



City of Columbia Falls
130 6th Street West
Columbia Falls, MT 59912
Phone: (406) 892-4391

Columbia Falls Study Commission Workshop Minutes October 22, 2025

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 5:03 PM by Chairman Piper.

Roll Call: Present: Study Commissioners Hopkins, Konopatzke, Nicosia and Piper. Also present: City Manager Hanks

Visitors/Public Comment: None

Approval of Minutes: Commissioner Hopkins made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, second by Commissioner Konopatzke, motion carried with all members voting in favor.

Discussion:

Commissioners reviewed the tentative final report. Commissioner Hopkins questioned whether the certificate section needed to list all statutory options and citations. The Commission agreed to maintain a simplified certification format. Commissioners also reviewed the overall timeline, confirming a public hearing for November 19 and anticipated adoption of the final report on January 21.

Commissioner Hopkins summarized his proposed edits to the final report. Commissioners discussed whether the report should explicitly reference adopting all general government powers under state law. The Commission agreed to request a legal review and recommendations from the City Attorney before finalizing language.

Commissioner Nicosia stated she was still evaluating whether compelling reasons support adopting self-government powers and noted she may prepare a minority report if not persuaded before the final vote. Commissioner Konopatzke expressed support for pursuing self-government powers, emphasizing the advantages of proactive governance, flexibility for future needs, and the absence of identified downsides.

The Commission reviewed the schedule for public engagement on the tentative draft report recommending a transition from general government powers to self-governing powers. Susan confirmed that required public notices would run in the newspaper on November 2 and November 9, and that the revised report would be available by October 31.

Review of Schedule

The Commission will host a Public Hearing on November 19th to receive public comment on the tentative report. The Commission anticipates adoption of the Final Report on January 21st.

Adjourn: Meeting duly adjourned at 5:58PM.

Chair

October 22, 2025