

## Stevensville Town Council Meeting Minutes

for THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2026, 6:30 PM 206 Buck Street, Town Hall

### 1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Mayor Crews called the meeting to order, Councilmembers Bailey, Ross, Wandler, and Smith were all present.

### 2. Pledge of Allegiance

### 3. Public Comments (Public comment from citizens on items that are not on the agenda)

John Snebigger: I have sent all of you some information on fire seasons. I am going to read you an article about climates and fire seasons. (read the article to the council also stated that he sent this article to the council).

Mayor Crews: I would like to add to that, we have had some fires in Red Lodge and in the Atlantic coast in Georgia there is one that is impacting that area, my brothers home is being impacted. I believe that it is due to increased populations and mismanagement of water resources.

John Snebigger: I would agree.

Steven Jackman: I have been here 10 years now, (gave some background to where he has lived and his health) I ride my bike I ride every other day, for the past 10 years I have been riding my bike on the bike path, into River Park and inside on the trails. I did not know until last week that it is not legal to ride a bike inside the Stevensville River Park. There are no signs down there that would let people know what things are allowed. In my opinion it should be open to bikes. I am asking you to take on that idea to legally ride bikes on the trail. I encourage you to look into this. Until we change the law, you will not see me riding in the trails. I am asking you to look at this municipal code.

Mayor Crews: Steven and I know each other from riding bikes.

Steven Jackman: I see him all of the time, cycling is my life and I think it is his also.

Mayor Crews: I encouraged Steven to come down and ask the council to change the ordinance to ride bikes in the park. I have talked with Gerry our parks manager to look at this park. Our park is not being used by everyone, and it should. One thing that I am talking to Gerry about is if we can work on this project and I am going to come to council and suggest that we change the ordinance and allow bicycles in

River Park. I would also to see that Lee Metcalf, but they do not realize that bicycles have low impact. I hope more people come forth about this.

#### 4. Approval of Minutes

##### a. Budget Workshop Meeting Minutes 04/08/2026

Mayor Crews: introduced Budget Workshop Meeting Minutes 04/08/2026.

Councilmember Smith: I move to accept Budget Workshop Meeting Minutes 04/08/2026.

Councilmember Wandler: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mayor Crews: motion and a 2<sup>nd</sup>. any discussion on this, public comment. Jenelle take the vote.

Councilmember Bailey: aye.

Councilmember Ross: aye.

Councilmember Wandler: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Crews: okay.

##### b. Town Council Meeting Minutes 04/09/2026

Mayor Crews: introduced town council meeting minutes 04/09/2026.

Councilmember Smith: move to accept town council meeting minutes 04/09/2026.

Councilmember Ross: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mayor Crews: motion and a 2<sup>nd</sup>. any questions from the council, public comment. Jenelle take the vote.

Councilmember Wandler: aye.

Councilmember Ross: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Councilmember Bailey: aye.

Mayor Crews: okay.

#### 5. Approval of Bi-Weekly Claims

a. Claims #20327-#20345 & #20348-#20351

Mayor Crews: introduced claims, #20327-#20345 & #20348-#20351

Councilmember Smith: I move to accept claims #20327-#20345 & #20348-#20351

Councilmember Wandler: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mayor Crews: motion and a 2<sup>nd</sup>. Council discussion?

Councilmember Wandler: 20349, we had discussed previously about soliciting bids from people for repairs to our vehicles. Is that done?

Mayor Crews: Jenelle we have submitted that, right.

Jenelle Berthoud: you got sick and that is where it ended.

Mayor Crews: I apologize we will need to bring that back up.

Councilmember Wandler: okay.

Councilmember Wandler: what is 20350 for.

Gina Crowe: Civic Plus is something that Jenelle uses. Codifications, website, minutes, agendas. This one is for codification.

Jenelle Berthoud: to hold our town code on the website we pay to have that service on the website.

Mayor Crews: any other questions, public comments? Jenelle, take the vote.

Councilmember Ross: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Councilmember Bailey: aye.

Councilmember Wandler: aye.

Mayor Crews: motion carries 4-0

## 6. Correspondence

a. Memo from Ms. Linda Henning

Mayor Crews: read correspondence. (Included in the agenda packet.)

Councilmember Bailey: May 19<sup>th</sup> will be our next meeting, to discuss the bills and the rates.

Mayor Crews: and you have a tour coming up.

Councilmember Bailey: that is on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

Mayor Crews: how many councilmembers are going to be able to make that tour?

## 7. New Business

### a. Discussion/Decision: Approval and Acceptance of the Montana State Fund Workers' Compensation Quote

Mayor Crews: introduced new business item a, Approval and Acceptance of the Montana State Fund Workers' Compensation Quote.

Gina Crowe: MMIA are phasing out and they were undercut by Montana State Fund,(MSF). MSF took on all of the bigger cities and so that forced MMIA to close their worker's compensation program as of June 30<sup>th</sup> they will not be providing anybody worker's comp to anyone in the state. I went out and did some research on who we could secure for our worker's compensation and MSF was the only one that would give us a quote. The others either do not cover municipalities or we are too small. We are left with MSF and actually we have a pretty good rate, and it is less than what we were paying with MMIA. I am sure as time goes on it will go up but we are pretty good as our work comp claims, we do not have any things out there or outstanding. What this does is secure us, it will take them a bit to put their stuff in there for us.

Mayor Crews: any questions from the council?

Councilmember Bailey: this is just good for one year and then reevaluate our rates for the next fiscal year.

Gina Crowe: it is really hard with a municipality as small as us, we can look but normally it is kind of hard to secure another one.

Councilmember Bailey: sure, I was just curious if they were going to raise their rates next year.

Gina Crowe: if they do we will ask.

Councilmember Bailey: just making sure that we would not be in a contract.

Gina Crowe: it all depends on their rates, I have not seen anything, they are not going to give us a three-year contract that is just not how they work. They will evaluate at the end of the year and see where we are, MMIA did the same thing.

Mayor Crews: any more questions from the council. Public comment.

Councilmember Smith: I move to approve and accept the Montana State Fund Workers' Compensation Quote.

Councilmember Ross: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mayor Crews: motion and a 2<sup>nd</sup>. Any further council discussion. Jenelle take the vote.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Councilmember Bailey: aye.

Councilmember Wandler: aye.

Councilmember Ross: aye.

Mayor Crews: thank you motion carries 4-0

b. Discussion/Decision: Approval to Close Town Hall on 04/29/2026 for Training Purposes

Mayor Crews: introduced new business item b, approval to close town hall on 4/29/26 for training purposes. We have requested MMIA to come down and provide training to the town and any other town. We have had Alberton respond and they will be coming. We have also requested that department heads attend, so we are going to have Stephen and John along with Jenelle and Andrena. Jessica will not be here because of court, right.

Jenelle Berthoud: yes, all day.

Mayor Crews: I have invited the department heads because I think that it is important that they know how government works. it is one thing to be out in the field all of the time and come in and say I need to get this and that and find out that there is a process, they need to know why there is a process and how it gets done, that is why I have asked the department heads to come. It is free training and they should not be turning it down.

Councilmember Bailey: how much does the training cost for them to come out?

Mayor Crews: \$1,500 is that right.

Jenelle Berthoud: yes.

Councilmember Bailey: and that is for an unlimited amount of people to attend.

Mayor Crews: I have asked the other towns if they come they can contribute if they want, the town is going to provide pizza for lunch and Cindy, and I are going to provide a meat and cheese platter and veggie tray and cookies. It will be a good event, and you will learn a lot. Talon will you be able to attend.

Councilmember Ross: I should be able to attend.

Mayor Crews: public comment?

Councilmember Wandler: I move to approve the closure of town hall on 4/29/26 for training purposes.

Councilmember Smith: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mayor Crews: motion and a 2<sup>nd</sup>. The reason that we have to do this is because the mayor's office cannot close town hall, it takes the council and we have to provide public notice that a quorum of the council will be convened, and no business will be conducted only for training purposes.

Councilmember Wandler: you said to close town hall, does that mean everything.

Mayor Crews: the clerks office, the police department, fire department, court and public works will still be open. It is mainly the clerks office

Mayor Crews: any further comments, Jenelle please call for the vote.

Councilmember Ross: aye.

Councilmember Wandler: aye.

Councilmember Bailey: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Crews: okay.

c. Discussion/Decision: Appointment of Austin Kirkland as a Volunteer Firefighter Recruit for the SFD

Mayor Crews: introduced new business item c, Appointment of Austin Kirkland as a Volunteer Firefighter Recruit for the SFD.

Austin Kirkland: I am 21 years old I moved out here last June to apprentice under my father as a barber, I figure that volunteer fire department is a good way to give back to my community. I have experienced lots of car accidents and things of that nature in high school and middle school and friends passing. Anything that I can do to help out or prevent or mitigate from that damage that occurred I will gladly take that opportunity.

Mayor Crews: thank you, I hope that things work out that we never have to see you getting a life saving award but if you do I welcome you to be one of the ones to receive it.

Councilmember Smith: do you have any certifications that you are bringing with you.

Austin Kirkland: none, but I have been going to the trainings with the rest of the fire department to start practicing and have been talking to me about driving the engine, that is one of the first things that they are going to train me to do. After that I will be doing fire fighter one and EMT.

Mayor Crews: any questions from the council, public comment.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Tamara Ross: both volunteer recruitments on the agenda tonight, I want to thank you for your time and commitment as well as donating your time and we know that time is precious and whatever time you are taking away from to give your public duty or public volunteer time is much appreciated.

Mayor Crews: any further discussion, public comment.

Councilmember Bailey: I move that we appoint Austin Kirkland as a Volunteer Firefighter Recruit for the SFD.

Councilmember Smith: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mayor Crews: motion and a 2<sup>nd</sup>. any further council discussion. Jenelle, please call for the vote.

Councilmember Bailey: aye.

Councilmember Ross: aye.

Councilmember Wandler: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Crews: motion carries 4-0

d. Discussion/Decision: Appointment of Jared Colton Johnston as a Volunteer Firefighter Recruit for the SFD

Mayor Crews: introduced new business item d, Appointment of Jared Colton Johnston as a Volunteer Firefighter Recruit for the SFD.

Councilmember Wandler: do we have any information on him.

Mayor Crews: I do not but he has been recommended by the fire chief and that is good enough for me.

Councilmember Bailey: I move that we approve the Appointment of Jared Colton Johnston as a Volunteer Firefighter Recruit for the SFD.

Councilmember Wandler: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mayor Crews: motion and a 2<sup>nd</sup>. discussion from the council. Public comment? Jenelle, please take the vote.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Councilmember Ross: aye.

Councilmember Bailey: aye.

Councilmember Wandler: aye.

Mayor Crews: motion carries 4-0

Mayor Crews: introduced new business item e.

Councilmember Smith: can I make a motion to combine items e and f.

e. Discussion/Decision: Approval of Stevensville Harvest Valley Farmers Market for 05/02/2026

f. Discussion/Decision: Approval of Stevensville Harvest Valley Farmers Market for 05/16/2026

Mayor Crews: motion on the floor to combined e and f.

Councilmember Wandler: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mayor Crews: motion and a 2<sup>nd</sup> to combined items e and f as one item, comments from the public and council discussion. Can I get a vote please.

Councilmember Wandler: aye.

Councilmember Bailey: aye.

Councilmember Ross: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Crews: okay.

Mayor Crews: back to those items, approval of SHVFM for 05/02/2026 and 05/16/2026. Questions from the council?

Councilmember Ross: my question is why are we voting on this because it is not an ongoing event it is a reoccurring event. And we had a discussion about this.

Mayor Crews: yes we have, first off the permit had not been approved because they just got their 501C-3 and got their business license and now we can approve their event. The discussions with farmers market, the town attorney and the mayors office included that they would come back every two weeks and ask for renewal of this for this year as a curtesy because our town ordinance says it. we are trying to comply with our ordinance we did give some leeway on the pricing, but we are sticking to our guns on the two-week reoccurring event per our town ordinance.

Councilmember Ross: that is fine I just think that it takes up a lot of time and the ordinance states ongoing events and it is not.

Mayor Crews: you have to look at the literal definitions of reoccurring and ongoing. If you read the definitions of them they are pretty similar.

Councilmember Ross: yes, but they are not the same. And you and I have had a discussion about this and you agreed that it was a reoccurring and not an ongoing, so to me we are wasting a lot of town time, and farmers market time to do something that I believe is not necessary. To me we should, we approved the permit we should be good to go we are not violating the ordinance and that is my opinion and based on our discission they are reoccurring not ongoing.

Mayor Crews: thank you.

Councilmember Smith: since this has been taken to the town attorney and all of that I am more inclined to go with that until we change the town code.

Councilmember Bailey: what is the definition of reoccurring versus ongoing. How are we defining those as different.

Mayor Crews: it is kind of weird because reoccurring would be an individual event occurring again, again and again, versus ongoing that an event starts here and it continues, without a break. This event has been approved for every Saturday for 23 weeks, but there is a week between each day, so it is kind of a hybrid. Farmers market is okay with it, the clerks office, mayor and town attorney are fine with it. Jess suggested that they would do the two-week renewal, we know that we have to change the ordinance. Once we can do that we can eliminate it.

Councilmember Ross: to me there is no need to change it if we are seeing it as a reoccurring because we have spent way more money with the attorney discussing something that we are not going to make that much money in a year. To now say that we are going to change the ordinance that is going to cost people more money. we are wasting time and money on something that happens every Saturday that is reoccurring. We are not approving it to be every day for the next two weeks we are approving it to happen once, then reoccur again next week. We are spending a lot of time, and I understand that they have offered to do this I am just stating we have already spent a lot of money.

Mayor Crews: as a reoccurring event are they separate or is it a continuous event.

Councilmember Ross: they would be separate events.

Mayor Crews: so, do we charge them a special event fee for every event.

Councilmember Ross: we have approved them by their permit, how we have approved the permit is with a one-time fee.

Mayor Crews: is it a reoccurring event?

Councilmember Ross: it was approved for all of those days. It reoccurs every Saturday.

Mayor Crews: so, we are in that zone in our ordinance that we are darned if we do and darned if we don't. this is a good compromise that it is going to come back every two weeks, it does not take much time to do.

Councilmember Ross: there are sometimes that it does not line up and then we have to approve two at a time and then. I understand that this is a current solution I

am just saying that we are going down a dark whole spending more money and we have brought in a fifth of what we are spending for this specific permit and I think its unnecessary and I think that ongoing is intended to be "hey you have the rodeo in town for a month and half way through the town comes to us and says that we are having a hard time with parking because of this ongoing event and that gives us the council an opportunity to say hey we are here to approve you for this second two weeks but for us to do that you need to fix your parking problem." not this is something that is happening once a week reoccurring every week.

Councilmember Bailey: what is the cost to the town to update the ordinance.

Jenelle Berthoud: upwards of \$500-\$800.

Councilmember Ross: and how much have we spent on attorney fees.

Jenelle Berthoud: \$3,000.00.

Councilmember Ross: and we are bringing in \$500 for the year.

Mayor Crews: this year.

Jenelle Berthoud: between all of the special events that you have heard of or given approval to is about \$500-\$550.

Councilmember Bailey: I think the language in the ordinance is vague enough that it would be worth it to us to clean it up and clarify and really spend time to get it perfect so that we do not have to come back and spend more attorney fees.

Mayor Crews: I want to enlighten you a little bit too, we change the ordinance the attorney has to review it.

Councilmember Bailey: if there are different and before it did not make sense and now that you have explained it, it does make sense.

Mayor Crews: that was the big dilemma, whether it was 23 separate events which would have been a lot of money or is it an ongoing event over 23 separate days that is where this all came together at, we reached a compromise that has worked and that is why we are bringing it back. Lets get this done, next week is their event.

Councilmember Bailey: in an event that has more than 1,000 people has to come to council?

Mayor Crews: that is the other question is it an individual day or a communitive event. At the minimum it is 250 per day, times 23 days more than 1,000. There are several ordinances that we need to clean up.

Councilmember Wandler: why can't we just have them have one application for this year saying specific dates and we approve it.

Councilmember Ross: we tried that. and I am advocating on not approving I just am pointing out a flaw.

Mayor Crews: it is a flaw; the government is not perfect right now. We will work through it.

Councilmember Bailey: I think that we also need to review the ordinance, the resolution, the rates and the application. In tandem so that we understand how these documents work, we really need to shore this up sooner than later.

Mayor Crews: I think that the correct answer might be to minimize how much of the special event permit is covered in the ordinance and do it by resolution and will not cost us as much as resolution. In the ordinance we say that a special event permit is changed by a resolution.

Councilmember Bailey: we can change a resolution easier.

Mayor Crews: state law, they have repealed so many laws lately. A bike is now considered a vehicle. Any further comment by council?

Councilmember Bailey: I do have a question as far as metering, and how they plan to do that.

Mayor Crews: what the farmers market is going to do, is they are going to go to the pole and take a date and time picture in the am and in the pm and send it to us.

Councilmember Bailey: and what is the rate that they will be charged for power usage.

Mayor Crews: whatever we are getting charged right now. The interesting thing is there is a base rate we may run into something with that.

Councilmember Smith: do we have a contingency if they might forget to take the picture.

Mayor Crews: we will hope they are more diligent than that.

Councilmember Smith: but what if, this is all new.

Councilmember Ross: there is still the base rate in the permit that we can charge them.

Councilmember Bailey: we can refer back to the resolution on that.

Councilmember Wandler: so, what are they paying. How much are they paying for use this year.

Mayor Crews: \$125.00 for the special event permit and we will look at the power; at the end of the year, they will take it to their board and bring it back to us and you the council will decide.

Councilmember Wandler: so, they will pay \$150.00 for all of it.

Mayor Crews: it depends on what they use.

Councilmember Wandler: forget the meter, just for the usage.

Councilmember Ross: yes they will pay the \$125.00 for the permit.

Councilmember Wandler: I see in red fee waived; they did pay already.

Mayor Crews: they did get their 501 C-3. They have paid their \$125.00.

Jenelle Berthoud: they have paid their \$125.00 for the car show as well.

Councilmember Bailey: make a motion that we approve the SHVFM for 05/02/2026 and 05/16/2026.

Councilmember Ross: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mayor Crews: motion and a 2<sup>nd</sup>. further discussion, Jenelle please take the vote.

Councilmember Ross: aye.

Councilmember Wandler: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Councilmember Bailey: aye.

Mayor Crews: thank you.

## 8. Board Reports

### a. Sewer & Water Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes 04/07/2026

Councilmember Bailey: I kind of already gave it, meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> to take a tour and on the 19<sup>th</sup> to meet with Robert and Gina about the finances.

Mayor Crews: your bylaws.

Councilmember Bailey: they were approved at the last meeting and will come to you soon.

Mayor Crews: everyone understands that the mission is to look at what is going on and try to get a resolution.

Councilmember Bailey: 6 members now.

9. Town Council Comments

NONE

10. Executive Report


Mayor Crews: not a lot to report this week, still recovering Doctor gave a good report he said that he surgery was successful.

11. Adjournment

Councilmember Smith: make a motion to adjourn.

Councilmember Ross: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**APPROVE:**



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James Crews, Mayor

**ATTEST:**



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Jenelle S. Berthoud, Town Clerk