



Livingston City Commission Minutes

July 07, 2026

5:30 PM

City – County Complex, Community Room

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81084345841?pwd=bKKahxG0aq0JD2h6MZD9Ls0eKU7bb5.1>

Meeting ID: 810 8434 5841

Passcode: 163636

1. Call to Order

5:34 pm Chair Nootz called the meeting to order.

2. Roll Call

- Chair Nootz
- Vice Chair Willich
- Commissioner Daniels
- Commissioner Wilcox
- Commissioner O'Neill

City Staff Present

- City Manager Grant Gager
- Asst. Chief Andrew Emanuel

3. Pledge of Allegiance

"I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Chair Nootz asked the room to stand for the pledge of allegiance.

4. Public Comment

Individuals are reminded that public comments should be limited to item over which the City Commission has supervision, control, jurisdiction, or advisory power (MCA 2-3-202)

Public comment was offered by:

- Jay Keifer gave his thoughts on the fires at the Transfer Station, an interview done by Chair Nootz regarding the hire of the City Manager in 2022, and the outdoor City pool.
- Patricia Grabow gave the City Manager a petition about the Parks Master Plan, and gave her thoughts on the current City Commission.
- Leslie Feigel thanked the 4 Commissioners for participation in the parade. She reminded the Commission of new businesses they should visit. She also expressed concern about political division.

Chair Nootz stated that her statement from that Commission in 2022 still stands today. She stated that every year they do vote on repairs and upkeep for the City pool, and asked what tools or reports staff use to assess the outdoor pool.

The City Manager stated that his first spring here they worked with Public Works to identify some repairs that included patching the inside of the pool. The repairs were done, but were short lived. He reminded everyone that in 2023 the community was discussing the Wellness Center that does include a lap pool and recreation pool. He stated that there was really no conversation at the Commission level about the review of the outdoor pool during discussion of the Wellness Center or after it was approved by ballot.

Chair Nootz stated that the Commission has prioritized economic development and the crossing.

The City Manager stated that he presented a work plan earlier in the year that showed the City's progress on several initiatives, and the economic portion of that presentation will ramp up at the end of this budget process. He stated the City released RFPs for alternative analysis for the crossing, which has recently closed. He stated that, as far as wildfire comments, he has worked with the Discovery Vista Homeowners Association, and will be attending its annual meeting. He stated that there is an ongoing Community Wildfire Protection Plan study, and the City is engaged with the study partners on that.

5. Consent Items

- A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JUNE 10, 2026, SPECIAL MEETING [PG. 4](#)**
- B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JUNE 16, 2026, REGULAR MEETING [PG.16](#)**
- C. APPROVAL OF CLAIMS PAID 6/11/26 - 7/1/26 [PG.62](#)**
- D. AGREEMENT 20266 WITH THE LAB 406 FOR FACILITY USE [PG.74](#)**
- E. AGREEMENT 20267 WITH MOUNTAIN SPRINGS BAPTIST CHURCH FOR FACILITY USE [PG.79](#)**
- F. PURCHASE ORDER 20268 WITH IMCO TRAILERS [PG.85](#)**

Chair Nootz pulled C&F

Commissioner Daniels motioned to approve Consent Items A, B, D & E, seconded by Commissioner O'Neill. Unanimously approved.

Chair Nootz asked about the claims paid report and asked about a \$10,000 charge for toilets and drinking fountains.

Finance Director Fetterhoff stated she will look at the invoice and get back to the Commission tomorrow.

Chair Nootz asked about the walking floor trailer on pg. 66, and that Consent Item F is the replacement trailer with insurance. She wondered where things were at with the insurance and equipment.

The City Manager stated there were two trailer fires at the end of May and early June. The first trailer fire occurred inside the Transfer Station building and damaged a used trailer, and the second fire occurred outside in the yard involving a new trailer the City owned. He stated Consent Item F

relates to the second fire with the new trailer. He stated that MMIA declared the trailer involved in the second fire a total loss, so they requested a signed purchase order so they can make the reimbursement, and will pay the full value of the replacement trailer, less the deductible. They are discussing internally keeping the trailer and repairing it. He stated that the purchase from Ken's Truck Repair on page 66 is to replace the used trailer that was damaged in the first fire.

Vice Chair Willich motioned to approve Consent Items C&F, seconded by Commissioner Daniels. Unanimously approved.

6. Proclamations

A. A PROCLAMATION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LIVINGSTON, MONTANA, DECLARING JULY 2026 AS PARKS AND RECREATION MONTH IN LIVINGSTON, MONTANA **PG.92**

Chair Nootz read the proclamation.

The City Manager stated the City has a very dedicated team in Parks and in Rec. He reminded everyone that there is an opening in the Recreation Department.

Commissioner O'Neill stated the Parks and Rec department are awesome.

Commissioner Wilcox expressed appreciation for this proclamation.

Commissioner Daniels expressed appreciation for Parks and Rec.

Vice Chair Willich stated that the City has world class parks and world class people working in the parks.

Chair Nootz stated it has been great to see Rec grow since the current City Manager has been here. She stated the Parks Superintendent was in the news about the pool, which was great to see.

7. Scheduled Public Comment

8. Action Items

A. RESOLUTION 5192: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LIVINGSTON, MONTANA, GIVING NOTICE THAT THE CITY COMMISSION HAS COMPLETED ITS PRELIMINARY BUDGET IN THE AMOUNT OF \$36,527,357 FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING ON JULY 1, 2026, AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2027, (FY 2027), THAT THE BUDGET IS ON FILE AND AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION AND ON THE INTERNET AT www.livingstonmontana.org, AND CALLING FOR A PUBLIC HEARING FOR APPROVAL OF THE FINAL BUDGET AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS. **PG.94**

The City Manager stated this is a follow up to the presentation he made at the last meeting.

Commissioner Wilcox asked since this is the preliminary budget, will the final budget come before them at the next meeting.

The City Manager stated yes, on 7/21/26.

Public comment was offered by:

- Patricia Grabow expressed dislike for this year's budget.
- Jay Keifer expressed dislike for this year's budget.
- Leslie Feigel expressed concern about this year's budget.

Chair Nootz asked for clarification on stormwater meetings.

The City Manager stated that two months ago they had a conversation about stormwater, but that it was not the only conversation on that topic, which predated 2019. He stated that 2½ years ago it was discussed about stormwater utility creation feasibility. He stated they also received an update nine months ago on the service development plan from Headwaters and AE2S, and that was a presentation given to the prior Commission.

Chair Nootz asked about meetings where the public could comment about the budget.

The City Manager stated there was a workshop in April, he presented the budget at the last meeting in depth, and stated this is the 2nd of 3 planned meetings to review the budget.

Chair Nootz asked about surplus.

The City Manager stated that he would caution the public not to draw a line about funding the crossing from increase in water and sewer rates as the crossing will come from a different revenue source. He reviewed the water and sewer budgets for this coming FY.

Finance Director Fetterhoff stated there was a large wastewater treatment facility upgrade in 2019. Along with the facility, the City incurred a significant amount of debt, and part of that requires the City to maintain debt service coverage ratios.

Chair Nootz asked about money being set aside for the railroad and audit.

The City Manager stated these appear early in the budget book in the fund balance tables on 1-10 in the budget book.

Finance Director Fetterhoff stated that the money is not in the current year budget. They have to come into compliance at the end of FY26, which means a budget amendment will come before the Commission for the FY26 budget.

Commissioner Wilcox asked about debt covenants.

Finance Director Fetterhoff stated it should be at 125%, so operating revenue, less operating expenses needs to be 125% of total debt cost every year. She stated that the 150% number is the reserves, so when you look at operating revenue, less operating expenditures, the City wants the reserve balance to be 150%.

Vice Chair Willich asked if the City is statutorily required to have a stormwater district by the time the City reaches 10,000 in population by the next census.

The City Manager stated no, it is not required to be in place, but it is required to start being worked on when the census shows a 10,000 population.

Vice Chair Willich asked who sets the power rates.

The City Manager stated the Public Service Commission.

Vice Chair Willich asked where we get our power from.

The City Manager stated NorthWestern Energy.

Vice Chair Willich asked who the biggest power user is.

The City Manager stated the Water Reclamation Facility.

Vice Chair Willich stated that the City also received rate increases for power. Then he asked who sets property tax rates.

The City Manager stated that property tax rates are a function of a formula that was created by the Montana State Legislature.

Chair Nootz asked where the revenue would come from in enterprise funds if they attempt to reach the targets.

The City Manager stated there are 2 levels: revenue and expenses. The primary revenue in these funds are user fees, so to increase reserves you can increase revenues or cut expenses.

Finance Director Fetterhoff stated that a 150% reserve level helps the City's ability to borrow money, and briefly explained the bond process to borrow money.

The City Manager reviewed page 1-10 in the budget book and explained how, mathematically, the enterprise funds and ratios for their reserves.

Finance Director Fetterhoff stated folks could use the appendix in the budget book to look at the math the City Manager is explaining.

Commissioner Wilcox expressed interest in expediting the stormwater project location at the underpass.

The City Manager stated they do have the capital improvement fund, which he thought this would be an appropriate use of funds for that project.

Chair Nootz asked from the last meeting about the increase examples of fees and asked for real world examples.

The City Manager stated that the State of Montana required cities to evaluate impacts on properties valued at \$100,000, \$300,000, or \$600,000 in market value. He reminded everyone that there are certain taxes that are variable to the size of the house, and stated the general levy is the best example of that. He stated there are others such as stormwater that would actually be done on a flat rate for all residential properties. He stated there are others like water and sewer that are dependent upon usage. He stated that with the recommendations in the budget, a property with a market value of \$100,000 would see its general levy increase by \$3.40, and a house valued at \$600,000 would see a general levy increase of \$23.44. He stated that stormwater would be an \$84.00 flat fee for any market value home.

Chair Nootz asked about the ambulance levy and what things that are less visible that would be impacted if this levy should change.

The City Manager stated that anything that is purchased out of the ambulance fund would largely go away because there is a small base mill that would persist beyond the levy that is set to expire in a few years. He stated that this includes things like new ambulances, medical supplies, 50% of

salary and benefit costs in LFR, and medical related training. He stated what would be left would be the general fund component, and would become more fire focused, and explained that in the absence of an ambulance levy there would be several options for EMS services, but they would require more conversation.

Chair Nootz asked about the Community Paramedic and Bridge Team.

The City Manager stated that both of those are funded out of the ambulance fund.

Chair Nootz asked what kind of medical equipment is on the fire vehicles.

The City Manager stated that the biggest thing would be the extrication equipment.

Chair Nootz stated she is just trying to understand what the department would look like if it had to separate.

The City Manager stated it would come down to policy conversations with the Commission if the levy was not renewed. The Commission would have to discuss what lines of business the City would be in and how they would be funded.

Chair Nootz wondered out loud how the Fire Department stays intact if this large source of funding goes away as she is learning how Fire and EMS overlap to some degree.

Commissioner O'Neill stated that he realizes that the budget goes up every year, but is concerned how high it can go before residents start swaying the community.

Commissioner Wilcox stated she did research on water rate increases in the State of Montana. She stated the increases do help maintain infrastructure, which is economic development.

Commissioner Daniels stated she would be interested to know how much the stormwater project at the underpass would cost because it is something they hear from the community that is impacting them.

Vice Chair Willich stated that the City hasn't raised his property taxes, the Department of Revenue in Helena has raised his property taxes. He expressed understanding that the budget has gone up, but explained that property tax increases are coming from the State of Montana. He also stated that he would like to see what it would take to do the underpass for stormwater and that they should investigate it and put it in the plan. He stated this budget is the most utility for the taxpayer dollar.

Chair Nootz stated it is an interesting idea to explore and figure out what is possible. She stated the cost of infrastructure goes up, so there is no real benefit to delaying something they know they want to do. She stated it makes sense to get the conversation going. She expressed understanding toward Commissioner O'Neill and him expressing how the budget has increased. She stated she doesn't like the idea of fighting to move good ideas forward. She stated the Commission has worked on their priorities together and can agree and disagree. She feels this is a great budget this year. She thinks a user guide would be helpful, also continuity across departments and the way capital request forms are used could be helpful to Commissioners.

The City Manager stated the City has had conversations with BNSF and MDT about the underpass and that the water moves east along Front Street from 5th Street. He stated there are a few options to the component of stormwater that is flooding the underpass. One is to tie into the stormwater system on Yellowstone Street, or to route it down into the underpass. He stated they have ongoing conversations with BNSF and MDT for engineering solutions for this. He stated that this budget

year he is not sure how much of that project they would be able to move forward because the 5th Street crossing is around a 2029 construction year project, and the solution was to bring it over to the Yellowstone system, but would still need to handle some of it out of the bottom of the underpass. He stated he doesn't want to get anyone's hopes up because he doesn't know how feasible it is within the next 12 months.

Finance Director Fetterhoff stated that the money going into the Capital Improvement fund is something they need to be cautious with because that is money that came from transportation impact fees. So, when impact fees are collected there are a lot of parameters as to how that money is allowed to be spent, which means it has to be capacity expanding. It doesn't mean improving existing infrastructure as it was originally built, it means something like, we have more cars going over the railroad tracks, so we are going to widen that path. So, moving money from the transportation impact fees has to stay within those capacity expanding guidelines. She stated she is not sure that improving the underpass would be considered capacity expanding. She stated that historically stormwater is funded through streets and sewer.

The City Manager stated that earlier this year they did talk about increasing the street maintenance assessment this year to pay for some of that work, so that is another avenue that would work because the street maintenance assessment amount has not yet come before the Commission.

Vice Chair Willich stated he is hesitant to take money from the rail crossing because they are already starting to collect data for it. He is not inclined to move that money but could talk about it for next year with streets for the stormwater.

Commissioner Wilcox stated she understands that 5th Street and Bennett were voted on first. She knows next meeting will be a good time to talk about this again with streets.

Commissioner Wilcox motioned to approve this item, seconded by Commissioner Daniels. Unanimously approved.

Commissioner Wilcox motioned for a 10-min break, seconded by Commissioner Daniels. Unanimously approved.

B. RESOLUTION NO. 5193: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LIVINGSTON, MONTANA, OF ITS INTENT TO ADJUST ALL RATES FOR ALL CUSTOMERS OF THE CITY OF LIVINGSTON WATER SYSTEM. [PG.100](#)

The City Manager stated this item is the intent to seek increased water rates for FY26/27. He stated the staff recommendation is an increase in the base water rates of 2.97%, which is identical to the observed rate of inflation over the last 12 months, and matches the State's allowable increase in revenue from property taxes. The 2.97% is estimated to result in a monthly increase of approximately \$0.50 to \$1.60 for customers. This year there is a recommendation to add a fifth tier to the water rates, and that is because less than 1% of users use close to 12% of the pumped water every year. This is an effort to encourage some water conservation for some of the large users.

Chair Nootz asked for a brief description of the tiers.

The City Manager stated that when he arrived as City Manager the City had a flat rate, and for FY24 the Commission at that time worked to implement tiers. He explained the tier chart, and stated it is a common tier system seen in other municipalities in Montana.

Vice Chair Willich stated this was implemented because they wanted to minimize the impact to the greatest number of users, which is Tier 1, less than 10,000 gallons a month.

Commissioner Wilcox asked about page 103 in the packet and wanted to understand the increases shown there.

The City Manager stated that those are the absolute fee numbers. He stated a user will incur \$0.50 more a month on the connection fee. He stated that the right column is the ending number after the increase.

Vice Chair Willich asked which department is the 2nd largest user of electricity in the City.

The City Manager stated the water department.

Vice Chair Willich stated that yes, pumping water costs a lot.

Public comment was offered by:

- Leslie Feigel expressed concern about rate increases for the community.
- Patricia Grabow expressed concern about rate increased for the community.
- Edleeta Shans expressed liking where the budget is going, and would like folks that don't like the budget to give examples of how to make it better rather than express wrongdoings.
- Kiersten Holycross stated that in her HOA dues they are seeing increases as well, and understands increases are coming from the State.
- Linda Mahr stated there are things everyone can do to lower costs.
- Hannah Anthony expressed support for the rate increases.

Commissioner Daniels asked if this item being voted on is to have a public hearing for this item.

The City Manager stated that is correct, this item is the notice of intent for a public hearing.

Commissioner Daniels reminded the public that they can be involved in the public hearing coming up.

Finance Director Fetterhoff stated there is a notice attached to this item and if passed tonight, that notice will be sent to every single utility customer in the City.

Chair Nootz asked what is the alternative to raising rates.

The City Manager stated that in the absence of new revenue the City operations and water fund would be constrained to the revenue that they have. There would be cuts, but things such as chemicals to treat wastewater cannot be cut.

Chair Nootz asked why we are still putting money into the Water Reclamation Facility when we have already paid for it.

The City Manager stated there is hardly any capital related to the WRF, but a lot of the work being done is on the pipes and related infrastructure.

Chair Nootz in discussion asked if the public doesn't want rates raised to please let the Commission know which parts of town to defer maintenance on.

Vice Chair Willich asked how much the City spent paying Republic to haul solid waste, indicating we do have a major cost savings by self-hauling.

The City Manager stated about \$80,000 a month.

Vice Chair Willich asked how much we are spending now.

The City Manager stated we are about half that.

Vice Chair Willich stated that affects the City's ability to budget for garbage and take care of solid waste.

The City Manager stated that staff is not recommending an increase in solid waste rates this year or last year.

Chair Nootz asked what the cost savings is on solid waste over the course of a year now.

The City Manager stated about \$400,000, but it fluctuates.

Chair Nootz asked what year taxes didn't go up.

The City Manager stated that was FY24.

Chair Nootz stated there have been breaks given under this administration approved by the Commission.

Chair Nootz stated she is excited to see the 5th tier.

Commissioner Wilcox asked how this public hearing is being advertised to the community.

The City Manager stated the notices will be mailed, they will appear in the newsletter, and will be out on social media.

Commissioner Daniels motioned to approve this item, seconded by Commissioner Wilcox. Unanimously approved.

C. RESOLUTION NO. 5194: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LIVINGSTON, MONTANA, OF ITS INTENT TO ADJUST ALL RATES FOR ALL CUSTOMERS OF THE CITY OF LIVINGSTON WASTEWATER SYSTEM. [PG.107](#)

The City Manager stated this item is the intent to increase the sewer rate by 2.97% for users, which is equal to the observed rate of inflation over the last 12 months. He stated the average residential user's bill will increase between \$0.71 and \$3.51 per month.

Chair Nootz asked where the average residential user falls in this.

Finance Director Fetterhoff stated that for sewer the average usage per household is 3,000 gallons a month.

Chair Nootz asked about compostable toilets.

The City Manager stated the LMC does require a sewer hookup for all buildings in the City.

Vice Chair Willich stated he doesn't like raising rates even though he understands why it has to be done.

Commissioner Daniels expressed understanding of the budget and why rates need to increase. She encouraged folks to review the budget and ask questions.

Chair Nootz expressed agreement with Commissioner Daniels.

Commissioner Daniels motioned to approve this item, seconded by Commissioner Wilcox. Unanimously approved.

Chair Nootz motioned to enter close session, seconded by Vice Chair Willich. Unanimously approved.

D. CLOSED SESSION TO DISCUSS LEGAL STRATEGY PURSUANT TO MCA 2-3-203(4)(a)

9. City Manager Comment

The City Manager thanked the Commission for their time and stated that he is looking forward to the Farmers Market where they are going to talk about the Wellness Center

10. City Commission Comments

Commissioner O'Neill stated he will try to make it to the Farmers Market.

Commissioner Wilcox thanked everyone for their time and stated she is looking forward to the Farmers Market.

Commissioner Daniels stated she is putting a plug in for Girl Scout Troop 2565 out of Arrowhead, and they have been in contact with the City about planting milkweed for the monarch butterflies, and they would like to do that in some City parks. She stated she would like to see good public turnout for the public hearings coming up to share their input.

Vice Chair Willich thanked everyone for a nice evening.

Chair Nootz stated she recently did one of the historic tours around town.

11. Adjournment

9:28 pm Vice Chair Willich motioned to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner O'Neill. Unanimously approved.

Notice

- Public Comment: The public can speak about an item on the agenda during discussion of that item by coming up to the table or podium, signing-in, and then waiting to be recognized by the Chair. Individuals are reminded

that public comments should be limited to items over which the City Commission has supervision, control, jurisdiction, or advisory power (MCA 2-3-202).

The Chair shall have the discretion to solicit comments from the public in the following order: (1) residents of the City, (2) business owners or operators in the City, (3) other organizations conducting operations in the City, and (4) residents, businesses or organizations from outside the City. The Chair may limit each person's comment period to not less than three (3) minutes.

- Meeting Recording: An audio and/or video recording of the meeting, or any portion thereof, may be purchased by contacting the City Clerk. The City does not warrant the audio and/or video recording as to content, quality, or clarity.
- Special Accommodation: If you need special accommodations to attend or participate in City meetings, please contact the City Clerk at least 24 hours in advance of the specific meeting you are planning on attending.