

May 26, 2026
Harlowton City Hall

A regular meeting of the Harlowton City Council was held on May 12, 2026. The meeting opened at 7:00pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The minutes of the April 28, 2026, Council meeting were approved as written. Mayor Runner asked Council if there was any conflict of interest with any item on the agenda. There was none.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Library: Councilmember Susan Beley reported the High School Art Show would be up until the end of this week. The 250th Community Art Show is up in the main area of the library. There will be a Flag Day Documentary on June 9th and as an extra perk, Carmen Katzenberger will give her speech that she won the Legion competition with. The Library Board will not have their meeting on Tuesday; they will have a meeting on May 29th at noon to okay the emergency plan.

Tree Board: Councilmember Vicki Paddock reported they had a workshop at the IAGT Building. Patrick Plantenburg from MUCFA was here to instruct people in the proper way to plant trees. The next Tree Board meeting will be Wednesday May 27th from 2-4 at City Hall.

Recreation: Councilmember Charley Bennett reported the pool is getting cleaned for the season. There is a broken valve that Mike Stensaas is looking for a replacement. The next meeting will be May 20th at 5pm at City Hall.

Ordinance: Councilmember Frank Brouillette reported the Ordinance Committee has recommendations for the Council on Title 13, 15, 16, and Tree Board and they will be later in the Council meeting.

Railyard/Roundhouse/Wetlands Trail: Mayor Runner is looking for volunteers for this committee if anyone is interested.

OLD BUSINESS:

Resolution 2026-17 A Resolution authorizing Amy Deitchler of Great West Engineering to pursue grant funding to update the City's Capital Improvement Plan: Councilmember Susan Beley moved to approve Resolution 2026-17. Councilmember Frank Brouillette seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Park Pavillion Use Agreement: There was concern on insurance, number of people included in the agreement, and alcohol use in the agreement. After much discussion, Councilmember Frank Brouillette moved to postpone this item to June 9, 2026, meeting to gather more information. Councilmember Vicki Paddock seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

Cody Nelson, DES Coordinator: Cody Nelson presented the council with a proposal: Harlowton Defensible Space Initiative. He talked to the Council about fire mitigation and what city residents can do to protect their property. Cody would like to come back and speak to the Council in June on this issue.

Fischer Park Flowers: Mayor Runner reported that in the past we have had people in the past take care of the flowers at Fischer Park. The Chamber of Commerce is not able to take care of it this year. We are looking for volunteers to tend the flowers this summer. Councilmember Frank Brouillette moved to postpone this item to the next council meeting. Councilmember Vicki Paddock seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 2026-16 Grant Funding for Railyard projects: Mayor Runner explained this resolution authorizing Jason Seyler of DEQ and Tonya Garber of Snowy MT Development to explore grant funding for the Roundhouse/Railyard projects. Snowy Mountain Development submitted a proposal for an eight-year plan for grants that would include the City of Harlowton contributing about \$3225 per year as our commitment to this project. Mayor Runner would like to postpone this resolution until it can be updated with the city's contribution. Councilmember Susan Beley moved to postpone this resolution to the next meeting so it can be updated with the City's contribution. Councilmember John Billadeau seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

City Committee Members and New Reporting Requirements: Mayor Runner would like to appoint Mariah Holt to the recreation committee. Councilmember Vicki Paddock moved to appoint Mariah Holt to the recreation committee. Councilmember John Billadeau seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Mayor Runner also let the committees know, they need to be submitting agendas so the meetings can be posted like council meetings as they are open to the public.

Door Hangers: Mayor Runner explained that in recent years, if a resident was 60 days past due on their utility bills, the city would put a notice on their door, that they had three business days to pay their bill. Our ordinance says if you are 60 days past due, you have until the 15th of the following month to pay, or your water is shut off. There has been some contention with the door hangers going on houses, creating some issues for us. After going through the council minutes since 2015, there is no reference to the door hangers other than a comment by Councilmember Bennett, September 10, 2019, stating there should be a charge associated with the door hangers to offset the cost of them and Rob Elwood stating that would be taken under advisement. The only other reference to door hangers is in the Big Timber Policy and Procedure manual that the Council was working on adopting. That policy and procedure manual was never approved by council. Mayor Runner asked if we could dispense with door hangers and go back to the ordinance wording. Councilmember Frank Brouillette moved to follow the ordinance. Councilmember Kyle Lawson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Citizens Bank Interest: Mayor Runner has been approached about putting money in STIP (Short-Term Investment Pool) through the state of Montana. We can transfer money back and forth. They currently have a 3.86% interest rate. Citizens Bank is giving us .25% interest. Mayor Runner asked Citizens Bank what they could do for us if we left the money in the bank. Citizens Bank offered us 3.5% interest to leave it in the bank. Councilmember Susan Beley moved to leave the money in Citizens Bank and get the 3.5% interest. Councilmember Frank Brouillette seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

First Reading for 01-2026 Ordinance Title 13 Franchises: Mayor Runner explained that Ordinance Title 13 dealing with franchises needs updates included in the ordinance wording.

Councilmember Vicki Paddock moved to accept the first reading of 01-2026 Ordinance Title 13 Franchises. Councilmember John Billadeau seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

First Reading for 02-2026 Ordinance Title 15 Moving Buildings: Mayor Runner explained the changes in Ordinance Title 15 Moving Buildings. Councilmember John Billadeau moved to accept the first reading of 02-2026 Ordinance Title 15 Moving Buildings. Councilmember Vicki Paddock seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

First Reading for 03-2026 Ordinance Title 16 Leases: Mayor Runner would like to postpone this ordinance until after the June 2nd election because if the city goes to self-governing powers it will change the way we deal with leases. Councilmember Susan Beley moved to postpone this first reading of Ordinance Title 16 until June 9th. Councilmember Kyle Lawson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

First Reading 04-2026 Repealing Tree Board Ordinance: Mayor Runner explained the tree board has never been recorded and goes back to 1987. The ordinance committee would like to repeal this ordinance. Councilmember Susan Beley moved to accept the first reading of 04-2026 Repealing the Tree Board Ordinance. Councilmember Charley Bennett seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

State Financial Services Division Decision (MLCT): Mayor Runner explained that because of repetitive past audit findings over the last five years, the State of Montana's is withholding some funding, including gas tax, loans and grants from the state for projects. Montana League of Cities and Towns Financial Services has been working on our bank reconciliation for some months; they had to go back and un-reconcile to 2020 and work their way forward to fix errors. They can devote more time to getting our past issues fixed but it will cost us some funds. After some discussion, Councilmember John Billadeau moved to have MLCT help us clean up our past audit findings and get us back on track with the state. Councilmember Charley Bennett seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Dump Truck overestimate: Mayor Runner let the council know that the dump truck is done, but the invoice is over the estimate for a total of about \$10,400. He is asking for approval for the overage of the invoice estimate. Councilmember Frank Brouillette moved to pay the invoice for the dump truck. Councilmember John Billadeau seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR REPORT: Public Works Director Bob Schuchard reported the crew is working on trees, streets and in the park. They also got the storm drain issue fixed.

REPORT OF THE CLERK-TREASURER: Clerk-Treasurer Anita Leach reported she spent last week at Municipal Institute. She learned some new things for council meetings. The state has changed their record retentions schedule, so we will start working on that. And the date of the audit has been changed to July 20th.

MAYORS REPORT: Mayor Runner said he had no report

REPORT OF ATTORNEY: City Attorney Brent Brooks reported he was at the Municipal Institute also. He was asked to speak at it. He is working on an animal cruelty case in this area also.

REPORT OF WCSO: None

ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING: Civic Plus Contract, Fischer Park Flowers, Railroad/Roundhouse Resolution

CLAIMS:

Councilmember Frank Brouillette made a motion to approve claims, 22767-22788. Councilmember John Billadeau seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50pm

Council Members Present: Susan Beley, Kyle Lawson, Charley Bennett, Vicki Paddock, Frank Brouillette, John Billadeau

Council Members Absent: None

City Office: Mayor Jack Runner, City Clerk-Treasurer Anita Leach, Public Works Director Bob Schuchard, City Attorney Brent Brooks

Public Present: Charlotte Runner, Dane Elwood, Shawn Tripp, Cody Nelson, Julie Berg

Jack Runner, Mayor

Anita Leach, Clerk-Treasurer