



City of Columbia Falls
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Columbia Falls, MT 59912
Phone: (406) 892-4391

Columbia Falls Study Commission Workshop Minutes September 10, 2025

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 5:00 PM by Chairman Piper.

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

Visitors/Public Comment: None

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

Discussion:

City Manager Hanks provided a staff report summarizing the staff and City Attorney's review of options following persistent debate over the last several Commission meetings. The report summarized the Commission's challenges to reach consensus over the last several months based on various interpretations of Montana Code Annotated and the Commission's responsibilities.

Recognizing inconsistent language in the tentative Final Report, Commissioner Nicosia motioned to amend the draft formal report to say the Commission "does not recommend a change in the Plan of Government; however, we are recommending the City Council use their powers under 73149 to pursue self-governing powers, if they see the need for future flexibility and unforeseen challenges." The motion was not seconded and the motion died.

Commissioner Hopkins stated that he has studied the statutes and believes that self-governing powers could be a benefit to the City, he would be willing to author a new tentative Final Report. He stated that he would use much of the verbiage in the current version but with a clear recommendation for a change in the Plan of Government. Commissioner made a motion to draft a new tentative Final Report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Konopatzke. Commissioner Nicosia voted against the motion.

The Commission continued the ongoing debate between the lack of a specific current need for self-governing power versus the importance of having the flexibility of self-governing powers for an unforeseen, urgent need that may arise in the future.

Review of Schedule

The Commission will adopt the tentative Final Report on October 22. The Commission will host a Public Hearing on November 19th to receive public comment on the tentative report. The Commission anticipates an adoption of the Final Report in January.

Adjourn: Meeting duly adjourned at 5:32PM.

Chair

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