

Stevensville Budget Workshop FY2026/2027 Minutes

for TUESDAY, JULY 16, 2026, 5:15 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. Discussion on the Following Items

a. Town of Stevensville Fiscal Year Budget 2026/2027

Mayor Crews: introduced discussion on the following items, Town of Stevensville Fiscal Year Budget 2026/2027.

Robert Underwood: here is what we have from the last two workshops.

*went over funds, not many things have changed but we will go over those few changes. We have had a few bills come in, Civic Plus.

*we will go through cash reserve later, pointed out the changes in revenue.

Robert Underwood: the police truck, we looked at financing one, but we would not have to finance a new truck if we financed it through the town. So, if we loaned the police department from the sewer fund at 4%. We could then also look at making for first payment on that in the next fiscal year.

*changes in expenses went over those changes.

Robert Underwood: took out the travel for training, the bench for the court. Microsoft increases, left enough in there for Jenelle to go to training, because she is working on her certification. Removed the fire department physicals, training. Bunker gear, if it did get contaminated then we would come back and take care of it. If it is left in the budget then it just gets spent.

Jeff Motley: we only spend what we have.

Robert Underwood: took \$12,000 off total general fund.

*went over additional removals and additions.

Robert Underwood: referred to public works, 4 trucks, here is the cost, coming out of streets, and the water and sewer operational accounts.

*reviewed water and sewer funds. 4 trucks and the loan for the police truck.

Councilmember Bailey: you said that is coming out of operational or capital.

Robert Underwood: the asset account.

Councilmember Ross: the other trucks are coming out of operational for water and sewer.

Robert Underwood: 20% out of BARS fund and 40% out of each water and sewer. Operational account can be spent on anything, once you move it to the asset account it has to be spent on that. Capital asset is saving up.

Councilmember Bailey: if we are doing this how do we guarantee that water and sewer do not go up.

Robert Underwood: showed the rates table/scale.

*discussed the water and sewer rates. Also discussed where the trucks would come out of.

Councilmember Bailey: will the car insurance go up for these new trucks.

Gina Crowe: not this year but next year it will.

Councilmember Bailey: what about licenses and signage.

Stephen Lassiter: it would be nice; Alpine Signs does a good job.

Mayor Crews: remember that these trucks come with snowplows and salt/sand spreaders on each one.

*continued discussions about the trucks. What the new ones will come with and what we may be able to surplus.

Councilmember Ross: I have a question on the bench; last meeting we talked about Hamilton might have one.

Mayor Crews: I have not gone down to the mayor yet to talk to him. He said that we could have it if he still has it.

Councilmember Bailey: so that amount will be removed from the budget?

Robert Underwood: yes.

*went over the list that had been removed.

Gina Crowe: went over training package from the League of Cities and Towns.

*discussions continued around training packages and what we would receive and is there required trainings for council and staff. Reviewed the training package with the council. Discussed the benefits of trainings for all and how in the next year and in the future we may be able to raise money to go to these trainings.

Councilmember Smith: at the last meeting we only had about \$23,000 with these changes are we getting closer to that \$200,000.

Stephen Lassiter: I have a bid to add to the budget for the sink whole over here. \$1,775. The gator needs tires, \$600.

*discussed leak detection through Montana Rural Water, \$480.00 per year.

Jeff Motley: looks like you are trying to balance the budget on cutting the fire department. Small non-cap equipment, \$8,000, up \$500 from last year. Then you go to the long list and the \$8,000 is out of there, so is it in or out. You take that out we can't by anything in small non-cap. This is just not for lights.

Councilmember Ross: what you are saying is that you are raising it from \$500 from last year.

Councilmember Bailey: let's leave it in there.

Mayor Crews: tell me about these lights.

*discussion continued about scene lights and non-cap equipment, how the spending of the \$8,000 would be spent down for equipment.

5 MINUTE BREAK

(during the five-minute break all four councilmembers met with Chief Motley in the fire hall) memos regarding what was discussed are included at the end of these meeting minutes.

Mayor Crews: called the meeting back to order.

Robert Undrewood: fire department.

Jeff Motley: let's talk about clothing and bunker gear.

*discussion around fire department clothing.

Councilmember Ross: what are you proposing in that clothing budget.

Jeff Motley: \$2,500 at the minimum.

Councilmember Bailey: we just approved another \$30,000 in street repairs for a contingency. Why would we treat this bunker gear any different.

Robert Underwood: the street fund is restricted to one thing. You give the money to the department heads they spend it.

*discussion continued about bunker gear. Possibly getting a grant for bunker gear, with a 5% match. Discussed gear for firefighters and public works. Physicals, for firefighters. Cost of bunker gear. Volunteer police officers, pay for everything on their own, do training with the full-time officers.

Mayor Crews: if we put the physicals back in what do we take out?

Robert Underwood: we have to look at the whole budget. We are at \$120,000.00 in the general fund.

*went over all of the items that were taken out, and which ones can be brought back in. Discussed the grant for the bunker gear and that Gina can give the correct number because she is the grant administrator. Talked about money in the budget to replace 7-8-year-old computers, how do we do that if there are other items be purchased out of the general fund.

Robert Underwood: discussed that we are only thinking of replacing items in this year not putting away for the next years.

Gina Crowe: the replacing of computers comes down to security updates; the computers are not compatible with the new updates. We need to be replacing three.

Jenelle Berthoud: the problem is the town replaces everything in one lump.

Councilmember Bailey: just like we are doing with the trucks, buying four at one time, my question is how much of the trucks is coming out of the general fund.

Robert Underwood: the trucks are coming out of water and sewer.

*discussion around how the chiefs truck will be paid back. Putting back in \$5,000 into the fire department budget for grant match.

Councilmember Ross: the levy for the fire when does that need to be, if we are going to do that, that would be a chunk of money that would alleviate the general fund.

Robert Underwood: if the town said to do it we would have to turn it in this year for the taxes.

Jenelle Berthoud: does the council have to have any kind of public hearing to do this.

Robert Underwood: not that I can see, maybe just an agenda item to discuss. 3 mills, and whatever that rate is per mill.

Jeff Motley: how is that determined.

Robert Underwood: we are given the rate per mills, and we fill out the form from the state.

*discussion around current and future property taxes and the general fund. Also discussed fundraising efforts from the Stevensville Fire Department Association and their volunteers.

Councilmember Ross: at least \$6,000 for computers?

Robert Underwood: I would say \$5,000 for bunker gear and \$6,000 for computers.

Mayor Crews: we have ageing equipment and gear that is needed for public works.

*discussion around how much to put back in the budget for needed items, fire training.

Mayor Crews: Jeff explain what kind of training and why you need it.

Jeff Motley: it is to train our volunteers on items that they are not yet trained on.

Gina Crowe: I need training also, but I can't afford it out of finance.

Jeff Motley: I would like to have a raise, but I can't have it.

*discussions around training, past experiences in training for fire department.

Robert Underwood: we did not spend down our cash reserve last year, so we had remaining funds, but each year we have to get tighter and tighter.

Councilmember Ross: you said that we can delay the first payment on the police truck, but they we are just pushing that back for another year, do you have a recommendation on that.

John Boe: with the fundraising that we do we would hope to have that paid off sooner.

Councilmember Wandler: where do we rent?

Robert Underwood: we rent a bay for \$5,000 and rent it back from them for \$2,500.

Councilmember Bailey: where does \$120,000 compared to other years.

Robert Underwood: usually \$200,000.

John Boe: I inherited a lot of things that were beyond their shelf life. Using fundraising to replace a lot of those things in the past two years. Unlike the fire chief I have not had to ask for things. There are certain line items that I can take 10% off. Uniforms down to \$300 per person per year.

*discussed additional items that do not need to be funded at this time. Training is taken care of by our department. Along with ammunition. Discussed how the police department can retrofit the new vehicle with the old items.

Robert Underwood: we have budgeted for \$80,000 at this time.

*discussed what kind of truck would work best. Discussion about paying off of tasers. The next time you see the cash report you will see the donation funds going to that.

Councilmember Ross: would you be willing to go seventy instead of eighty for the truck.

Gina Crowe: I would like to wait and see what we get for quotes.

*discussions continued about police truck and grant match for fire department.

Robert Underwood: went over all of the proposed changes.

Gina Crowe: we can get these together and email them out to all of you.

Jenelle Berthoud: went over the calander dates for workshops, placing public notices in the newspaper and holding of meetings.

*set budget workshop for 07/20/2026 and 07/21/2026 @ 5:15pm.

Councilmember Wandler: I am concerned about the salary ranges.

Robert Underwood: went over salary ranges for public works and the max amounts for other jobs.

3. Public Comment

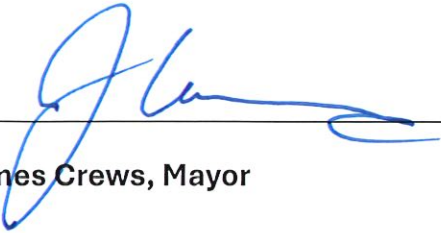
NONE

4. Adjournment

Councilmember Smith: move to adjourn.

Councilmember Bailey: 2nd.

APPROVE:



James Crews, Mayor

ATTEST:



Jenelle S. Berthoud, Town Clerk

On July 16 2026 ^{During} ~~During~~ a 5 min
Recess during the Budget work shop
after much discussion about scene lights
I offered anyone who wanted to see what
we were discussing about the scene lights
to take a trip next door to look at
what we were talking about

The group consisted of Chief Motley
Council Member Wendler, Member Smith
and Member Ross. Chief Motley pointed
out the scene lights on Eng. 2010
which has already been replaced and
the lights on the Ambulance 2040
Chief Motley pointed out that Engine
2010 and 2510 are twins and came
from Muskegon City fire Dept for \$2400⁰⁰
with a replacement cost of 1.4 Million
and a four year waiting time.

Member Smith had question about the
use of the Ambulance 2040 as to how much
use it gets. and was informed that it runs
the majority of the calls

Chief Motley then pointed out Eng. 2011 and explained
that it was a triple wildland Engine.

Chief ~~Jeff~~ Motley

Jenelle Berthoud

From: Talon Ross
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2026 8:30 PM
To: Jenelle Berthoud
Subject: Re: Memo from the Mayor, Maintenance of a Quorum after Meetings

Hello Jenelle,

Sorry for the delayed response. As the mayor has requested, here is my documentation of said event. This is as best and accurate as I can remember, and I hope that this aids in clarifying what occurred out of sight of the presiding officer and alleviates any questions or concerns.

My documentation for the record.

The chief offered to show people what a scene light is on a fire truck in the engine bay.

Chief: this is a led scene light, this is an incandescent/halogen scene light, the led version is way better as it is much brighter while also conserving more energy.

Council member Wandler: Oh, so some of these trucks are already upgraded so we do not have to purchase upgraded scene lights for all of the trucks.

Chief: That is correct.

Councilmember smith: I see, now this truck (referring to the ambulance) is not hardly used, correct?

Chief: no this truck is used for 90% of our calls. This is the ambulance.

Councilmember smith: oh, this is the ambulance? I didn't realize that.

After that I left and returned to the council chambers.

Please reach out with any other questions.

Talon Ross

Town Council, Ward 2



From: Jenelle Berthoud <townclerk@townofstevensville.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2026 8:47 AM
To: Melissa Bailey <councilmemberward1a@townofstevensville.gov>; Talon Ross <councilmemberward2a@townofstevensville.gov>; Karen Wandler <councilmemberward2b@townofstevensville.gov>; Wallace Smith <councilmemberward1b@townofstevensville.gov>
Subject: Memo from the Mayor, Maintenance of a Quorum after Meetings

Councilmembers,

Please find the memo below from Mayor Crews, thank you.

When a meeting , workshop, or other event involving the council is convened, the meeting must be noticed, with an agenda, date, time and location of the meeting must be posted appropriately.

After a council meeting, it is recommended that a quorum be dissolved and that a quorum not even loosely be convened. Any assembly of a quorum where no business will be discussed must be posted such as the council attending an event or dinner where no business will be discussed.

When a workshop or meeting is recessed, the quorum should not discuss any town business matter between themselves or other parties until the meeting has been reconvened.

At the budget work-shop 7-16-26, the quorum of the council during the break left the council chambers and entered the fire bay with a department head. During that time, out of the view of the presiding officer of the recessed work-shop, an un-noticed discussion or presentation occurred. This was not in the view of the public, nor was there a record kept of the conversation or presentation.

I am requesting all members of the quorum and the Town Department head to please document the purpose of the discussion and document the discussion in detail so that it may be added to the public record.

Thank you.

*Jim Crews
Mayor*

*Jenelle Berthoud, Town Clerk
Town of Stevensville
206 Buck St
Stevensville, MT 59870
406-777-5271 Ext 102
townclerk@townofstevensville.gov*

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Jenelle Berthoud

From: Karen Wandler
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2026 7:05 PM
To: Jenelle Berthoud; Melissa Bailey; Talon Ross; Wallace Smith; Jim Crews
Subject: Re: Memo from the Mayor, Maintenance of a Quorum after Meetings

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I was not privy to what lights are needing to be replaced on the fire trucks. I asked Jeff to show me where these lights were and how the requested lights differed from the current lights. He simply showed me the lights on the truck and answered my question. I don't recall who else was present. No other business was discussed.

Karen

m: Jenelle Berthoud <townclerk@townofstevensville.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2026 8:47 AM
To: Melissa Bailey <councilmemberward1a@townofstevensville.gov>; Talon Ross <councilmemberward2a@townofstevensville.gov>; Karen Wandler <councilmemberward2b@townofstevensville.gov>; Wallace Smith <councilmemberward1b@townofstevensville.gov>
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Jenelle Berthoud

From: Melissa Bailey
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2026 7:51 PM
To: Jenelle Berthoud
Subject: Re: Memo from the Mayor, Maintenance of a Quorum after Meetings

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I went into the truck bay and promptly climbed the stairs to get a better view of the lights. I decided it was too hot and left the room to return to the hall. I think it was Wally, Karen, Talon, and Jeff Motely who remained to look at the lights. No business was discussed aside from Jeff pointing out the lights on each truck.

Melissa Bailey
Councilmember Ward 1
Town of Stevensville MT

From: Karen Wandler <councilmemberward2b@townofstevensville.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2026 7:04 PM
To: Jenelle Berthoud <townclerk@townofstevensville.gov>; Melissa Bailey <councilmemberward1a@townofstevensville.gov>; Talon Ross <councilmemberward2a@townofstevensville.gov>; Wallace Smith <councilmemberward1b@townofstevensville.gov>; Jim Crews <mayor@townofstevensville.gov>
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