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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, April 17, 2020

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**TOWN STEVENSVILLE INCREASES CITIZEN
PARTICIPATION IN VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETINGS**

Stevensville, MT – The Town of Stevensville has been successfully engaging citizens in their Council meetings through live webcasting for the past 2 years. Recently, the Town of Stevensville has added a new participation guide and implemented steps to broaden civic involvement in its virtual public meetings online.

Using the Town's web-based meetings application, citizens are able to view the agenda and then submit their opinions on upcoming meeting agenda items from any computer or phone with an Internet connection instead of requiring them to attend the meeting in person to have their voices heard. The Town's website will now live stream any virtual meeting including boards, commissions, and the Town Council.

“This is a powerful extension of the Council's desire to make city government, the Town Council, and our meetings as accessible as possible for the citizens. Citizens can comment on an agenda item prior and throughout the meeting from the comfort of their home, in order to let the Council Members know how they feel about a particular issue. Government doesn't get any more responsive and interactive with its citizens than that when doing virtual meetings,” said Town Clerk Monica Hoffman.

Citizens can comment in one of three different ways:

- Public comment sent to council@townofstevensville.com will be distributed by email to the Town Council before and during Town Council meetings.
- Public comment can be mailed to the Town Clerk at 206 Buck Street or PO Box 30
- A half hour prior to the start of a virtual public meeting, the Town will place a drop box outside the front door at 206 Buck Street where citizens can drop off written comments. Comments will be read during the relevant agenda item's public comment period.

To view upcoming meeting agendas, watch the live stream, or find links to provide public comment, citizens can go to www.townofstevensville.com/meetings and navigate to their desired meeting date for agenda information. Live stream is also available on the website, and the Town will post recordings of concluded meetings with the corresponding meeting agenda.

“By providing an electronic way to for citizens to comment on the issues important to them, the Town will be able to reach a broader segment of our community and hear feedback from more people,” said Stevensville Mayor Brandon Dewey. “This demonstrates a commitment to strengthening collaboration with citizens and maintains the Town of Stevensville’s goals of an open government, even amid social distancing.”

Citizens can view the complete Guide for Town of Stevensville Virtual Meetings and Citizen Participation on the Town’s website www.townofstevensville.com

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