receive funding in years 3, 4, and 5. Alexandria also shared the evaluation of other sites that took place, and the reasoning for selecting the "triangle" as the site. Additional grant funding is being sought but has not been confirmed at this time.

Toyne asked if the funding was not used for this purpose, would the City lose it, which Drew responded that there is potential to lose the funding. A member of the public asked if the City could purchase a building for the grant, instead of using the triangle, and it was explained that the City is not in a position to purchase land. Further, the soils of Hardin could be similar throughout the City, which would not solve the situation. Mayor Ramsey explained that the schools could benefit from this greatly, especially with students who are going to lunch. Alexandria explained that there have been discussions about partnering with the school at some point to connect paths from the schools or tennis courts over to Town Pump, which would increase the safety of students and current walkability.

Krebs asked that with the plan right now, could this building be altered some other way to drop community rooms and office and just focus on the visitor center part of it? Bowers explained the entire building is broken into 4 portions of a building – or 4 phases. The items that Krebs is referring to are "nice to have's" at some point. Greer asked if money was set aside in the grant for maintenance of the property and Drew explained that is not an eligible cost within the grant.

Toyne asked for clarification of wording in the contract on the potential damage of the property of when the building is being constructed. Council discussed Toyne's concerns and Bowers clarified the process of maintaining a safe site for the general contractor and sub-contractors that will be on the site. It will be clarified in their scope of work if work beyond Phase 1 was conducted. Jeremy confirmed that no additional funding is coming out of the City funds to complete the proposed plan of the Visitor Information Center, it was confirmed. Krebs motion to approve the revised Phase 1 as presented to council, seconded by Hopes. Krebs motioned to approve. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote the motion passed. (4/0) Hopes, Greer, Espinoza, and Krebs voting Yea. Mayor Ramsey voiced motion carries.

Cody Meeks, resident, read aloud a letter he submitted requesting for the current cannabis ordinance to allow a third licensed dispensary within the commercially zoned areas of the City. First, by increasing the number of licensed dispensaries encourages healthy competition. Second, it will positively contribute to the local economy by generating additional tax revenue, licensing, fees, employment opportunities, and commercial investment within Hardin. Third, it will maintain separation from residential neighborhoods. He asked Council to consider amending the ordinance.

Knudsen noted there are three requested changes on the document submitted by Meeks. The request is to add Commercial Districts where marijuana businesses can exist; currently as written they are only allowed in Agricultural and Industrial zoned areas. The requests are to add commercial to the list, to change the number of dispensaries from two to three, and to change the times they can operate. Meeks noted the change in the time matches what the state law allows.

Greer asked where is there not residential property. Meeks reported there are some possibilities on the other side of the highway. Meeks and Hopes looked at the Zoning Map on the wall. Krebs noted the City already has two, he feels that is enough, and asked how will it contribute positively to the residents of Hardin. Meeks voiced these are professional business, he referenced where the other two business are adding Billings allows them to open in professional areas. It would add more jobs, another business that is invested in the community willing to donate and sponsor events. Krebs noted the tax revenue received over the course of last year was about \$12,000 out of \$1.2 million dollars sold in Big Horn County; not worth it; two is enough in Hardin.

There is availability for people that want recreational marijuana to get it. Hopes voiced two is more than enough. Espinoza voiced he is for this; when Meeks was with Bloom, they donated and sponsored to events etc. There was discussion about alcohol and cannabis, the effects they can have and allowing a third dispensary would allow competition. Meeks noted the plan is to bring in a real building with bathrooms. Knudsen asked if their plans are to bring in a skid type building or construct a building on a foundation. Meeks noted a 16x42 building to get up and running and then build a steel frame building.

Mark Kuntz, resident, asked Meeks some questions and noted two is plenty. He voiced there are plenty of jobs available, we don't need to create more jobs, we need to fill the positions available.

Shawna Hogan voiced there are a lot of medicinal uses for cannabis; there are a lot of people on medical marijuana who are diabetic and this is the only thing that will help them with neuropathy, it is also used for cancer. She asked why Bloom hasn't invested in their business to make it more professional.

Carole Fox expressed concern for it causing more problems with drugs for kids here. Espinoza noted anyone can come get an alcohol license, there is not a health benefit. He doesn't see why a third one, dispensary, can't be approved that has health benefits. He added alcohol seems to be the biggest problem in Hardin.

Mayor Ramsey noted the City does not issue a Business License for cannabis. Espinoza made the motion to change to what he is proposing. Knudsen voiced this is not an action item, this will require an ordinance change. He suggested, if Council wants him to draft a change to the ordinance it will go through the ordinance procedures. Espinoza motioned to send the requests to the Resolutions or Ordinances Committee. Toyne seconded. On a voice vote the motion passed. (3/2) Espinoza, Toyne, and Greer voting Aye and Hope and Krebs voting Nay.

Lehr reviewed quotes for timekeeping services from the current timekeeping system, Time Clock Plus, and the current Human Resources System, Bamboo HR. BambooHR will keep track of vacation and sick time and will make it easier for payroll staff. He noted there would be a savings of about \$1,700 per year with BambooHR. Krebs motioned to make the switch to BambooHR. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Lehr reported on the State Revolving Fund (SRF) for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Project; the Rural Development grant is drawing down. Bond Counsel has asked to pass a certificate as a resolution. Eight Hundred and Fifty Thousand dollars of the loan will be forgiven once the project is completely done and approved by the funding agencies and engineers. The actual loan portion is \$2.5 million dollars; a thirty-year loan. Mayor Ramsey reported the resolution should read Resolution NO. 2435. Hopes motioned to approve the Resolution. Toyne seconded. Hopes withdrew his vote; noting it will be voted on under Resolutions or Ordinances.

Lehr reported the Rural Development Bond Anticipation Loan will be carried by the SRF and issue the money, once the RD loan is fully drawn; the \$2.562 million dollars will be paid over forty years.

Mayor Ramsey reported the City received Health Insurance quotes from HUB, the City agent. He noted the recommendation is Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS); they have a lower deductible. Lehr reviewed dental, vision, and life insurance plans from the carriers; recommending to go with the Principal Plan. He reported Joint Powers Trust, the current City insurance, the health insurance portion was going to be approximately a 9% increase. BCBS will be an increase of roughly 2.5% above the current insurance. Mayor Ramsey noted the recommendation is BCBS for health insurance and the Principal Plan for dental, vision, and life. Hopes motioned to approve the recommendation. Greer seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Knudsen reported every once-in-a-while he will have a conflict in City Court. Bob Snively use to handle those for him; he has been Judge for a few years now. He is requesting for the City to appoint a Special Deputy City Attorney, for the one or two times a year, to pick up the case(s). He reviewed the terms of Resolution NO. 2437, on the agenda.

Mayor Ramsey made the recommendation to appoint Officer Tyler Nedens as Interim Police. Espinoza asked how much experience he has. Ramsey reported two years adding he has a good reputation with the public. Hopes motioned to approve the appointment. Espinoza asked Knudsen if there is a problem. Knudsen noted there is no legal requirements or experience for Chief of Police other than age and POST Certified. Greer seconded. There was further discussion about the

timeline for hiring a Police Chief. Espinoza noted a Memorandum Of Understanding may be possible with the County while the City looks for a new Chief. Knudsen it would be an Interlocal Agreement adding it is lawful; lots of communities do hire the Sheriff to be the Chief of Police. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

STAFF REPORTS:

Public Works:

Hurff reported there was a water main break over Mother's Day, it has been repaired. The water plant cleaned out the sedimentation basin and the other will be cleaned next week. Montana Rural Water loaned their leak detection equipment to the City. There have been three more curb stops replaced and three others in the application process. Hurff reported a letter was received from Montana State asking the city to do PFAS samples at the Water Treatment Plant; they were done and the results were accepted. The City also received a letter from testing done at the Waste Water Treatment Plant; the samples came in lower than what they want to see.

Hurff reported South Park Splash Pad was vandalized a few nights ago. One of the four pieces of equipment was damaged, he reached out to the company for a cost for replacement. The splash pad hasn't opened yet. He asked the public to call it in if they see something.

Finance:

Police:

Legal:

Knudsen reported Council had asked for him to send a demand letter to Rocky Mountain Power about what they owe on the Ash Contract; he got a phone call yesterday they have agreed to the basic terms of paying the current \$193,000 and change in exchange we would agree to suspend future charges, suspend that contract until things changes with power generation. He asked for payment to be made prior to Council voting on it.

Toyne noted he would like to suggest Animal Control be moved out from under the Police. Ramsey noted it has been discussed and he agrees with that.

Economic Development:

RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

Resolution NO. 2435 – State Revolving Fund (SRF) A&B Loan 2026. Mayor Ramsey pointed out, on page 2, the Resolution NO. to be corrected to 2435. Greer motioned to approve the resolution. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Resolution NO. 2436 – Rural Development (RD) Bond Anticipation Loan 2026. Greer motioned to approve the resolution. Toyne seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Resolution NO. 2437 – To Appoint A Special Deputy City Attorney. Greer motioned to approve the resolution. Krebs seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Tammy Devers, resident and representative of the Community Cat Coalition (CCC), asked why she is not on the agenda under Unfinished Business. She noted she is changing how she will be doing this, the CCC will be a program under her rescue Hamster Boy and Tiger Lilly. They put in a proposal over a month ago, asking where it sits, a yes or a no. The cats have to be trapped, who is going to do that. Mayor Ramsey addressed her questions. Devers noted Yellowstone Valley Animal Shelter offer is off the table.

Anika Risener, Big Horn County Library Director, provided a Spring Activity Guide Book and Summer Activity Guide Book. She would like to kick-off the Summer Reading Program by having a party in South Park on the 10th of June from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and invite the entire community. She will be approaching the board, before their regular board meeting, insinuating a letter of sponsorship for the South Park Grand Opening.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

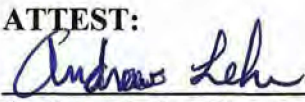
Mayor Ramsey reported the Hardin Volunteer Fire Department Pancake Breakfast is scheduled for Sunday, June 7, 2026 at 8:00 a.m. at the Hardin Fire Hall, 1204 N. Custer Avenue; the South Park Grand Opening Celebration is scheduled for Saturday, June 20, 2026 from 3:00 p.m. – 5:00

p.m., the Yes Coalition sponsorship and others businesses. The Masonic Spaghetti Dinner is scheduled for Wednesday, May 20, 2026 from 4:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. at Saint Johns Lodge #92 (Masonic Hall).

The City of Hardin has the following Job Openings: Full-time positions – Police Chief, Maintenance Worker I, and Water Distribution Operator in Training I. Part-time position Temporary - Court Clerk I-III.

Greer motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 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 June 2, 2026 was called to order at 6:45 p.m. with Mayor Riley Ramsey presiding by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Also present: Finance Officer/City Clerk Andrew Lehr, Public Works Director Michael Hurff, Jr., Economic Development Director Tina Toyne, Deputy City Clerk Angela Zimmer, Attorney Jordan Knudsen, and Interim Chief of Police Tyler Nedens.

Also present: Several Members of the Public

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS & CLAIMS: Greer motioned to approve the Council Meeting of May 19, 2026 as written. Motion seconded by Hopes. On a voice vote the motion passed. (5/1) Sharpe abstained. Hopes motioned to approve the Sewer and Water Committee minutes as written for May 19, 2026. Greer seconded. On a voice vote the motion passed. (5/1) Sharpe abstained. Greer motioned to approve the Law Enforcement Committee minutes as written for March 3, 2026. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote the motion passed. (5/1) Sharpe abstained.

Greer made a motion to approve the claims for June 2, 2026.

	CLAIM No.	Monthly Total
April, 2026	33807	\$ 631.65
May, 2026	33752, 33770, 33777-33778, 33783, 33791 33802, 33803, 33805-33806, 33808-33813, 33815, 33840-33859, 33861-33865, 33866-33875, 33877	149,710.17
June, 2026	33814, 33816-33832, 33834, 33837-33838	<u>2,0000</u>
Claims Total (Expenditures)		\$ 152,341.82
May 2026		\$ 296,796.47
TOTAL Submitted		\$ 449,138.29

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

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jose Funke, resident, noted he was here to discuss the Interim Police Chief wage and voiced his thoughts on the position and his feelings on having the City of Hardin Police Department (HPD).

Mark Kuntz, resident, asked Funke if he remembers how bad crime was before the HPD.

MAYOR:

Mayor Ramsey voiced he appreciates the Police Department, they have been working hard. There have been recognitions. There is a really bright future. He appreciates Hurff and the City Crew for the work they have done on the sewer main.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Personnel Policy/City Policy:

Sewer & Water:

Hopes reported there was a sewer problem; the City crew did an excellent job. The new machine (vac truck) helped.

Hurff reported that on Tuesday, May 26th, at approximately 3:00 p.m., they received a call about a sewer back-up in the Rangeview area. There was a plug in the line at the intersection of

3rd Street and Mitchell Avenue; the vac truck ran through that night, the next day, and the next night. The bypass pump was used. He requested emergency funds from Council; he called six companies in an effort to get someone here as soon as possible; Pace Construction, Inc. came in at about \$10K – 15K. The City received a permit from the State and received approval to start to dig this morning to dig. Hurff noted they found an old part of the cast iron pipe missing. He reviewed the process for repairs. He noted the storm line over top of the sewer line failed also and will be replaced.

Streets & Alleys:

Hopes reported the City Crew has been working on alleys and picking up garbage.

Law Enforcement:

Toyne reported the City has a new Interim Chief; the department has received resignations and has also hired new staff.

Parks & Playgrounds:

Krebs reported the Grand Opening for South Park is scheduled for Saturday, June 20, 2026 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. He noted banners have been ordered, posters have been printed, t-shirts, door prizes etc. for the kids. Sponsors for the event include Montana-Dakota Utilities, 811 Montana, Pepsi, City of Hardin, One Health, Big Horn County Library, YES Coalition, and S Ranch Meats.

Finance/Landfill:

Resolutions & Ordinances:

Sharpe reported the committee approved to bring the marijuana ordinance before Council.

Economic Development:

Toyne reported the City Economic Development Director, Tina Toyne, has been working with the Planning Committee to plan activities and funding for Little Big Horn Days and has been collaborating with program managers on multiple Tourism Grant projects. She has attended meetings with Montana Business Attraction, Cushing Terrel and Destination IQ, Montana Main Street, High Plains for the Becker Hotel, Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority, the Tourism Grant Steering Committee and Beartooth RC&D.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES:

PETITIONS & COMMUNICATIONS:

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: N/A

NEW BUSINESS:

Hopes motioned to approve the Emergency Funds for the Sewer Main at Mitchell Avenue and 3rd Street West. Espinoza seconded. Mayor Ramsey reported it was an emergency due to public health and wellness. Hurff reported it will cost between \$10K - \$15K; it was noted there will be additional costs for flowable fill, asphalt, etc. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Landa Lehman requested assistance from the City for the 8th Annual 4th of July Celebration. The requests include closure of the 200 Block, dumpsters, portable restrooms, a handwashing station, blockades, and street sweeping. Hopes motioned to approve the requests. Espinoza seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Cheri Suchodolski, Manager of the River Valley Farmers Market, requested street closure of the 200 Block of North Center Avenue from 3:30 to 8:30 p.m. every Thursday in August and September; portable restrooms – handicap accessible and a handwashing station. Suchodolski noted they are extending the market two more weeks, for a total of eight weeks. Krebs motioned to approve what has been done in the past and also the additional two weeks. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Ramsey reported there is a request to transfer the Ford F250 from the Police Department (PD) to the Public Works Department (PW). Interim Chief Tyler Nedens noted Public Works would get more use out of it. Krebs asked if PW would have to purchase it from the PD or can it just be transferred. Lehr noted money would be transferred from the PW fund to the Public

Safety Fund. Krebs motioned to allow the transaction. Espinoza seconded. Ramsey noted the amount of \$20,000 would be transferred. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Ramsey asked Knudsen about what the process would be regarding the marijuana ordinance. Knudsen reported Council can vote to draft the ordinance with instructions of what they would want him to change. Espinoza motioned to have Knudsen draft an ordinance with the amendments of adding a third one. Knudsen noted there are other proposals; the request to change from two to three (dispensaries) within the one-mile radius; change which zoning areas is allowed by adding commercial zoning to that; and the hours. Cody Meeks noted to add if possible the City should propose, have Knudsen look into it if the three percent is possible. Knudsen noted he looked it up and it is only the County that can tax that; it is opt in excise tax the City gets a benefit of, Cities are not allowed to do that. Krebs asked if he could make a motion to keep the number at two. Knudsen pointed out there is a motion pending by Espinoza. Espinoza rescinded his motion, adding because it was an example. Krebs motioned to keep the number of dispensaries, the ordinance the same and keep it at two dispensaries. Hopes seconded. Meeks voiced he is asking for a professional heavy regulated business to be opened in a commercial area, with the possibility of bringing in more tax revenue. On a voice vote the motion passed. (4/2) Hopes voting Aye, Greer voting Nay, Sharpe voting Aye, Toyne voting Aye, Espinoza voting Nay, Krebs voting Aye.

Mayor Ramsey reported the Chamber of Commerce submitted requests for a Beer & Wine Permit, extended hours and fee waiver for Little Bighorn Days 2026 – June 26th, 27th, and 28th. Sharpe motioned to approve the beer and wine permit for Little Big Horn Days. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Ramsey reported the Chamber of Commerce submitted requests for the 4th of July Celebration - Beer & Wine Permit, extended hours and fee waiver. Toyne motioned to approve the beer and wine permit for the 4th of July. Espinoza noted he thought the items were being voted on separately; extended hours, beer and wine, fee waiver. Knudsen noted it is appropriate, he requested when somebody makes a motion to specifically say the exactly what they are approving, or not approving. Mayor Ramsey noted, for the record, to move back to the item for Little Bighorn Days. Sharpe motioned to approve the beer and wine permit for the Little Bighorn Days, the extended hours, and a waiver fee. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved. Hopes motioned to approve the beer and wine permit, extended hours, and waiver of fees for the 4th of July Celebration. Greer asked about the extended hours. Knudsen noted the motion should include the times to be approved. Hopes motioned to approve the 4th of July beer and wine permit, extended hours from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and fees to be waived. Espinoza seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

David R. Blaine, Crow Times President and Founder, voiced he and the YES Coalition host free “Movies in the Park”. He provided information about past, current, and future events. His goal is There is a lot of structure to the events he holds. The requests include approval to utilize Heimat Park after hours, a power source for the equipment and for the sprinklers to be shut off. Krebs made a motion to approve all the requests and asked Knudsen if it is okay to approve this with him coordinating the events one or two weeks in advance with Hurff. Knudsen noted that is fine and he also recommends for him to notify the City Police Department. Espinoza seconded the motion. Espinoza asked if this is a one-time permit. Blaine noted he would like to have it for generations, keep it consistent. Krebs asked Blaine to come back next year for approval. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Espinoza asked if they are asking for a one time permit. Blaine asked to have it for generations, keep it consistent by season. Krebs asked for him to come back next year again.

Mayor Ramsey requested approval of the wage increase for Interim Chief of Police Tyler Nedens. Espinoza motioned to approve. Greer seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

STAFF REPORTS:

Public Works:

Finance:

Lehr reported the Lodge Grass Project may be pushed back a few weeks; the City of Hardin will pay for the engineers to be onsite for the remainder of the project. Training on the new website is scheduled for the next couple of weeks; the City is getting closer to releasing the new website

to the community. The State allowed money from the Pilot Grant earmarked for mini-grants, that was spent/expected to be spent in year one of the grant, to be rolled over to the second year. Lehr reported open enrollment for Health Insurance has begun. The City went out to bid for an auditor to audit the City's financials, there were not any bids turned in; he will solicit bids for an auditor to audit Fiscal years 2025, 2026, and 2027. He would like to schedule Budget Meetings for June 23, 2026 and July 14th, 15th, and 16th.

Police:

Interim Chief of Police Nedens reviewed calls for service. He reported Officer Joshua Sederes is currently at the Montana Law Enforcement Academy.

Legal:

Knudsen reported he notified Council at the last meeting that Rocky Mountain Power had reached out to him to settle their debt for the ash. They sent him a proposed settlement/agreement to put a pause on the ash agreement. He will have it for Council at the next meeting.

Espinoza asked Knudsen what he charges for mostly court, weed versus alcohol – MIP (minors in possession). Knudsen noted marijuana and tobacco vapes are number one.

Economic Development:

Toyne reported she attended the Montana Housing Partnership Conference in Anaconda last month; she provided examples of how the school districts are partnering with the communities to address housing challenges and create educational opportunities that include developing a fourplex for teachers and a student home building program that help students gain interest in trades; providing them with rewarding career opportunities and a strong foundation for their future.

RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

Resolution NO. 2438 – Appointing an Interim Chief of Police and Establishing Wages. Hopes motioned to approve the resolution as written. Greer seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jose Funke, resident, asked questions and voiced his concerns about the Police Department.

Corrina Kirschenmann-Kuntz noted she had asked about the state statute for compensation of the Police Commission. She passed out a paper online from Montana Code Annotated noting the City of Hardin is a third class; it indicates they would not have to get paid. She added the City could save \$50.00 a month and they could be volunteers.

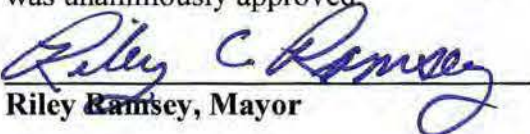
ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mayor Ramsey reported the Hardin Community Blood Drive is scheduled for Thursday, June 4, 2026 from 1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at First Alliance Church; the Hardin Volunteer Fire Department Pancake Breakfast is scheduled for Sunday, June 7, 2026 at 8:00 a.m. at the Hardin Fire Hall, 1204 N. Custer Avenue; the regular meeting for the City-County Planning Board is scheduled for June 8, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers; Budget Meetings are scheduled for June 23rd and July 14th, 15th, and 16th, 2026 and Continuing as needed; the South Park Grand Opening Celebration is scheduled for Saturday, June 20, 2026 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. There is a possibility of a quorum to be present, no business will be conducted.

The City of Hardin has the following Job Openings: Full-time positions – Police Chief, Maintenance Worker I, and Water Distribution Operator in Training I. Part-time position Temporary - Court Clerk I-III.

Espinoza announced the Farm to Market Agreement between the City and County expires tomorrow.

Greer motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. Krebs 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 June 16, 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, Chris Sharpe, Antonio Espinoza and Jeremy Krebs.

Also present: Finance Officer/City Clerk Andrew Lehr, Public Works Director Michael Hurff, Jr., Economic Development Director Tina Toyne, Deputy City Clerk Angela Zimmer, Attorney Jordan Knudsen, and Interim Chief of Police Tyler Nedens.

Also present: Several Members of the Public

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS & CLAIMS: Greer motioned to approve the Council Meeting of June 2, 2026 as written. Motion seconded by Hopes. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved. Greer motioned to approve the Resolution or Ordinances minutes as written for June 2, 2026. Espinoza seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Greer made a motion to approve the claims for June 16, 2026.

	CLAIM No.	Monthly Total
April, 2026	33878	\$ 70,964.13
May, 2026	33879, 33888	8,098.46
June, 2026	33839, 3880-33891, 33893, 33895-33931	<u>247,934.45</u>
TOTAL Submitted		\$ 326,997.04

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

PUBLIC COMMENT: 3 minutes per person N/A

MAYOR:

Mayor Ramsey reported there was an interview held today for the Chief of Police position.

Toyne noted it has been discussed several times about moving animal control and the Police Service Officer out from under Law Enforcement. Mayor Ramsey reported he intends to look at a couple of ways to merge Animal Control with Code Enforcement. Toyne noted he is getting complaints from constituents on community decay and animals.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Personnel Policy/City Policy:

Sewer & Water:

Streets & Alleys:

Law Enforcement:

Toyne reported things are going good; we are regrouping.

Parks & Playgrounds:

Krebs reported the Grand Opening for South Park is scheduled for Saturday, June 20, 2026 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. He noted Big Horn County Electric has donated use of their large boom truck; the cornhole boards have been installed; he and Anika Risener, with the Big Horn County Library, have been putting up signs and banners for the event. The volleyball net has been installed and the picnic tables will be moved there in the next couple of days. The splash pad went live on the 10th of June, since the library held their party there. Krebs noted he is looking for volunteers for the event.

Krebs asked about times for the splash pad and having them posted for the splash pad and recommended the purchase of a timer. There was discussion about purchasing a timer and posting hours; 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Hurff noted he will have to check the sign he ordered.

Finance/Landfill:

Mayor Ramsey reported a Finance Committee Meetings are coming up.

Resolutions & Ordinances:

Economic Development:

Toyne reported the City Economic Development Director, Tina Toyne, attended the Reimagining Rural Summit in Townsend, MT; she will provide a full report at the next meeting.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES:

PETITIONS & COMMUNICATIONS:

Mayor Ramsey reported the City received the minutes from the City-County Planning Board Meeting of March 9, 2026.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: N/A

NEW BUSINESS:

Mayor Ramsey reported Northcon, Inc. submitted Change Order NO. 3 in the amount of \$13,887.75 for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Project. Greer motioned to approve the Northcon, Inc. Change Order NO. 3 in the amount of \$13,887.75. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Ramsey reported Northcon, Inc. submitted Pay Application No. 11 in the amount of \$527,925.92 for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Project. Lehr noted Dax Simek, of Stahly Engineering, reviewed and approved the document. Greer motioned to approve Pay Application No. 11. Toyne seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Knudsen reviewed the terms of the agreement with Rocky Mountain Power; Suspension, Payment and Release Agreement; that include the payment of \$193,706.02. Hopes motioned to accept this agreement. Toyne seconded. On a voice vote the motion passed. (5/1) Krebs voting Nay.

Lehr reported the ARPA funds for the Lodge Grass Project runs out at the end of this month; the DNRC is not able to extend beyond June. Some of the budget that was set aside for the project wasn't used. The engineers proposed for the City to purchase a floating dock in the amount of \$23,072.38; the dock will be safer for them in making repairs and maintaining the lagoon system. Hopes motioned for the floating dock. Greer seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Lehr explained the engineers and DNRC have asked for the City to cover a portion of the mobilization and de-mobilization related to construction at the lagoon to be paid from the ARPA competitive grant that the City is sponsoring. There is approximately \$54,457 left to be spent from the grant that isn't expected to be used on expenses from engineering fees or administrative services the City of Hardin has incurred supporting the grant. Lehr noted the request is to cover the portion of the project that is least risky, which is mobilization, de-mobilization and general conditions. Toyne questioned if the State could attempt to say the funds weren't used for the part of the project they were intended to be spent on and request the funds back. Lehr explained that nothing was misappropriated and that the DNRC was on board with the Town of Lodge Grass engineers in requesting the funds be used towards construction to fully draw the entire grant. Krebs motioned to pay the Lodge Grass Competitive Grant Pay Application. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Ramsey reported both HUB International and Johnson Insurance Agency submitted proposals for Worker's Compensation. Lehr reported they both quoted from Montana State Fund; the exact same amount. Greer noted HUB contacted the City prior to the request for info, he motioned to approve HUB International for Workman's Compensations Insurance. Krebs noted they are both the same coverage, just different agent. Sharpe seconded the motion. Krebs voiced Johnson Insurance Agency pays taxes in Hardin; their property is in Hardin; exact same coverage for the exact same price; adding his opinion it would be best to stay local for the same thing. Toyne

seconded; to support local. Mayor Ramsey called for a roll call vote on the first motion to approve HUB International. On a voice vote the motion was a tie with Hopes, Toyne, and Krebs voting Nay and Greer, Sharpe, and Espinoza voting Yea. Mayor Ramsey broke the tie vote by voting Nay. Krebs motioned to approve Johnson Insurance for Worker's Compensation. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote the motion passed. (4/2) Sharpe and Espinoza voting Nay.

STAFF REPORTS:

Public Works:

Hurff reported the project on 3rd Street and Mitchell has been completed. He does not have final invoices yet; there was a discount applied by the company that provided the signage. He noted unfortunately there is a sewer line that failed at the Wastewater Treatment Plant; providing an overview of the plan of action. Hurff reported there are bid openings scheduled for June 25, 2026 for dump trucks and a crawler loader for the landfill.

Hurff reported two new employees started today and looking to start two more. Everyone has been working hard, stepping up, and will be gearing up for Little Big Horn Days.

Toyne asked Lehr is there was still money in Council Budget. Toyne noted he would like to have a pizza party for the guys, City Crew. Lehr noted there are funds.

Hurff noted Complaint forms are available, on the front table, for anyone who has concerns. It helps to have it written down.

Finance:

Lehr reported the City received the 4th Quarter State Entitlement money yesterday and taxes were received from the County; he will put out an addendum to extend the submission deadline for the Request for Proposals for Audit services; and there is scheduled training for the new website this week. The City will be moving to .gov emails. He reported the substantial completion for the Lodge Grass Project is being pushed out. A Budget Meeting is scheduled for next Tuesday, June 23, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.

Police:

Interim Chief of Police Nedens reviewed calls for service. He reported the new speed trailer is stationed on Mitchell Avenue.

Legal:

Economic Development:

RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

Resolution NO. 2440 – Establishing Wages for Certain City Employees for Fiscal Year 2026/2027. Greer motioned to approve the resolution as written. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Resolution NO. 2441 – Establishing Wages of Non-Union Employees and Elected Officials for Fiscal Year 2026/2027. Greer motioned to approve the resolution as written. Sharpe seconded. On a voice vote, the motion passed. (5/1) Toyne abstained.

Resolution NO. 2442 – Establishing Wages for Hardin City Police Department Employees for Fiscal Year 2026/2027. Greer motioned to approve the resolution as written. Toyne seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT: 3 minutes per person

Carole Fox asked if there is an ordinance for grass, what about alleys; adding some weeds are tall in the alleys. Hopes responded with a yes.

Alexandria Edwards, with Friends of The Depot, extended a Thank you to the City for Little Big Horn Days and that she hoped to see them there.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mayor Ramsey announced the following Employee Anniversaries: May – Jeremy Beckman, 31 years and June – Dean Baker, 12 years; Alexandria Edwards, 1 year; Joshua Garcia, 1 year; Michael Hurff, Jr., 16 years; Lauren Krebs, 1 year; Tamara Mendez, 7 years; Tyler Nedens, 2 years; and Shawndae Old Elk; 5 years. Budget Meetings are scheduled for June 23rd and July 14th, 15th, and 16th, 2026 and Continuing as needed; The South Park Grand Opening Celebration

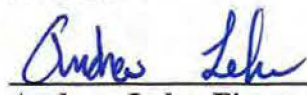
is scheduled for Saturday, June 20, 2026 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. – No Business is to be conducted, but there is a possibility for a quorum to be present; a Bid Opening for Three (3) 10 Yard Tandem Axle Dump Trucks is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. June 25, 2026 and a Bid Opening for One (1) New Crawler Loader with Multi-use Bucket, for the Landfill is scheduled for 10:15 a.m. June 25, 2026; and City Offices Closing will be closing at 12:00 p.m. on Friday, June 26, 2026 to attend Little Big Horn Days activities.

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

Greer motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:29 p.m. Sharpe 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 July 7, 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., Economic Development Director Tina Toyne, Deputy City Clerk Angela Zimmer, Attorney Jordan Knudsen, and Interim Chief of Police Tyler Nedens.

Also present: Several Members of the Public

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS & CLAIMS: Hopes motioned to approve the Council Meeting of June 16, 2026 as written. Motion seconded by Greer. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Greer made a motion to approve the claims for July 7, 2026.

	CLAIM No.	Monthly Total
April, 2026	33932-33933, 33952,	\$ 9,217.29
May, 2026	33965	527,925.92
June, 2026	33934-33938, 33940-33951, 33953-33964 33966-33977, 33979-33985, 33988-33992 33994-34012, 34015-34106, 34018-34022 34024-34027	279,913.83
July, 2026	33939, 33978, 33986, 34013-34014 34017, 34023	<u>177,910.88</u>
Claims Total (Expenditures)		\$ 994, 967.92
June, 2026		<u>271,486.35</u>
TOTAL Submitted		\$ 1,266,454.27

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

PUBLIC COMMENT: 3 minutes per person N/A

MAYOR:

Mayor Ramsey reported the City has offered the Chief of Police position conditionally to someone; the candidate is going through the background process.

Corrina Kirschenmann-Kuntz asked if they will be living in the community. Mayor Ramsey noted they would.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:
Personnel Policy/City Policy:**

Sewer & Water:

Hopes reported the Water and Waste Water Plant are doing alright.

Streets & Alleys:

Hopes reported there were bid openings for three garbage trucks. The City crew has been patching streets; they are working hard to get that done.

Law Enforcement:

Toyne reported things seem to be going good.

Parks & Playgrounds:

Krebs reported there was a really good turn-out for the Grand Opening for South Park; people were having a lot of fun; there were door prizes; and people enjoying their day. He extended a

“Thank You” for the help to the City and everyone that volunteered for the event. There was further discussion about the splash pad drain; Hurff reported a clean-out drain will be dug in. Krebs noted he hoped to get cameras up at the park soon. There was further discussion about vandalism at the park.

Hurff noted the City received a certificate from the Library for helping with their event at the South Park Splash Pad.

Finance/Landfill:

Greer reported Budget Meetings are coming up on July 14th, 15th, 16th, and continuing as needed. He noted work is expected to begin on the septic tank at the landfill.

Resolutions & Ordinances:

Economic Development:

Alderman Toyne reported the City Economic Development Director, Tina Toyne, is working on the Infill and Redevelopment project and she has been attending meetings for the Pilot Tourism Grant. Tina Toyne reported she attended a Visit Southeast Montana Board Meeting in Broadus and the Visit Southeast Montana Executive Board Meeting today online.

Corrina Kirschenmann-Kuntz asked how it is coming along with the Wayfinding signs. Tina Toyne noted the City will be putting out a Request for Proposal for the project.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES:

PETITIONS & COMMUNICATIONS:

Mayor Ramsey reported the City received a newsletter from the Montana Department of Transportation.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Knudsen reported he sent the Big Horn County Hospital the proposal that Council had decided; to pay \$25,000 last fiscal year plus \$10,000 each fiscal year after that to settle hospital debts for those taken to the hospital after arrests. He corresponded with their attorney and the proposal came back with one of the most important portions of the proposed agreement cut out which was no future billing. Knudsen noted the City, by Montana Law is not responsible for these medical bills unless we cause the injury. Their counter proposal is they will accept the payment of \$25,000 plus \$10,000 for the next four years to settle past debt, but does not address any future billing. Toyne recommended to negotiate an exam fee with the hospital and if they want to do other tests they can cover it. Knudsen noted the City does not ask for the evaluation, the County jail turns the City away and says to get them evaluated; they ask for it. They have no legal authority to say no when the City brings somebody in; they have no legal authority to say go get a medical screening first. He added he understands why they do it. The City has been compliant. There was further discussion by Council. Krebs noted he would like the paragraph that Knudsen liked to be put back in the agreement. Hopes voiced to send it back. Knudsen noted no action is to be taken now, he was just looking for guidance.

Lehr reviewed sewer repair bills from the emergency repair at Mitchell Avenue and 3rd Street; Pace Construction - \$38,577.98, Mountain West - \$6,475.00, and Fisher Sand & Gravel – \$15,150. Hurff reported Pace Construction gave a fifteen percent discount and Mountain West gave about an eight percent discount. It was reported the total is around \$60,202.98. Hurff reported there will be a cost for the blacktop; waiting on the invoice. Greer motioned to approve the sewer bills. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

Officer Raymond Longstreth was sworn in by Mayor Ramsey.

Hurff reviewed the four bids the City received for 3 Tandem Axle Dump Trucks. Hopes asked Hurff what his recommendation was. Hurff reported his recommendation is to move forward with I-State Truck in the amount of \$170,677.00 for each truck. Greer motioned to approve the bid from I-State Truck in the amount of \$170,677 each for three dump trucks. Hopes seconded. There was further discussion about the current trucks and the new ones. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Hurff reviewed the two bids the City received for a Crawler Loader for the Landfill. The lowest bid was submitted by RDO Equipment Co. in the amount of \$320,000. Hopes motioned to

accept the bid from RDO for \$320,000, Greer seconded. There was further discussion about the equipment and what it will be used for. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Ramsey reported Northcon, Inc. submitted Pay Application No. 12 in the amount of \$834,564.90 for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Project. Toyne motioned to approve the Pay Application. Krebs seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Lehr reviewed Amendment NO. 1 of the Interlocal Agreement with Lodge Grass. Greer motioned to approve Amendment NO. 1. Hopes seconded. Krebs asked Knudsen if he was okay with this. Knudsen verified he is. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Lehr reviewed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Hardin, Town of Lodge Grass, and Western Municipal. Greer motioned to approve the money for the MOU. Hopes seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved. Greer seconded. On a voice vote the motion was unanimously approved.

Hurff provided an overview of the EJCDC agreement between the City of Hardin and Stahly Engineering for professional services. The work to be completed is at the 200 Block of Crawford Ave. is estimated to be around \$80,000 to replace the water line and street. The project is expected to be complete by August 31st, before school starts. Toyne asked if this could be partially funded by a grant if applied for. Lehr noted there are CDBG Grants opening up soon for construction; the City could apply for a grant. He added there is funding available in the street and water funds. Greer noted this needs to be done right now. There was discussion about waiting to apply for a grant as to doing the project now. Hurff noted this project has been on the books for a while. Toyne noted he would make a motion to wait and apply for the grant and apply for it for two blocks instead of one and plan it next year. Hopes noted they have to patch that street all the time. Krebs noted if the City can get an \$80,000/\$90,000 grant, the money could be used somewhere else; other streets in town. Krebs asked Lehr what his opinion financially of the best route to go. Lehr noted his opinion is the City should move forward with this one block and apply for other grants for streets. Knudsen noted there is a motion pending with no second. Ramsey asked if there was a second to the motion to delay. The motion died for lack of a second. Hopes motioned to get the project done. Greer seconded. Knudsen asked Hopes to clarify his motion. Hopes motioned to go with Stahly Engineering, EJCDC, for the 200 Block of Crawford Avenue. On a voice vote the motion passed. (3/2) Krebs and Toyne voting Nay.

Mayor Ramsey requested approval of his appointment of Brian Seely to the Impact Fee Advisory Committee. Greer motioned to approve Brian Seely as the appointment to the Impact Fee Advisory Committee. Sharpe seconded. On a voice vote the motioned passed. (4/1) Hopes abstained.

Mayor Ramsey reported Wharton Asphalt is doing road repairs for the County near the Fairgrounds; a block on the south side of the railroad tracks on Center Ave. The bid is for this side of the tracks of Center Avenue, \$32,659. He reported he and Hurff have spoken with County Commissioner Larry Vandersloot; the County would pick up and procure the asphalt, the estimated City portion would be \$17,069. The County will pay for that. Mayor Ramsey reviewed the scope of the project. Krebs motioned to approve the amount of \$32,659 to get the rest of the work done. Sharpe seconded.

STAFF REPORTS:

Public Works:

Hurff reported the City received a certificate of appreciation from the Library for the Splash Pad.

Finance:

Lehr reported the Audit RFP's are due in a couple of weeks. The new website will be coming out in the next few weeks; emails will change with the new website. Budget Meetings are scheduled for next Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday and continuing as needed.

Police:

Interim Chief of Police Nedens reviewed calls for service. He reported Officer Joshua Sederes will be graduating from the Montana Law Enforcement Academy July 21st and Officer Raymond Longstreth is scheduled to go to the Academy in September.

Legal:

Economic Development:

Tina Toyne reported she and Alexandria Edwards attended the Reimagining Rural Conference in Townsend; the focus was on strengthening rural communities through volunteerism, partnerships, and community engagement. She provided more information on the key takeaways from the meeting.

RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

PUBLIC COMMENT: 3 minutes per person

Corrina Kirschenmann- Kuntz, resident, asked if the City was hiring Animal Control. Ramsey noted the City is looking to combine Animal Control with Code Enforcement.

Karleen Pitsch, resident, reported someone in town has rabbits. Knudsen read City Code regarding rabbits. Toyne noted she can fill out a complaint form.

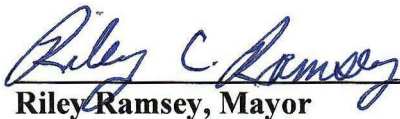
ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mayor Ramsey reported Budget Meetings are scheduled for July 14th, 15th, and 16th, 2026 and Continuing as needed. The City-County Planning Board has Public Hearings and a Regular Meeting scheduled for Monday, July 13, 2026 in Council Chambers for the Hill-Scott Garage and Zoning Ordinance for Marijuana. At 7:00 p.m.

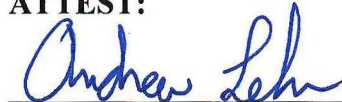
The City of Hardin has the following Job Openings: Full-time positions – Police Chief and Police Officers.

Carole Fox asked didn't the City settle that ordinance for the marijuana. Mayor Ramsey noted as for City Council, it is.

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


Riley Ramsey, Mayor

ATTEST:


Andrew Lehr, Finance Officer/City Clerk

