

TOWN OF WHITEHALL
P.O. BOX 529
WHITEHALL, MT 59759
Posted June 3rd, 2025

*There was an annual budget workshop of the Whitehall Town Council on **Thursday, June 5th, 2025 at 1:00 pm.** The workshop was held in the Town Hall Council Chambers at 207 East Legion Ave.*

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

The workshop was called to order at 1:04 pm. Katy James, Linda Jung, Kennedy Kleinsasser, Sara Unruh, Mary Janacaro Hensleigh, Bill Lanes, Roy McBride, Shawn Hoagland, and Kory Klapan.

II. BUDGET WORKSHOP

The meeting began with first discussing wages. Kennedy Kleinsasser suggested a possible permissible mill levy for health insurance to cover the +\$6,000 increase. There was discussion about hiring Kelsey MacDuff on a permanent basis and if there was enough in the budget. Kory Klapan would like to hire her full-time and she could have two years to complete the free apprenticeship program to be certified to operate the new water treatment plant. Having four people on staff full-time will cover running the water treatment plant.

The swimming pool wages are all from the general budget. There are now two lifeguards that are over 18 and can alleviate Kelley Seccomb's overtime. There was discussion about possibly making Kelley Seccomb a department head. Kory Klapan brought up a 50/50 match grant with Montana FWP for \$160,000 to pay for the pool resurfacing in the future. He said it must be resurfaced within the next two years or the pool will not pass inspection. The pool budget was discussed and most agreed that the pool would have to shut down if the budget is overextended. May need to schedule a separate meeting with the pool board to discuss how much has been granted and allocated to the budget in the past. Bill Lanes would be able to write about the pool in the next Council Corner in the newspaper. There was discussion about possible grants from Jefferson County. Overtime coverage is split between the funds and is now budgeted for \$15,000. It was budgeted for \$12,000.

The general fund was then discussed starting with office expenses. Todd Watkins is retiring. The Local Government Center does offer accounting services but the costs is

currently unknown. The court services costs have increased since the previous judge retired. Seems to be based on the amount of hours billed since the hourly rate has not increased. Municipal court services must be provided so there was discussion about contracting through Jefferson County.

The law enforcement contract will need to be negotiated next year. The current contract is \$120,000 and it is speculated that Jefferson County will raise it to \$170,000. Discussion continued about needing a mill levy to cover the cost. There was also discussion about Jefferson County not meeting their requirements of the contract including not enforcing ordinances or providing monthly reports.

The fire budget is the same as last year and any remaining (~\$4,000) will be put into the CIP fund. Ambulance loans are still being repaid. The cemetery budget remains the same and there was discussion about possibly raising the perpetual care rate. While discussing the facilities budget, the topic of the Country Store and Whitehall Library leases were discussed. The contracts do not include utilities and maintenance.

The recreation complex budget is \$120,000 and have \$61,000 currently in the fund. Kennedy Kleinsasser assumed that is what will be needed for the two rodeos that are booked. TA sidewalks budget is all reimbursable and the project will be out to bid in November. The headworks line item will need \$1,000,000 added due to Sugar Beet Row improvements.

The Council discussed the possible mill levy for law enforcement. There is a lack of the monthly report that is required from the court. There was discussion about revisiting the Court Clerk's contract. Nothing has been cut out of the general fund. The general fund is currently at \$565,020 and the expected revenue will be ~\$510,000 (that number will be known by the second week of August). The actual deficient is closer to \$20,000 according to Kennedy Kleinsasser. The law enforcement mill levy would alleviate the general budget and allow funds to be saved and reallocated. The plan for the budget is to remove certain line items that were discussed and then shave off the remaining at an even percentage across the board to break even.

Mary Janacaro Hensleigh stated that Todd Watkins' recommendation for the budget was to have a law enforcement mill levy, run a break even pool program, and have the permissible mill levy to cover health insurance. Bill Lanes is planning on writing up information on the law enforcement mill levy to publish in the paper and online.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT *No Public in Attendance*

Nothing is debated or voted on during public comment. This is where the public gets the opportunity to talk about anything that is NOT on the agenda.

IV. ADJOURNMENT *Katy James motioned to adjourn and Bill Lanes seconded.
The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm.*

Next Regular Council Meeting, **Monday, June 16th, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.**