

Stevensville Budget Workshop FY2026/2027 Minutes

for WEDNESDAY, JULY 08, 2026, 5:15 PM 206 Buck Street, Town Hall

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Council President Bailey called the meeting to order. Councilmembers Bailey, Ross, Wandler and Smith were present. Stephen Lassiter, Public Works Supervisor.

2. Discussion on the Following Items

a. Public Works FY26/27

Robert Underwood: started with the revenues compared with expenditures updated since last night. Talked with the mayor and took some things out after our discussion last night. You will see where it was changed, even during this meeting you can change things, that is why it is a workshop. The cash reserve is now down; we need to look at closer to \$200,000.00.

Councilmember Smith: we can even look and talk about things from last night?

Robert Underwood: yes.

Councilmember Ross: can you give us a quick overview on what brought up the cash reserve.

Robert Underwood: (went over the changes from police vehicles, money in the 4000 fund, radios, etc.)

Robert Underwood: discussed revenue from renting out fire department equipment.

Jeff Motley: it is a great idea, but you also have to have volunteers to man the equipment.

Robert Underwood: we look at expenses, but we also need to look at revenue options for the town.

Councilmember Bailey: I thought that you said last night that we already had them rented out.

Jeff Motley: no, we are on the list.

(continued discussion on how the rental of fire department vehicles works)

****Mayor Crews joined the meeting at 5:30pm. Mayor Crews will now run the meeting.**

Councilmember Smith: the fast talk about the equipment that the fire department has may I ask the chief why we have a ladder truck all we have is two story buildings.

Jeff Motley: a ladder truck, it is not just about the height it is also about the length or reach into or over a building.

(reviewed the amount of money and why for physicals of the fire department volunteers)

Mayor Crews: why can't we just do it military style?

Jeff Motley: one thing, it would be hard to get everyone together at one time. I set it up local to make it easy for the volunteer.

Councilmember Bailey: how many.

Councilmember Ross: I do not think that it is an unreasonable ask for 16.

Jeff Motley: 16 I think. Think of it as investing in our volunteers.

Councilmember Bailey: we want them to be safe when doing their jobs.. Robert can you please go back to the cash reserve.

Robert Underwood: I will show you those. Here are the changes that we have made. I am sure that there will be some changes after tonight.

Mayor Crews: I have a question about these physicals, what it is the minimum physical criteria that has to be met.

Jeff Motley: there is nothing out there that says you to have a physical to be a fireman. NFPA says that there is and here it is, but we are nowhere near that.

Councilmember Ross: would it make sense to jump into public works so that we can get an idea about that and discuss this more at the end.

Robert Underwood: okay here is the public works, pointed out the general fund portions of public works. Salaries, contributions, (referred to salaries chart). Then you would see the water and sewer. Stephen gave me a couple of changes, and I will also add those in.

Stephen Lassiter: I am pretty spot on, except for those few things.

Robert Underwood: (went over basic expenditures for public works) .

*discussions around a possible parks district.

Gina Crowe: you can think of a parks district like a lighting district.

Jenelle Berthoud: remember that this is not a process that is just going to happen, it could take up to two years to pull it all together.

Councilmember Smith: since we are talking about parks, Steve, we are two employees down right now, am I safe to say that whoever is hired on would be hired on at base rate.

Stephen Lassiter: no, we would not get anybody. All we can do is offer.

Mayor Crews: the problem that we have here is that Missoula is paying much more than this rate, and we have to be competitive.

Councilmember Bailey: do we have to anticipate the top of the wage range, are we budgeting for the top of the wage range.

Robert Underwood: referred back to the wage chart.

*discussion continued referring to the wages chart. (between staff and council).

Councilmember Smith: police chief, what is the fresh out of academy rate for Hamilton and Missoula.

John Boe: I think that it is \$27.00 for Hamilton and right at that for Missoula.

Councilmember Ross: are we competitive on our wages for water and wastewater.

Gina Crowe: we are on the lower range.

Mayor Crews: one thing that we look at is where do these candidates live; do they live in the area and have to travel to Missoula.

*continued discussion about the wage chart (staff and council).

*discussion around certifications for Public Works jobs. (staff and council).

Councilmember Ross: my concern would be that while we have an applicant in limbo, and we have not passed the budget. This is the time that we can make those changes.

Mayor Crews: we also have to think of the current employees.

Councilmember Ross: I am saying that this is the time that we make sure that we are paying the correct amount to keep employees and get new ones.

*discussions around rate increases for public works. (staff and council).

Councilmember Ross: if we did these increases would we have to raise our water and sewer rates.

Robert Underwood: we are good right now.

Councilmember Bailey: max pay, referring to step ups.

Robert Underwood: as the way that the economy goes, the old employees get the shaft, two years ago we were paying \$18.00 to start now we have to start that at \$21.00.

Councilmember Bailey: what I am saying is for an example, the public works supervisor has a range, but not a reason for that range.

*discussion around rates, hourly and step ups. (staff and council).

Gina Crowe: in most areas the plant operator makes more than the supervisor, it goes off of certifications and years of experience.

Councilmember Bailey: if you are only going to pay that rate for Stephen why are you budgeting for a higher pay range.

Councilmember Ross: lets say that Stephen leaves for Missoula, next person that comes in may have more experience or we need that range to hire someone.

Robert Underwood: this is hard, remember that public works is mainly out of water and sewer funds. Police, admin and fire are out of general fund.

Councilmember Bailey: why are we not putting in pay ranges for everyone else?

Mayor Crews: if you want to establish a pay range for each employee than go ahead. You want to have a range, but can we get through the budget with this range and work through the job descriptions and pay.

Councilmember Ross: is it to much of an ask on us to look into pay ranges.

Robert Underwood: we can look at that.

Mayor Crews: if you do it to one, you do it to all. Look at the finance officer than add two dollars to each side. If we try to establish this now it could take weeks. We have to look at all of the other towns and cities and review pay.

Gina Crowe: you are looking at trying to compare apples to apples.

Jenelle Berthoud: the town forgets to look at longevity. I have worked really hard to start at \$20.00.

*discussion around pay ranges. (staff and council).

Councilmember Bailey: I think that we should be looking at job descriptions and pay ranges as soon as we pass this budget.

Mayor Crews: then get an agenda item in for that. Jenelle, please put on the list for a COW meeting.

Gina Crowe: it is very time-consuming to go through job descriptions.

Mayor Crews: it takes a long time to do this.

Robert Underwood: went through all of the accounts for public works, streets, parks.

Mayor Crews: how many streets need to be repaired Stephen?

Stephen Lassiter: there are a few.

*went through the line items provided to the council for review. Reviewed Parks, Gerry's wages. Tree removal or trimming. Pool.

Councilmember Ross: I thought that I had read about some towns selling their pools to another organization.

Mayor Crews: you really can't because it is tied to the park.

Robert Underwood: remember this is a pool that is losing \$30,000 a year, how are they going to make that up.

*discussions about pool and splash pad expenses. Putting together a meeting to discuss revenue sources for the town.

Jeff Motley: can we go back to streets; can we look at fixing the sink hole at the end of the building.

Mayor Crews: lets get that on a work request.

Stephen Lassiter: can we use BARSSA for that.

Robert Underwood: I will look.

Mayor Crews: we need a work request for that, Jenelle put on your list to put in a request and see what is needed.

Gina Crowe: we have to pay for Q-Ware this Thursday after the claims are approved and then we can start that back up.

Robert Underwood: in streets we could add some more, if we don't use it, it is still there.

Airport discussion.

Councilmember Smith: are all of the leases paid up.

Gina Crowe: yes, they are caught up and we are getting ready to send out the new ones.

*discussed building department funds. Lighting districts, Pension (police department and fire). The amount goes up and down on what we get. Gas appropriation fund, trucks for public works.

Robert Underwood: trucks are about \$45,000 each.

Councilmember Smith: used, I can beat that.

Gina Crowe: I have a quote here, four trucks with under 20,000 miles each for \$45,000.00.

Robert Underwood: we put in \$180,000 for trucks.

*discussion around purchasing trucks. How many, prices, where from. Current truck conditions.

Councilmember Bailey: why do we only need trucks? What are we pulling?

Mayor Crews: we have to carry equipment, how much does a 55 gallon of chlorine weigh? That is why we can't do a UTV.

Stephen Lassiter: everyone needs to have a truck.

Mayor Crews: we need something that can haul, has a heater, gets good gas milage.

Councilmember Bailey: I can argue all of that, but it is fine.

Robert Underwood: went over additions that Stephen had to his budget. Lodging increase.

Stephen Lassiter: I was thinking if I went and two others, I think that this is the best-case scenario. Having three possibly attend.

Robert Underwood: we will look at that. (continued to go over line items). Remember that these are the max amounts not saying that it is going to be spent. Here are legal amounts for water rights. Water rights legal fees should drop.

Stephen Lassiter: we do have to do Well 1. I don't think that it will be that much. We are not fighting for it at this point, just making it legal.

Robert Underwood: also looked at adding water meters, new houses in Twin Creeks, so we will add another \$5,000.00.

Councilmember Bailey: how many water meters can you buy with \$15,000.00

Stephen Lassiter: around \$335.00 per meter.

*continued discussion around meters, how much to budget and how many to order.

Robert Underwood: went over the water and sewer accounts, what is being used for vehicles. All in all, looking at spending what we spent last year. So that is water and sewer and public works, any questions.

Councilmember Bailey: so, what we are looking to spend out of capital is for trucks and fix water leaks. Anything else that we can do to spend some of that money and show the people what the money can go for.

Stephen Lassiter: there is a part left from the ARPA project that did not get done, which is to clean the water tank. It is something that should be done around every five years, it has not been done since I have been here.

Jenelle Berthoud: Stephen what about the money for the head gates on Reeves property?

Stephen Lassiter: I have not heard from her about material costs. I know a culvert will be needed and some gates and a measuring device to see how many gallons are passing through.

Robert Underwood: if we have it in time we will add it if not, there is \$200,000.00 in there. Airport is the same, fuel sales are going well. We mentioned that the Airport might be in the negative, but sales are up and leases are going out. Questions with the budget, next step will be putting in all of these changes and then I will send you the new copy with the changes.

Jenelle Berthoud: you can ask for another budget workshop or respond back via email with comments.

Mayor Crews: I think we will do another budget workshop. When would council like to schedule the next workshop.

Jenelle Berthoud: I need you to hold the next meeting next week so that we can count out the days to set the public hearing.

Councilmember Bailey: I say we set it for the 16th.

Jenelle Berthoud: okay, out to all council and department heads for the 16th at 5:15pm.

Mayor Crews: can it go out for the 5th of August for public hearing.

Jenelle Berthoud: you can, but you have to have it done and no numbers changed after the 22nd of July.

Mayor Crews: that works for me.

*side discussions around dates and times for meetings.

3. Public Comment

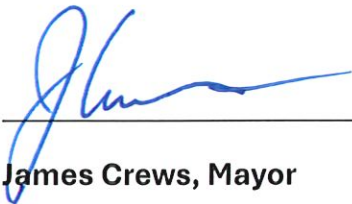
NONE

4. Adjournment

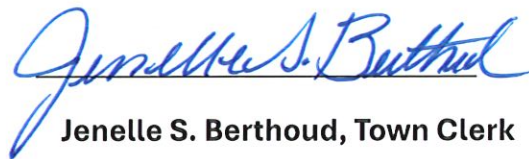
Councilmember Smith: motion to adjourn.

Councilmember Wandler: 2nd.

APPROVE:


James Crews, Mayor

ATTEST:


Jenelle S. Berthoud, Town Clerk