

**A REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING OF THE LEWISTOWN CITY COMMISSION ON
SEPTEMBER 8, 2026, WHICH WAS HELD AT THE CENTRAL MONTANA
COMMUNITY CENTER AND STARTED AT 7:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Day called the meeting to order.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Day asked everyone to stand and say the Pledge to the Flag.

ROLL CALL

Present were Commissioners: Bowser, Buehler, Day, Hewitt, Robertson, Shaver, and Warren.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Day stated that without objection and based on the corrections the minutes for August 17, 2026, are approved.

COURTESIES

There were none.

PROCLAMATIONS

Chairman Day explained that there is a proclamation this evening that was provided to the Commission by Mr. John Koch. Chairman Day read the following proclamation:

“A Day to Remember”

WHEREAS the unprovoked attacks of September 11, 2001, upon America by foreign terrorists have thrust the United States and other countries into a war it never envisioned, militarily or diplomatically, and

WHEREAS, the challenges facing all the civilized people of the world as they relate to the war on terrorism will not end until those responsible are eliminated, or brought to justice, and

WHEREAS, America is fully committed to ensuring our freedoms remain unfettered and sovereign for all generations, now and forever; and

WHEREAS, world opinion needs to remain focused upon the eradication of these inhuman acts perpetuated around the globe, and

WHEREAS, one way to accomplish this is to NEVER FORGET that those innocent victims did not die in vain, and

WHEREAS, America can fight back by reminding the world that the deaths of these people will always be remembered and that they will be forever loved, and

WHEREAS, a noble and appropriate way to accomplish this is through the annual celebration of their living, and

WHEREAS, this commemoration should be conducted each September 11 throughout the land to include:

- the promotion of global peace and goodwill,
- the demonstration of America's resolve and perseverance to win the war on terrorism
- The advancement of responsible citizenship,
- the encouragement of patriotism and love of country, and
- the poignant remembrance of those innocent victims who died September 11th as heroes, one and all.

Now, therefore, be it resolved, as the Commissioners of Lewistown, Montana, this proclamation is to memorialize those men, women, and children who lost their lives and

Be it further resolved that this proclamation be publicized for all to see and know that the citizens of Lewistown, Montana, remember with eternal respect those whose lives were suddenly, without cause, and pointlessly taken from them on September 11, 2001.

May they forever rest in peace and abide in our memories.

Respectfully submitted and approved on this day. September 2026.

BOARD AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Hewitt reported on the Airport Board meeting. There will be a redesigned effort for the improvements to the main hangar due to finding rot in the trusses. A change order will be done to address the roof leaks. Runway work is expected to be completed by mid – September after the rain delays. There are four private hangars under construction, representing more than \$4 million in new development

Commissioner Buehler reported the Central Montana Foundation (CMF) Board met on August 25th and awarded three grants. The small grants supported the Metis Powwow, the Montana Meth Project and Spirit Fusion. The next CMF meeting will be on September 22nd, and the audit meeting will be on September 17th at noon.

Commissioner Robertson reported on the ordinance committee meeting. The meeting focused on zoning, and potential zoning changes driven by State law. Commissioner Robertson stated he thinks it is important for the public to understand it is not a rezoning of the current zoning. The changes in zoning are happening due to state legislation and how the engineers are accommodating and changing.

Commissioner Bowser reported the Library Board met on August 19th. The board discussed an upcoming cybersecurity workshop, copy pricing and hiring a part-time employee.

Commissioner Day reported on the Park and Recreation Board meeting. The board reviewed the Farmers Market operations, and it was noted that the market established a board, obtained insurance and made effort to help with maintaining the park. The renovation of the Civic Center downstairs fitness and weight room is continuing. The Civic Center fall hours changed after Labor Day. The board discussed vandalism at the warming shelter and Creekside Park and possible additional cameras; improvements at East Fork; volunteer are needed for Trails and Ales; and an adopt-a-kiosk program using three-year agreements. There are approximately 20 trail kiosks available, with about eight parties interested. Flag football concluded successfully, youth soccer has more than 133 participants. The Farmer's Market was invited to the next Park and Recreation Board meeting on the first Wednesday in October at 7:00 p.m. at the Civic Center.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

City Manager Holly Phelps reported on the following items:

The City continues working with the Fergus County Treasurer's Office to verify tax payments and obtain reports needed for reconciliation. Auditors will assist with closing the prior fiscal year and reviewing County information.

Work has begun on the downtown master plan. Consultants and City representatives are reviewing the prior plan and identifying stakeholders. Virtual and in-person public outreach will occur during the winter, and updates will be posted on the City website.

Chokecherry Festival activities include traditional events, a children's scavenger hunt, downtown entertainment, and Trails and Ales. Maps and schedules are available through the festival website.

The biosolids project is progressing and there have been follow-up meetings with DEQ. After the environmental review is completed, bidding is anticipated in late October; construction is expected to begin after the first of the year because of long-lead components.

Upcoming meetings include the Public Works Committee on Friday at 9:00 a.m., the Ordinance Committee on September 16 at 11:00 a.m., and the Audit Committee on September 17 at noon at City Hall.

PUBLIC COMMENT – non-agenda items

John Carlson, 314 Fourth Avenue North, thanked the Commission for improved meeting sound quality and provided materials concerning Article X, Section 6 of the Montana Constitution, tax increment financing, and prior justice-of-the-peace matters. He encouraged integrity and honesty in City operations.

A resident of 109 Turquoise Drive thanked the City for installing stop signs at Lewis and Clark, stating they improved safety for children. The resident asked about the completion timeline for the apartment complex behind the former hospital and requested review of the Walnut, Darby, and Ash intersection for a four-way stop. The City Manager stated that the area is part of the Ash Street Bridge project and that other safety improvements, including flashing crosswalk beacons, have been requested and may require local funding.

Sandy Youngbauer, 49 Dairy Drive, reported an out-of-service fire hydrant near her home, asked the City to address tall hedges near Garfield School along East Boulevard that obstruct visibility, and raised concerns about knapweed and leafy spurge at Brewery Flats. Public Works representatives will follow up on the hydrant, and the Park and Recreation Board will be advised of the weed concerns.

Dean Allen questioned the City Manager's compensation and asked the Commission to evaluate whether City funds could be directed to other needs.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Buehler made the motion to approve the consent agenda and Commissioner Hewitt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The consent agenda was the acknowledgment of the claims that have been paid from August 15, 2026, to August 31, 2026, in the amount of \$76,360.66.

***REGULAR AGENDA – Resolutions, Ordinances & Other Action Items:**

1. Discussion and action on approving the placement of a sign on the City trail property for the Central Montana Shooting Complex

City Manager Phelps explained the members of the Central Montana Shooting complex are requesting permission to place a directional sign on City owned railroad property near Lime Kiln Road and Highway 191. The shooting complex is located just down the road. City Manager Phelps commented they will have to follow the State of Montana sign regulations and permits. This will not fall under the city's sign ordinance because it will be located outside the City limits. City Manager Phelps recommended that if the Commission chooses to approve the sign that as part of the motion you require state approval and an agreement in place to so the sign is maintained. Commissioner Shaver made the motion to approve the placement of a sign on the City trail property for the Central Montana Shooting Complex with the understanding they follow state regulations, keep the area clean and have an agreement with the City to maintain the sign and area it is located and Commissioner Bowser seconded the motion. Commissioner Day asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for, and the City Clerk took a roll call vote with all being in favor of the motion.

2. Discussion and action on approving amendment #2 to the Honda Shop Railroad lease

City Manager Phelps explained that amendment #2 to the Honda Shop Railroad lease was discussed at a previous meeting and at that time the commission did not approve it. The Contract Attorney Martin Smith has reviewed and revised amendment #2 to comply with Resolution No. 3820. Resolution No. 3820 is the railbanking resolution that was approved with the City purchased the property from BNSF. The amendment #2 changes also provides safeguards that were asked for by the lender for the Three Brothers. Commissioner Day asked if all the concerns of the attorney have been addressed in this revision. City Manager Phelps answered yes. Commissioner Robertson made the motion to approve amendment #2 to the Honda Shop Railroad lease and Commissioner Hewitt seconded the motion. Commissioner Day asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for, and the City Clerk took a roll call vote with Commissioners: Buehler, Bowser, Day, Hewitt, Robertson and Shaver being in favor of the motion. Commissioner Warren recused.

3. Discussion and action on approving Resolution No. 4233, a resolution redefining the boundaries of Street Maintenance District No. 1 in the City of Lewistown

City Manager Phelps explained the boundaries for Street Maintenance District No. 1 are the entire City limits. The new boundary does include the two annexations approved this year.

Commissioner Robertson made the motion to approve Resolution No. 4233, a resolution redefining the boundaries of Street Maintenance District No. 1 in the City of Lewistown and Commissioner Buehler seconded the motion. Commissioner Day asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for, and the City Clerk took a roll call vote with all being in favor of the motion.

4. Public hearing on the cost of maintenance of Boulevard District No. 12, cost of maintenance reserve and administration for Lighting Districts and cost of maintenance in Street Maintenance District No. 1.

Chairman Day opened the public hearing on the cost of maintenance of Boulevard District No. 12, cost of maintenance reserve and administration for Lighting Districts and cost of maintenance in Street Maintenance District No. 1. City Manager Phelps explained the proposed rates for street maintenance, boulevard maintenance and lighting districts are the same rates as last year.

Commissioner Shaver asked how many boulevard districts there are since this one is referenced as #12. City Manager Phelps answered this is the only boulevard district, but there were more when the boulevards were first created. Commissioner Day asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the public hearing was closed.

5. Discussion and action on approving Resolution No. 4234, a resolution of the City Commission of the City of Lewistown levying and assessing a special tax to cover the cost of maintenance of Boulevard District No. 12, in the City of Lewistown, Montana for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027

City Manager Phelps explained that the properties in the boulevard district are assessed on the linear footage adjacent to the boulevard. A list of the properties located in the district are attached to the resolution. The rate remains the same and it is the intention of the Commission to look at the boulevards in the future as to what improvements could be made. Commissioner Buehler made the motion to approve Resolution No. 4234, a resolution of the City Commission of the City of Lewistown levying and assessing a special tax to cover the cost of maintenance of Boulevard District No. 12, in the City of Lewistown, Montana for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027, and Commissioner Warren seconded the motion. Mr. John Carlson asked what he is paying for since there have been no improvements. City Manager Phelps answered the assessments cover the mowing of the boulevards. Mr. Dean Allen asked the Commission to consider removing the boulevard and widening the street to improve emergency route to the hospital and accommodate the school buses. Commissioner Day asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for, and the City Clerk took a roll call vote with all being in favor of the motion.

6. Discussion and action on approving Resolution No. 4235, a resolution levying and assessing the cost of maintenance reserve and administration, and supplying of electrical current for the streetlights within the City of Lewistown, to properties within particular lighting districts

City Manager Phelps explained there are numerous lighting districts in the City of Lewistown, and some residents are located in more than one lighting district. While other properties are not located in a lighting district. The proposed assessments remain the same and costs of each district vary according to the number and type of lights in each district. Commissioner Buehler made the motion to approve Resolution No. 4235, a resolution levying and assessing the cost of maintenance reserve and administration and supplying of electrical current for the streetlights within the City of Lewistown, to properties within particular lighting districts and Commissioner Shaver seconded the motion. Commissioner Day asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for, and the City Clerk took a roll call vote with all being in favor of the motion.

7. Discussion and action on approving Resolution No. 4236, a resolution estimating the cost of maintenance in Street Maintenance District No. 1, specifying the assessment option and levying an assessment on properties for Street Maintenance

City Manager Phelps explained the resolution explains how the properties are assessed for street maintenance. The assessment remains the same this year at four cents per square foot. A residential lot is capped at 15,000 square footages. Commissioner Hewitt made the motion to approve Resolution No. 4236, a resolution estimating the cost of maintenance in Street Maintenance District No. 1, specifying the assessment option and levying an assessment on properties for Street Maintenance and Commissioner Warren seconded the motion. Commissioner Day asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for, and the City Clerk took a roll call vote with all being in favor of the motion.

8. Public hearing on the 2026-2027 budget for the City of Lewistown

Chairman Day opened the public hearing to hear comments on the 2026-2027 budget for the City of Lewistown. City Manager Phelps explained this is the same budget approved as the preliminary. The one change is the addition of the large taxpayer fund. Commissioner Day asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the public hearing was closed.

9. Discussion and action on approving Resolution No. 4237, a resolution relating to final budgets, budget authorities and annual appropriations for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027

City Manager Phelps explained the approval of the resolution establishing the spending authority of the City of Lewistown. There are certain funds that are budgeted to meet statutory requirements but are not expected to be spent. Commissioner Buehler made the motion to approve Resolution No. 4237, a resolution relating to final budgets, budget authorities and annual appropriations for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027 and Commissioner Bowser seconded the motion. Commissioner Day asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for, and the City Clerk took a roll call vote with all being in favor of the motion.

10. Public hearing on Resolution No. 4238, a resolution authorizing an increase in the City of Lewistown's mill levy in order to fund increases in premium contributions for medical group benefits for City employees and exempting the same from the mill levy calculation limitation provided for by law

Chairman Day opened the public hearing to hear comments on Resolution No. 4238, a resolution authorizing an increase in the City of Lewistown's mill levy in order to fund increases in premium contributions for medical group benefits for City employees and exempting the same from the mill levy calculation limitation provided for by law. City Manager Phelps explained that state law allows municipalities to assess mill levy to help with the increase in health insurance premiums for general fund employees. Mr. Dean Allen asked how employee medical premiums have historically been paid and encouraged the Commission to consider taxpayer impact. City Manager Phelps explained the City pays 95% of the medial premium for the individual premiums. Commissioner Day asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the public hearing was closed.

11. Discussion and action on approving Resolution No. 4238, a resolution authorizing an increase in the City of Lewistown's mill levy in order to fund increases in premium contributions for medical group benefits for City employees and exempting the same from the mill levy calculation limitation provided for by

City Manager Phelps explained there is state statute that allows municipalities and school districts to assess health insurance premiums. The statute is very specific as to what employees qualify and how it is calculated. The City of Lewistown calculates this as up to 38 employees and the base year was 2000. Commissioner Buehler made the motion to approve Resolution No. 4238, a resolution authorizing an increase in the City of Lewistown's mill levy in order to fund increases in premium contributions for medical group benefits for City employees and exempting the same from the mill levy calculation limitation provided for by and Commissioner Hewitt seconded the motion. Commissioner Day asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for, and the City Clerk took a roll call vote with all being in favor of the motion.

12. Discussion and action on approving Resolution No. 4239, a resolution providing for the annual tax levy mills for fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027

City Manager Phelps explained that with the taxing structure the general fund mills will decrease. The City has determined a \$1,763,222 tax levy requiring 187.72 mill levy to balance the general fund budget and a \$250,989.87 permissive medical tax levy requiring a 26.72 mill levy to fund the increase in premium contributions for group insurance benefits. The total mills for the City of Lewistown are 214.44 for fiscal year 2027. Commissioner Hewitt made the motion to approve Resolution No. 4239, a resolution providing for the annual tax levy mills for fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027, and Commissioner Warren seconded the motion. Commissioner Day asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for, and the City Clerk took a roll call vote with all being in favor of the motion.

CITIZENS' REQUESTS

Mr. Jason Carlson encourage the Commission and public to recognize Constitution Day on September 17th by reading the Montana and United States Constitutions.

COMMISSIONER'S MINUTE

Commissioner Shaver discussed possible weed-control methods at Brewery Flats. Commissioner Shaver requested that public surveys be available in paper and telephone formats, as well as online, to reach a broader cross-section of residents. He also commented on the reduced budget and requested review of constitutional questions raised regarding funding provided to churches.

Commissioner Robertson commended the Commission, staff, and public for completing the evening's actions through constructive questions and discussion. He expressed appreciation for Lewistown's community character and upcoming Chokecherry Festival.

Commissioner Buehler discussed concerns communicated about the care of a dog being held for a required 10-day quarantine following a bite when vaccination records were unavailable. The City Manager confirmed that the Police Department was working to obtain records and that City facilities are available for the required hold.

Commissioner Buehler also asked the City to monitor the Berg property for noxious weeds and the invasive eastern heath snail.

Commissioner Warren relayed concerns about garbage near the parking area behind the brewery following a recent fire. The City Manager stated that Code Enforcement is working to address cleanup issues.

Commissioner Day asked if there was improved sound quality, and asked about the September 11 procession on Main Street, promoted Chokecherry Festival and the Chamber's monthly Ladies Night, and thanked staff for the extensive budget work and responsiveness to public and Commission questions.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Day adjourned the meeting.

Dated this 8th day of September 2026

Loraine Day, Commission Chairman

ATTEST:

Nikki Brummond, City Clerk