Public Hearing and Regular City Council Meeting

City Hall

October 5, 2026

Mayor Ferguson opened the Public Hearing at 7:00pm and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Others Attending are:

Council: Kerri Baird, Jeff Davis, Mike Duval and Leonard Woehler.

City Staff: Hope Mosness, Clerk/Treasurer, Kris Novotny, Public Works Director, and Jim Lippert, City Attorney

County Staff: Deputy Jason Ferguson

Public: Angela Selby, Mike Shirley, Chad Hanson, Anita Dore, Linda Brunckhorst, Page Dringman, Corry Seitz, Dawn Curry, Kathy Morgan, Lauren Dillon, and Aaron B. Freed

Great West Engineering presented information on the Wastewater Preliminary Engineering Report.

Public Comment: None

Mayor Ferguson closed the public hearing at 7:22pm and opened the Regular City Council Meeting.

Councilwoman Baird made a motion to approve the minutes from the 9/21/26 Regular City Council Meeting as amended, seconded by Councilman Woehler. Motion carried by unanimous vote of the Council.

Deputy Ferguson
~~Sheriff Ronneberg~~ reported that there were 351 complaints, 7 cases, and 41 citations for the month of September 2026. The new deputy that was hired is in his second phase and is doing very well. They are having issues with vehicles. Another deputy is getting trained in firearms instruction. Undersheriff Ron Swanson is in favor of the electronic speeding sign on 1st Ave.

Kris Novotny, Public Works Director, stated the Water Treatment Plant is running smoothly. Some parts are still on backorder. They are working with Montana Rural Water System to do GIS mapping of the water system. They have about 2/3 of the mapping done and hope to finish it in the spring. They are working on the Wastewater Preliminary Engineering Report. They have also been replacing street signs around town. He has been working with Great West Engineering and Weave Construction on options on how to fix the drainage problem on E 8th Ave. They hope to have a solution by the end of this week. There were a lot of prohibited items in the burn pile that they had to go and remove. The department has been winterizing the park and bathhouse, but the compressor broke down and is being repaired. He would like to hook the new Animal Control building on a solar grid rather than Northwestern Energy. Council members Woehler and Duval are worried about the cost of installing solar power. Kris will get a cost estimate for it. Councilman Woehler suggested making the public aware of the prohibited items being dumped in the burn pile and what it is costing the city.

Kathy Morgan and Dawn Curry from the Big Timber Trails Network asked the Council to approve a request for 3 designated parking spaces at Boulder Campground for the trail users. They will supply and maintain the signs as well as a doggie bag station. Councilman Woehler made a motion to approve the

request for 3 designate parking spaces at the Boulder Campground for trail users in area 13 in the photo provided, seconded by Councilman Davis. Motion carried by unanimous vote of the Council.

Page Dringman presented information on an encroachment permit and a request to pave the alley behind Sweet Grass Tavern. Four parking spaces along McLeod Street would be lost, but there will be 12 off street parking spaces including three handicapped spots. A couple of concerns mentioned were the garbage trucks being able to turn down the alley and would the paving of the alley affect the drainage of the other businesses along Anderson Street. Greg with WWC Engineering explained they figured out a placement of the trash dumpsters so the garbage trucks could make it in there. He explained their plan for the drainage so they can pave the alley. Council members Woehler and Davis stated that they approve of the plan. Kris Novotny stated that he wants to make it clear that Sweet Grass Tavern will be responsible for maintaining the pavement of the alley. Councilman Davis made a motion to approve the encroachment permit and alley paving for Sweet Grass Tavern noting that any repairs of the paved alley will be paid for by Sweet Grass Tavern, seconded by Councilman Woehler. Motion carried by unanimous vote of the Council.

Corry Seitz, representing Vitality Partners, asked the Council to consider writing a letter of support for the wayfinding signage project they are working on. Councilman Woehler made a motion to approve the letter of support for the wayfinding signage project, seconded by Councilwoman Baird. Motion carried by unanimous vote of the Council.

Vitality Partners would like to apply for a planning grant for the wayfinding signage project. The funding will come to the city, but Vitality Partners will do all the required paperwork for the Montana Main Street Program. Lauren Dillon also added that the city would need to sign the grant application. She and Aaron Freed also stated that there are several communities that have gone through this process and they are in contact with them. Councilman Duval asked who would be responsible for the maintenance of the signs and who is liable for the signs. Councilwoman Baird made a motion to approve the grant application for the wayfinding plan, seconded by Councilman Davis. Motion carried by unanimous vote of the Council.

Councilman Davis, made a motion to untable the decision on rescinding the resolution for the Sweet Grass County Port Authority, seconded by Councilman Duval. Motion carried by unanimous vote of the Council. Councilwoman Baird stated that we are being wishy-washy about our decision. We already held a public hearing, and a majority of the citizens in attendance were in favor of it. Councilman Woehler stated that we have two years without it costing the city a dime to see if the port authority is working or not. If we don't feel it is working, then the city can always back out of the agreement. He wants the council to be forward-thinking. Council members Duval and Davis disagree and think that we are adding an unnecessary level of government and there is no structure or plan on how it will run in the agreement. City Attorney Jim Lippert stated that the Council can either rescind the resolution or withdraw from the agreement. He stated there would need to be another public hearing on the matter. Councilman Duval made a motion to table the decision on rescinding the resolution for the Sweet Grass County Port Authority, seconded by Councilman Davis. Motion carried by unanimous vote of the Council.

Mayor Ferguson presented the Circle T Lease Agreement for the City Hall office space. Mayor Ferguson stated that Circle T is firm on $1300/month and he never heard back from Mark Norem. Jim Lippert pointed out that there is no language in the contract for terminating or amending the agreement. Councilman Woehler made a motion to approve the Circle T lease agreement for City Hall, seconded by Councilman Duval. Public Comment: Linda Brunckhorst agreed that we need an out in the contract in

case something comes up. Councilman Woehler called for the question. Motion carried with Councilmembers Davis, Duval, and Woehler voting aye. Councilwoman Baird voted nay.

Councilman Davis made a motion to approve Claims, Payroll and Overtime for September 2026, seconded by Councilman Duval. Motion carried by unanimous vote of the Council.

Public Comment: Aaron Freed, Executive Director of the Sweet Grass County Chamber of Commerce, stated that there are many people like Vitality Partners and Crazy Mountain Collective who take economic development seriously, and realize that the city does not have the resources needed to focus on economic development and the port authority is the solution. As a taxpayer and resident, Aaron stated that the city's elected officials are not to just do administration, but their job is to do governance. He added that a solution has been brought forward, but the elected officials haven't provided any solutions. He realizes it may not be perfect, but it is free. We need to have our heads up and be strategic or we may not end up where we want to be. He thanked them for their service. Lauren Dillon, Anita Dore, and Page Dringman all asked for clarification on why a second public hearing on the Port Authority is needed. Aaron Freed asked for a list of questions the Council would like answered concerning the port authority. Mayor Ferguson stated that procedurally we need to follow the correct path.

There being no further business to go before the Council, Councilman Woehler made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:42pm seconded by Councilman Duval. Motion carried by unanimous vote of the Council.

Justin Ferguson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Hope Mosness, Clerk/Treasurer