# Livingston City Commission Minutes

June 16, 2026
5:30 PM
City – County Complex, Community Room

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84392203716?pwd=aPIlQl2mblZc2ZasVkfhwnCuwiHkzp.1

Meeting ID: 843 9220 3716
Passcode: 204549

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
- Chief of Police Wayne Hard
- Policy Analyst Greg Anthony
- Finance Director Paige Fetterhoff

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:

- Edleeta Shans shared how a tree was just planed at the Northside Soccer Fields and recalled the memories from when her daughter played. She expressed thanks for the City Manager newsletter.
- Leslie Feigel shared new businesses doing grand openings. She asked that the City let folks know about dumping in the City vs. County. She shared some ideas to better reach the community members for communication.
- Peggy O'Neill liked the ideas of different communication to the members. She asked about some inconsistencies for community members speaking at the podium.
- Michelle Hiland read a statement related to the proclamation read declaring June as PRIDE month.
- Jay Keifer expressed concern about flag poles that were previously purchased, and about the recycling program in the City.
- Kiersten Holycross asked what the process is to the City logo.
- Britney Chabalowski expressed thoughts about the City Commission Handbook and MCA. She gave her thoughts about the previous meeting on June 10, 2026, and asked for future investigations if they could use an outside investigator.
- Art Messel expressed thoughts about the previous meeting on June 10, 2026 and how meetings are run. He also expressed thoughts about the PRIDE month proclamation.

Chair Nootz stated that the handbook states that people are to direct their comments to the Chair of the Commission. She stated she doesn't feel overly strict about this rule and is comfortable if folks are addressing other Commissioners, so long as they don't cross into addressing City staff because these meetings are City Commission meetings. She stated they typically give 4 minutes for public comments even though the MCA gives 3, and she stated that at their first Commission Workshop they discussed and decided to give folks 4 minutes to speak unless the room was really full, then they would allow 3 minutes.

Chair Nootz asked the City Manager what folks might do if they are threatened online.

The City Manager advised that folks reach out to the Livingston Police Department for those types of threats.

Chair Nootz asked for the non-emergency number for dispatch.

The City Manager stated it is 406-222-2050.

Chair Nootz talked about the flag poles purchased by the previous City Manager. She stated the one proposed for Sacajawea Park did come before the Commission and was not supported. The flag poles in front of City Hall did not come before the Commission because they fell within the previous City Manager's budget authority.

The City Manager stated that it is correct that the flag poles were within the City Manager's budget authority at that time, so they did not go before the Commission for approval.
Chair Nootz asked if there are cameras at the Transfer Station.

The City Manager stated yes, some are in the area.
Chair Nootz asked who pays for the fire damage at the Transfer Station.

The City Manager stated the City of Livingston is represented by the Montana Municipal Interlocal Authority for property and liability insurance. The adjuster was out there today inspecting the two trailers that burned, and the building, to assess the damage. He stated the City is able to be reimbursed for the damages, as well as some of the labor hours associated with the incident.

Chair Nootz asked who pays for City Manager trainings.

The City Manager stated he has a training line item in his budget.

Chair Nootz asked about the City logo and the process to use it.

The City Manager stated the City adopted brand guidelines and there are restrictions on its use, but it was never copyrighted as it was paid for by taxpayer dollars. He stated they may reconsider that decision.

Chair Nootz reviewed the MCA, the LMC, and the City Commission Handbook for the City Commission and City Manager form of government. She asked the City Manager how he guides staff to engage with Commissioners.

The City Manager stated that when he first started as City Manager, he notified City staff and City Commissioners that he would prefer if City staff and Commissioners did not meet independently without first notifying him to understand what the subject matter is.

Vice Chair Willich reminded everyone from the handbook that a Commissioner will not act as a representative of the whole City Commission unless agreed upon by the body.

Chair Nootz clarified that she did not say that the City does not need a Fire Department, but she did ask about consolidation. She asked the City Manager to pull up the MCA that was read at a previous meeting related to the Fire Department.

The City Manager pulled it up and stated it was MCA 7-33-4101.
Chair Nootz asked what it would look like on the agenda if the Commission needed to make a decision on an item.

The City Manager stated it would appear as an action item.

Chair Nootz asked if it would appear as a staff presentation.

The City Manager stated no, it would have to be clearly stated that it was an item being voted on.

Chair Nootz asked about measurable outcomes and what the City departments use.

The City Manager stated there are a number of different metrics within each department. He stated Police and Fire measure call volume and response times. He stated Public Works uses things like lane miles painted, garbage over the scale, and the number of pickups. He stated again that departments all have different measures.

Chair Nootz asked about getting an outside investigator for investigations.

The City Manager stated that in the handbook there are very specific "shall" sections about who now performs investigations, and the allowance for outside investigators does not exist in the handbook that was adopted back in 2017.

Chair Nootz clarified that she has not said these meetings are her meetings, but she has stated that they are the Commission’s meetings because this is where their business occurs. She reviewed the legal advice that was given to them as a Commission from City Attorney Jon Hesse in reference to City staff waiving their right to privacy and the Chair’s role at the meeting on June 10, 2026. The LMC and the City Commission Handbook were also reviewed and read to show the Chair’s role at meetings and how meetings are run.

5. Consent Items

**A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JUNE 2, 2026, REGULAR MEETING** PG.4

**B. APPROVAL OF CLAIMS PAID 5/28/26 - 6/10/26** PG.94

**C. APPOINTMENT OF CHAD JOHNSON TO THE URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY BOARD** PG.108

**D. APPROVAL OF PURCHASE ORDER 20265 WITH KEN'S TRUCK REPAIR** PG.111

Commissioner Wilcox, Vice Chair Willich, and Chair Nootz pulled Consent Item A.

Vice Chair Willich pulled Consent Item C.

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

Commissioner Wilcox pointed out a date error in the minutes.

Vice Chair Willich requested the removal of a word in one of his comments.

Chair Nootz asked about a section of the claims paid report and wondered what was happening on North K Street.

The City Manager stated there is a property on North K Street that has some really deteriorated sidewalks, and the City has been working with that property owner to correct the sidewalks. This homeowner is part of the program offered by the City and will reimburse the City for this expense through their tax bill, with interest, over the next several years.

Vice Chair Willich pointed out a name discrepancy in the URA Board appointment.

The City Manager clarified that Chad Johnson from the school district is being appointed to the URA Board.

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

Commissioner Daniels motioned for a 10-minute break, seconded by Vice Chair Willich. Unanimously approved.

6. Proclamations

7. Scheduled Public Comment

8. Action Items

**A. PRESENTATION OF THE CITY MANAGER'S FY 2026-27 RECOMMENDED BUDGET** PG.118

The City Manager gave a brief presentation and invited Commissioner questions throughout the presentation.

Chair Nootz stated she works for MSU, so the sections pertaining to MSU she will abstain from.

Vice Chair Willich stated he has no conflicts. He volunteers for Bridger, and he announces for the Livingston Roundup Parade.

Commissioner Daniels stated she works for the State of Montana.

Commissioner Wilcox stated she works for Livingston HealthCare, and occasionally LHC will partner with ASPEN for programming.

Commissioner O'Neill stated he has no conflicts with budget items.

The City Manager continued his presentation.

Commissioner Wilcox stopped on the Police Department Summary and asked if she understood the recommendation correctly, and whether it is to find and obtain secure vehicle storage that also has some kind of training facility.

Chair Nootz asked if the Chief and admin staff for the department will stay in the City/County Complex.

The City Manager stated yes, the new facility is more for back-office functions.

Chair Nootz wondered because the intent for City Hall was to have admin staff there and expressed concern about everyone being spread out across town.

The City Manager stated that the building at 101 Star Rd is being vacated, and also the part of City Hall that is leased by the State will be vacated, so throughout FY 27 there will be discussions about staff locations.

Chair Nootz asked if LPD gets the secure vehicle storage, will it free up parking area space for the Fire Department at the City/County Complex.

The City Manager stated the secure vehicle storage will also have space available for excess vehicles from other departments.

Vice Chair Willich asked how they are going to get a facility built for secure vehicle storage for $50,000.

The City Manager stated that other metal buildings have been done for other departments and were around $85 to $90 thousand and could easily fit six vehicles inside. He stated they would have a separate building for the training room and office area.

The City Manager continued his presentation.

Commissioner Wilcox asked if the projects listed for the Parks Division will be brought to the Commission to keep the public informed. She also asked if the Water Plant Park Picnic Shelter will be revenue generating like the others around the park system.

The City Manager stated that this meeting is one of the first ways the City can provide visibility into some of the projects from the Parks Master Plan. He stated these will come back before the Commission in various different ways.

Commissioner Wilcox asked about the River Drive Retaining Wall project and wanted to know if it is being considered a levee impacts what is used for this retaining wall.

The City Manager stated the City has been working with the US Army Corps of Engineers for over a year on several Silver Jacket studies and does not have a certified levee. The process to get it to be a certified flood control device is called the Section 205 process, and that is potentially the next step. He stated it is a bit more complex, and the Army Corps of Engineers requires 3 feet of run for every 1 foot of rise, and the 3 feet has to go in both directions. He stated that this would be a very large community conversation for something like this.

Commissioner Wilcox asked if they could get an update to the FEMA Floodplain Map soon. She asked if it is worth the money going into a retaining wall if there are anticipated changes to the floodplain map and more stringent mitigation recommendations for the area.

The City Manager stated that they don't expect any forced capital projects as they map the area as it currently exists, and when they map it, they don't assume that the levee exists above street level because it is not certified.

The City Manager continued his presentation.

Chair Nootz asked how budget approval works for Dispatch since some of their funding is paid for by the County and some through the City.

The City Manager stated they currently have a Technical Director of Dispatch, and all of the members of Dispatch are funded through the Dispatch Fund, and that Technical Director makes recommendations based on their expertise with the system. Dispatch is overseen by the Police Department, and he works with Chief Hard through the budget process as he does with the Police Department. He stated they have a number of shared departments with the County, and they either fall under the City or County for administrative purposes and budgeting. Dispatch falls under the City for administrative purposes and is funded by a Dispatch Fund, which has several revenue sources that are generated from the City and County. He stated that 50% of charges are billed to the County for Dispatch as part of the interlocal agreement.

The City Manager continued his presentation.

Commissioner Wilcox asked if the water rate is the same as last year.

Finance Director Fetterhoff stated the rate increase last year was 4.22%.

Chair Nootz asked about capital improvements from Tab 29.

The City Manager stated they are listed in the budget book.

Chair Nootz asked if the capital improvement projects are partially funded by the water rate increase.

The City Manager stated yes, and impact fees, and also the URA will be expected to participate in funding.

The City Manager continued his presentation.

Chair Nootz asked about the part time position listed.

The City Manager stated it's a seasonal position to assist with Transfer Station hours.

The City Manager continued his presentation.

Chair Nootz stated there was an update to Tab 24 just before the meeting.

Finance Director Fetterhoff stated she updated the link on the City website to reflect the change in Tab 24.

Commissioner Wilcox asked if it was possible to see a total utility and tax rate increase for residents and listed examples of water, sewer, and the Wellness Center.

The City Manager stated that he can get together some samples for a coming meeting. He clarified that the City doesn't have clarity on other taxing entities and so they can only make estimates on the City of Livingston's component, which is only about 25% to 30% of somebody's property tax bill.

Commissioner Wilcox asked if this first budget draft raised any issues with Department Directors in comparisons to what the Commissioners had worked through regarding their budget priorities.

The City Manager stated that he and Finance Director Fetterhoff work with each department head to understand specifically what the requirements are of each department for the coming budget year.

Finance Director Fetterhoff stated that going through the General Fund with Directors can be challenging during the budget process.

Commissioner Wilcox asked about reserve funding and wanted to make sure she understood that it's anticipated the City will have a 27% reserve, and the recommended minimum is 16.6% and the max is 50%.

The City Manager clarified that the 16.6% is not a state minimum, but a recommended minimum by the Government Finance Officers Association.

Chair Nootz asked what the reserve fund was before it was at 27%.

Finance Director Fetterhoff stated that when she started with the City, the reserve fund was about 12%, which was causing some cash flow issues in the General Fund. She stated they have worked hard over the last eight to nine years to increase that, and with the influx of COVID funding they were getting closer to that 50% mark.

Vice Chair Willich asked about the funding for roller skates at $10,000 a year for the next 5 years, and felt like that is a lot of roller skates.

The City Manager stated the request was for a multi-year replacement, and stated the City does have a lot of roller skates and will start replacing the oldest ones first.

Vice Chair Willich asked why the Police Department's requests were coming in about $49,000 less this year.

The City Manager stated that last year they had some additional gear requests that were fulfilled that they did not request or need this year.

Vice Chair Willich asked about the Fire Department capital request going from $455,000 last year to $24.56 million this year.

The City Manager stated the Fire Chief has added two new fire stations to his capital request budget, and those pages are in the appendix with supplemental information.

Vice Chair Willich asked about page A20 under the justification section that talks about appropriate land area, and wondered where that was and when those discussions were had.

The City Manager stated the City has not formally gone through a location selection process because they don't actually know what the project is. He stated that at a staff level they are aware of some parcels that are vacant that may be able to accommodate a facility of that size. He stated that fire stations require 2 to 5 acres to build a station on.

Vice Chair Willich asked about funding for Search and Rescue on page A23 and thought it was the responsibility of the Sheriff.

The City Manager stated he is not recommending the funding for the SHERP vehicle in FY27. He stated Vice Chair Willich is correct, and Search and Rescue is the responsibility of the Sheriff as shown in state statute.

Commissioner Daniels asked about the Fire Department capital request stating the assumption that the SAR activities within Park County are now handled by LFR. She wanted to make sure she read that correctly.

The City Manager stated that is what is written on paper.

Chair Nootz asked what the City is using the ambulance levy to pay for vs. the money that goes to LFR. She really would like to know what is paying for what so she can understand it better. She asked about the funding request for LFR and EMS and what is the outflow.

Finance Director Fetterhoff stated they have changed the way wages are paid for LFR because the staff for EMS and Fire are the same people. She stated something they have realized over time is that 80% of their call volume is related to EMS. She stated they are statutorily required to have a Fire Department, but not statutorily required to have an ambulance service. They have shifted a portion of the cost of that staff from the General Fund to the EMS Fund just based on call volume alone. She stated that for LFR staff, 50% of their wages are paid from the General Fund and the other 50% is paid from the Ambulance Fund. She stated there are different line items in the budget based on when those staff members are called back in during their off time, so for those instances 80% of the wage is paid from the Ambulance Fund and 20% is paid from the General Fund. She stated they document when they come back in for ambulance transfers because they code that 100% to the Ambulance Fund.

Chair Nootz stated she is looking for capital and operational costs outside of staffing, and also is looking ahead as staff are partially funded by a temporary levy that is set to expire.

The City Manager stated he will prepare some information for a coming meeting regarding this.

Chair Nootz asked if the projects listed for Public Works are projects for the next five years, or if there are others.

The City Manager stated there are other projects such as a municipal well, Bennett Street water loop, and other water loops.

Chair Nootz expressed that she would like to see what is coming in future years for Public Works.

Commissioner Wilcox took a moment to run through the best way to review these documents and how to use the appendix and compare it to tonight's presentation from the City Manager.

Chair Nootz asked the City Manager to explain what 11-3 is in the budget book.

The City Manager stated it is for things such as professional services and training services.

Public comment was offered by:

- Michelle Lami asked the Commission to support the stormwater management fund.
- Peter stated his thoughts on the math for the budget.
- Edleeta Shans expressed that stormwater is a huge issue and wondered if it is its own department.
- Becky Bird stated that municipal budgeting is a plan and a process based on what priorities are by community and the Commission.
- Art Messel talked about stormwater and doing something about it sooner rather than later. He expressed concern about the money given to ASPEN.
- Sara asked about the plan for railroad crossings.
- Patricia Grabow expressed concern about the stormwater budget and railroad crossings.
- Michelle Hiland expressed concern about not seeing the railroad crossing in the budget.

Chair Nootz asked the City Manager what the stormwater fund is vs. the whole budget.

The City Manager stated he did the math and it was somewhere around **0.7%** of the total budget.

Chair Nootz asked how the City came up with this number and the starting plan for stormwater.

The City Manager stated there are some options with this, and one option is to put it on a tax bill as an assessment or put it on a utility bill. He stated they are recommending putting it on the tax bill because the City has some undeveloped properties and they are not utility users.

Chair Nootz asked about stormwater details.

The City Manager stated it will not be its own department, but it will be its own fund, and that fund will pay for a position within the Water/Sewer Division of Public Works.

Chair Nootz asked what victim services are and what ASPEN does.

The City Manager stated there are two components to what ASPEN does with the City, and the first is working with officers in training in response to certain calls, and the second is working with officers and victims of certain crimes to ensure everyone's rights are looked after.

Chair Nootz asked how folks get across the tracks in case of an emergency.

The City Manager stated the City has done some confirmatory testing to make sure emergency vehicles can get through the underpass when there is traffic in both lanes. He stated that ambulances and patrol cars do fit down the middle. He stated there are other processes that exist with the railroad to break trains and clear a path across. He stated that in early 2027 a crossing will go before the Commission to decide if it will appear on a ballot for voters.

Chair Nootz asked if they have to choose between stormwater and a crossing.

The City Manager stated no, the City can do both things.

Chair Nootz addressed one of the comments asking how they evacuate during an emergency. She stated the Fire Chief gave a good presentation and plan for this at a previous meeting.

The City Manager stated the Fire Chief stated that they do have the interstate and the ability to reverse traffic on the interstate in an emergency situation. He stated that he and both Chiefs have been working on updating the emergency plans, evacuation plans, and how to clearly communicate those with the community.

Chair Nootz gave credit to Vice Chair Willich for suggesting a priority setting meeting for the Commission as the new Commissioners came on, and stated it was a good way to share with the public what the Commission priorities are.

Commissioner O'Neill asked if stormwater has to go out to the voters and if it's the most economical way to budget for it.

The City Manager stated it does not have to go to the voters. He stated cities are statutorily allowed to implement these rates.

Chair Nootz clarified that if they did it all at once, the amount would be so large it would go to the voters.

Commissioner Wilcox expressed appreciation for the discussion about stormwater. She asked if there is a capital project that would make a large dent in the stormwater problem.

The City Manager stated the underpass is the one stormwater project that would be transformative for the community. He stated they already know what that project would look like, and it's about a million dollar project to upsize the flow pipes.

Commissioner Daniels reiterated that the rail crossing is a big priority for the Commission and encouraged the public to read the City Manager's message inside the recommended budget.

Vice Chair Willich expressed that he likes the recommendations and that it is easy to understand.

Chair Nootz expressed appreciation to Commissioner O'Neill for his stormwater comments. She stated the previous Commission set them up well to move forward with the crossing. She feels stormwater is a really big deal. She expressed liking this year's budget book but thought a user guide would be nice to have as well. She expressed really liking the structure at Public Works for the Police Department and is happy to see it moving forward.

Chair Nootz motioned for a 5-min break, seconded by Commissioner Daniels. Unanimously approved.

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

**B. CLOSED SESSION TO CONSIDER LEGAL STRATEGY PURSUANT TO MCA 2-3-203(4)(a)**

9. City Manager Comment

The City Manager thanked the Commission for their work on the budget.

10. City Commission Comments

Commissioner O'Neill stated it was a good meeting.

Commissioner Wilcox thanked everyone for a productive meeting.

Commissioner Daniels thanked everyone for a productive meeting and stated she is looking forward to being able to work on the Veterans Memorial.

Commissioner Daniels motioned to do a reconsideration of the City Commission vote at the Special City Commission meeting on June 10, 2026, seconded by Vice Chair Willich.

Vice Chair Willich thanked everyone for a good meeting.

Chair Nootz stated that the budget conversation is her favorite topic and thanked the City Manager for making it fun.

11. Adjournment

11:06 PM Vice Chair Willich motioned to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner O'Neill. Unanimously approved.