

Stevensville Special Town Council Meeting Minutes
for MONDAY, APRIL 27, 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 were all present. Councilmember Smith is delayed.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

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

NONE

4. New Business

a. Discussion/Decision: Lifeguard Wages

Mayor Crews: introduced new business item a, lifeguard wages.

Robert Underwood: (passed out to the council revenue and expenses for the past four years on the pool) we looked at some of the costs of swim lessons in the area. We are pretty much in the ballpark with the rates. (reviewed the surrounding areas and their costs for swim lessons). We could look at raising the rates a bit. If you look at the sheets, (went through the amounts that the pool as lost in the past four years). The pool season is based on two fiscal years, in June all of the expenses will calculate into this year, we do get a lot of our revenue in the next two months. The cost over time has gone up (reviewed the costs over the past four years). We still have two weeks in June for open swim so that number could go up but not by much. For the total over the past four years, we have lost over \$37,000.00

Mayor Crews: let the record show that Councilmember Smith has arrived. (at 6:36 pm)

Robert Underwood: remember this one year we had some big fixes, if you go with the last two years we are losing around \$5,000.00. the hard part about the wages is they are kids and how many kids we need at the pool. Pool manager works about 250 hours; on average the kids work on average about 160 hours. The hard part is the pool manager comes to us every year with a number of kids. They aren't always here, some may go on vacation, leave early for school. (broke down the average of how many kids and the number of hours and the wages). At \$15.00 per hour, we go up \$3,000.00 in the big picture the cost does not go up much. First we thought about

pool manager and 5 full times. But what we need is more to cover. Through the summer it can be harder to manage the kids because they start to leave. The revenue is slowly going up (referenced the four-year chart). The 24/25 number is up because they maxed out the swim lessons. One of the things that is in here is the Splash Pad, and the expenses, it takes away from the pool and costs us money. it has cost us \$10,000.00 already, we did get a donation for that, and it is now gone. I do not know where to go from here, looking at the budget, we still only have one applicant so far. The wage number is just not something that is looking good to them. \$14.00 is just not good. The pool manager said she will not come back at the low rate.

Councilmember Ross: what is the minimum for the employees at the pool.

Robert Underwood: we are not hiring full-time employees, the more lessons the more employees needed.

Councilmember Ross: at any given hour about how many people would have to work there for it to be open.

Stephen Lassiter: it varies so bad, Olivia would send them home sometimes. And then there were other days they were lined up to get into the pool.

Mayor Crews: What is the minimum number on employees to open the pool.

Stephen Lassiter: eight lifeguards and a manager. They switch around.

Mayor Crews: at least three.

Gerry Gaylor: every fifteen minutes the lifeguards have to switch out.

Councilmember Bailey: what is the pool capacity?

Stephen Lassiter: 65?

Councilmember Bailey: how many kids per lifeguard?

Stephen Lassiter: that is a guess, we have been sticking with 20-25. I cant find a rule, that is just what they have been doing.

Councilmember Smith: do we have any applicants for lifeguard yet?

Mayor Crews: one. We think that the reason that we are not getting any applicants is because the wage is to low.

Robert Underwood: the wage is too low and the kids that we used to have had lifeguard certification and we used to pay for it. Kids have moved on. Do we pay for the certification, I think that it is around \$200.00 per person.

Mayor Crews: what is the maximum amount that we can afford to pay?

Robert Underwood: we are making the budget; we are already at a loss.

Stephen Lassiter: it depends on how much you want to lose.

Mayor Crews: if we pay \$15.00 an hour we would be okay?

Robert Underwood: extra \$5,000.00 with wages and pay for certification. Manger increase would be \$1,200.00.

Councilmember Bailey: what about swim instructor certs, are we requiring those.,

Mayor Crews: we have three agenda items here, wages, pay for certs and opening of the pool. If council wants to discuss all three at one time I would recommend that council suspend town council rules and make a movement to address all three items at one time.

b. Discussion/Decision: Reimbursement of Certification for Lifeguards

c. Discussion/Decision: Set Date to Determine the Stevensville Pool Opening for the 2026 Season

Councilmember Smith: I suspend council rules and discussion items a, b, c as one item.

Councilmember Wandler: 2nd.

Mayor Crews: motion and a 2nd. Public comment? Jenelle take the vote.

Councilmember Bailey: aye.

Councilmember Ross: aye.

Councilmember Wandler: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Crews: good motion carries, discuss all three items at one time.

Councilmember Ross: this comes out of the general fund so annually how much of our general fund do we have left at the end of the year.

Robert Underwood: about \$200,000.00 is what we shoot for, general fund is pretty tight.

Councilmember Ross: the reason for asking has to do with if we did the \$5,000.00 where would we be.

Robert Underwood: I can change that number out really quick and show that.

Councilmember Ross: and that does not include swim certification.

Jenelle Berthoud: I could find one thing online, but not a dollar amount tied to it,

Gerry Gaylor: I did not see anything. Just lifeguard training. Two more times for training still available.

Councilmember Ross: so less than a month to hire eight lifeguards and get them trained.

Councilmember Bailey: the later that we open, less revenue and a bigger risk of not making our money back.

Councilmember Ross: and the kids that want lessons have to potentially go somewhere else. They are competing late for other lessons.

Mayor Crews: there seems to be a general consensus that the wages need to be increased to \$18.00 an hour for the manager and \$15.00 an hour for the lifeguards and pay for the certification. Is that what I am hearing you say.

Councilmember Ross: it is worth considering.

Mayor Crews: Robert you said that increase would be \$5,000.00

Robert Underwood: I did an average; I think that we are about at that.

Councilmember Ross: I think it was Gina that had found out that the county was giving to the Hamilton pool.

Robert Underwood: I think that they have a district. They have different rates. We do not have separate rates for city and out of town. The people that I talk with they like to come to our pool because it is close.

Mayor Crews: what are the fees?

Robert Underwood: gave the current rates that are offered by the Stevensville Pool.

Jenelle Berthoud: provided rates for the Bitterroot Aquatics Center. In district and out of district rates. We are just about the same.

Councilmember Ross: with the in and out of district and if we were to go with that, what type of workload would that add for the pool as far as, would we have to add an extra person to check ID.

Jenelle Berthoud: I think that we would have to go off of, I am not sure how to handle that, when I called Hamilton today they make you go online and fill everything out.

Councilmember Ross: then we would have to have someone who would check ID's and know the areas.

Mayor Crews: maybe this is something that we look at for next year, when they come to get their pool pass we do it then and look at increasing our fees for out of district, I do not see a problem with that, but this year I think that we are too late. General consensus is that we need to raise the rates, pay for their certification, and then leaves us with a decision for a cut off date for lifeguards and when we open the pool.

Councilmember Ross: with that is there a possibility that we can set an initial date as a target.

Mayor Crews: when is the next certification.

Gerry Gaylor: May 28th.

Mayor Crews: so that should be your target date, June 1st to see if we have the lifeguards.

Stephen Lassiter: the people that are calling now, I am telling them that we can put them on the schedule, but I am telling them if we don't have lifeguards. I am just letting them know so they will not be mad.

Mayor Crews: I agree. June 1st will be your cut-off date, if we do not have lifeguards by June 1st then we have to decide to close the pool.

Councilmember Ross: I think that a couple of days prior to that training that way we can have our decision made.

Mayor Crews: I do not see a problem with that, when would be a good time to do that?

Jenelle Berthoud: we do have a council meeting on the 28th of May.

Robert Underwood: I would give a range, \$15.00-\$18.00 for the manger and \$13.50-\$15.00 for lifeguards. We could, depending on what we get, if there are already certified that would reduce cost.

Jenelle Berthoud: if we are not making a decision until May 28th we miss out. Stephen and I talked about if we have nine kids on the 28th we hire them all and figure out how to get them trained up.

Councilmember Smith: if I remember correctly lifeguard certification is one day.

Gerry Gaylor: the one that I found was three hours a day for five days.

Mayor Crews: that is in Missoula, a lot of gas.

Mayor Crews: we could look at getting an instructor here.

Councilmember Ross: could they come to ours.

Gerry Gaylor: we could look at that.

Councilmember Ross: do we also need to make sure that the pool is functioning by that date as well.

Stephen Lassiter: I can get it open before that and make sure that it is all working. It is nice to have a few cushion days to check everything out.

Councilmember Ross: my concern is that we accept the 28th and then we go to open the pool, and it is not actually working and then we are out another month.

Stephen Lassiter: we will just have to see where we are at with the lifeguards.

Jenelle Berthoud: if we are not going off of any of these dates which date are you looking at opening the pool, the last day for school is June 5th.

Stephen Lassiter: I can look at it being open that next Monday.

Mayor Crews: so, a little summary, \$15.00-\$18.00 for the manger and \$13.50-\$15.00 for lifeguards we agree to pay the certification and if we can we will do the certification here in town all at one time. We set a date to open the pool of June 8th if we have the lifeguards and we make a decision to open the pool on May 28th.

Robert Underwood: we talk about expenses; we also need to talk about revenue. Last year we sold t-shirts and snacks another thing to ask council about is selling a spot for a coffee truck or food truck outside the pool, even \$25.00 a day or a week. Another option would be to sponsor a lifeguard, talk with business about sponsoring the wages for lifeguards.

Councilmember Bailey: are the lifeguards teaching swim lessons, we are advertising that we teach swim lessons and collect money for that. Are we anticipating that our guards are certified. To me it seems like a huge liability that we are advertising that

we are going to teach your kids how to swim and the lifeguards have no prerequisites to do so.

Stephen Lassiter: there is a program that they go by it is some kind of approved program. It is a certified program.

Councilmember Bailey: so, all of the lifeguards go through that then?

Stephen Lassiter: no, all lifeguards do it, but not necessarily a class.

Councilmember Wandler: I do not think Stevensville is teaching your kids to swim we are just giving them lessons.

Mayor Crews: there is a difference.

Councilmember Wandler: I used to teach swim lessons.

Councilmember Bailey: with lessons I think that it implies that you are going to learn how to swim.

Mayor Crews: what does our advertisement say?

Jenelle Berthoud: group and private swim lessons.

Councilmember Bailey: they are not going to come out of the class with a certificate saying they know how to swim. Teaching a class or inviting someone to come to a class says that you have certification to teach that class.

Robert Underwood: I know that they have the program down, I know that they talk through what they are teaching. At one time we have a program that tracked everything, we do not pay for that program anymore, but we still do it.

Mayor Crews: for our purposes tonight, we are just talking swim lessons, we need to make sure that the program is together and have our town attorney look over it and sign off.

Gerry Gaylor: they have a six-level program that they sign off on. I can bring that to you.

Councilmember Ross: another thing that I thought of, on a future agenda we do have the group locally that was looking to lower the price specifically for that group and that would be a potential increase in some revenue for kids that would not normally come.

Mayor Crews: you are talking about Jamie. Is everybody have a good idea of what we are doing here, can I have a motion on the floor for lifeguard wages.

Councilmember Ross: I would like to make a motion to approve lifeguard \$13.50-\$15.00 and \$15.00-\$18.00 for the manger.

Councilmember Wandler: 2nd.

Mayor Crews: motion and a 2nd. Any discussion?

Councilmember Bailey: what is the likelihood that we will get that money back if we raise salaries.

Robert Underwood: get the money back?

Councilmember Bailey: if we raise our salaries what is the likelihood that we will make that money back or see a return.

Councilmember Ross: currently we are not getting our money back.

Councilmember Bailey: just not going to happen.

Mayor Crews: the pool has always lost money. I expect the same thing to happen again this year, we provide a service and that is what it is. We haven't even talked about the cost to run the pool.

Councilmember Smith: what is the determining factor between \$13.50 and \$15.00.

Mayor Crews: it is a negotiation between the lifeguards and the town for being hired, it gives you a wage range. You have one that comes back from last year and they are going to get a hire wage this year.

Councilmember Smith: do they get raises week after week?

Robert Underwood: no.

Councilmember Wandler: it makes sense, first time \$13.50 coming back \$15.00.

Robert Underwood: for years we used to have a fifty cent raise every time they came back, and we tracked that. It is not in the plan anymore because they are all going to be new.

Mayor Crews: we are going to have to bring these wages back by resolution all wages and salaries are by resolution.

Councilmember Smith: with your motion Talon are we funding the certification or not.

Mayor Crews: that is a separate issue. Motion on the floor is for wages. Any public comment? Jenelle call for the vote on lifeguard wages.

Councilmember Bailey: aye.

Councilmember Ross: aye.

Councilmember Wandler: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Crews: okay.

b. Discussion/Decision: Reimbursement of Certification for Lifeguards

Mayor Crews: I will entertain a motion for paying for the certification for the lifeguards. We have discussed that we will either pay for it individually or as a group.

Councilmember Ross: with that is it something that we need to distinguish at a later date that we are doing it individually or all here. If we say that we are going to cover it, we are done.

Councilmember Ross: I make a motion that we approve Reimbursement of Certification for Lifeguards

Councilmember Smith: 2nd.

Mayor Crews: motion and a 2nd. Public comment?

Councilmember Bailey: any consideration for some retention language if the lifeguards get their certification and only cover one shift and leave us short staffed or leave town. How are we going to recoup our money or ensure that they are going to work the shifts that we have invested in.

Gerry Gaylor: is there something that we could do with 30 days or a set timeline.

Mayor Crews: it is a good idea.

Councilmember Ross: is this something that would need to go into the resolution?

Robert Underwood: remember we do not have anybody yet and then we are going to put a limit on that. We do the training; we can't ask for that money back if they do not stay.

Councilmember Ross: that would be pretty hard to do.

Mayor Crews: I think at this point if you want to "handcuff" a potential employee you are going to have the town attorney review this, and that is going to cost us more than the training.

Jenelle Berthoud: we do this with our police officers because we are investing tens of thousands of dollars, I think that right now we are talking about maybe \$100.00.

Councilmember Ross: and the town attorney is going to be \$150.00 per hour. The attorney cost is going to be the same as certifying the lifeguards.

Mayor Crews: we can't always predict what is going to happen. To handcuff them is not going to work.

Councilmember Bailey: a general form that they fill out and that they will work a certain number of hours or reimburse the town is a very simple thing and protects the town. They sit in the sun decide that it is not what they want, they leave the town is out of money and short staffed. And then we can't recoup that money.

Robert Underwood: you can have them do that, a signed piece of paper, in their mind they would not know, you have to work a season.

Mayor Crews: you have an agreement such that if they do not work a full thirty days they have to reimburse the town.

Jenelle Berthoud: we will have to have Ms. Christine to draw that up.

Mayor Crews: yes, that would be a labor agreement.

Councilmember Ross: that was my concern her drawing that could potentially be more than the training.

Councilmember Bailey: potentially, unless they need to have certification for swim instructors. Do we need to approve lifeguard certs or any and all certs that they need to do the job.

Mayor Crews: I am sorry can you say that again.

Councilmember Bailey: are we approving to approve reimbursing or paying the employee certification just for lifeguard or for lifeguard and swimming instructor should they need it.

Mayor Crews: it should be one in the same.

Councilmember Bailey: it is different, lifeguard is saving lives and swim instructor is teaching.

Mayor Crews: what is the fee for the other.

Jenelle Berthoud: I did not find a fee, we train them in CPR, First aid, and lifeguard saving measures. What Ms. Bailey is talking about is the same thing that Mr. Motley

brought up, which is where is the cert for them to teach this kid to swim, it is a different cert.

Councilmember Ross: the current motion is just for lifeguards.

Councilmember Smith: do I assume that the manager already has the teaching certification?

Jenelle Berthoud: no, just lifeguard.

Councilmember Ross: nobody has a certification for teaching. This is completely different, when I was a ski instructor we had general people who could come in and get a job and be a ski instructor and then you could go and get certified as PSIA ski instructor and that would give you a raise.

Mayor Crews: Jenelle look up on the internet real quick if you would please what it takes to become a certified swim instructor.

Jenelle Berthoud: to be a certified swim instructor in the state of Montana must have strong swimming skills and have a certification from the American red cross water safety instructor or a WSI or a basic swim instructor, BSI. Required training includes CPR, First Aid, AED certification, passing in water skills assessments and completing online or in person course. That is from the City of Missoula.

Mayor Crews: so that is the same one.

Councilmember Bailey: yeah, I would like to see that it is a certified instructor instead of a lifeguard.

Gerry Gaylor: can we just advertise it as swim lessons taught by lifeguards.

Mayor Crews: how do we normally advertise it?

Gerry Gaylor: swim lessons.

Mayor Crews: so, they are getting their certified as a lifeguard.

Councilmember Ross: our motion is just for the lifeguards is that something that we could vote on and then look into it further between now and when we start teaching lessons. Because this could be two different things.

Mayor Crews: it could apply to both, if you agree to pay the certification for the lifeguards and one of them wants to become a certified swim instructor I think that it would benefit the town to pay for that.

Councilmember Ross: I agree I was just more, the current motion is just for the lifeguard training, and we could come back and do another one.

Mayor Crews: we could put that on the agenda, the current motion on the floor is reimburse for the certification of lifeguards.

Councilmember Ross: it would at least get us the approved for the lifeguards.

Councilmember Bailey: and then we can understand what we need for training.

Mayor Crews: Jenelle, please call for the vote.

Councilmember Bailey: aye.

Councilmember Ross: aye.

Councilmember Wandler: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Crews: please put a note that we are going to bring back on the 14th for swim instructors.

c. Discussion/Decision: Set Date to Determine the Stevensville Pool Opening for the 2026 Season

Mayor Crews: introduced new business c. you have discussed June 8th and bring back on May 28th for a final decision.

Councilmember Bailey: did we determine that we wanted to set that a little earlier so that they can get to the training earlier.

Mayor Crews: right now, we do not have any lifeguards, and this gives us almost a month to get them together and then we should know and make that decision then.

Councilmember Ross: if we are going to host the training it does not matter.

Mayor Crews: can I get a motion.

Councilmember Ross: I move that we approve to set the date for the to open the June 8th in the May 28th council meeting.

Mayor Crews: motion on the floor to make a preliminary decision to open pool on June 8th with a final decision to be made on May 28th.

Councilmember Wandler: 2nd.

Mayor Crews: motion and a 2nd. Public comment? Council discussion?

Councilmember Smith: just a reminder or point of information that I will be gone from the 17th-1st.

Mayor Crews: the government shall move on without you. Jenelle call for the vote.

Councilmember Bailey: aye.

Councilmember Ross: aye.

Councilmember Wandler: aye.

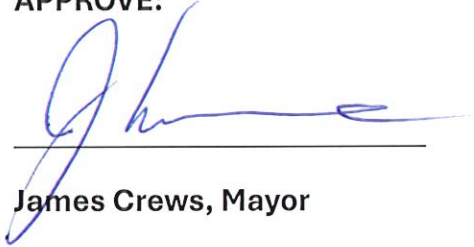
Councilmember Smith: aye

5. Adjournment

Councilmember Smith: motion to adjourn.

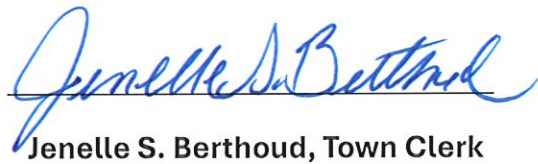
Councilmember Ross: 2nd.

APPROVE:



James Crews, Mayor

ATTEST:



Jenelle S. Berthoud, Town Clerk