

**Anaconda-Deer Lodge County
Study Commission Meeting
6:00 p.m. Wednesday, January 7, 2015
Courthouse Courtroom**

Present: Heather Edwards, Dan Tocher, Linda Sather, Adam Vauthier, Terry Galle

Others Present: Commission Chairman, Kevin Hart and Administrative Assistant, Julie Hoffman

Heather Edwards called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Adam Vauthier moved to approve the minutes from the November 13, 2014 meeting; seconded by Dan Tocher.

Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion – Training Review/Discussion

Members of the Study Commission shared their thoughts regarding the training they attended in December.

Linda Sather felt the training was informative and she learned a lot.

Heather Edwards stated she was a bit disappointed with one of the speaker's presentations as it did not related to what the ADLC Study Commission is tasked with doing.

Adam Vauthier felt he learned a lot about local government and shared that it was great to see so much diversity from local Montana governments being represented at the training.

Terry Galle commented that he was surprised that no one from ADLC was involved with the training since ADLC was the first city/county to establish a charter form of government.

Dan Tocher found the training helpful, particularly the information relating to open meeting laws. Linda Sather commented that at one time, Montana had the strictest open meeting laws in the country.

This discussion led to further talk regarding transparency as it relates to Montana's open meeting laws. Kevin Hart suggested getting everyone on the Study Commission set up on the State's e-mail server. Heather Edwards stated she will look into this.

Discussion – Budget Resolution for the 2014-2015 Study Commission (per MCA 7-3-184)

Heather Edwards presented the proposed Budget Resolution for 2014-2015 to the members of the Study Commission. The budget reflects the following:

Part-time wages	\$800.00
Operating Supplies	\$750.00
Postage	\$200.00
Printing	\$1500.00
Advertising	\$750.00

Travel, Meetings	\$1500.00
Workshops, Education	\$1500.00
TOTAL	\$7000.00

Heather Edwards stated she will provide a financial report to the group every month. She also informed the group that if there are funds leftover at the end of 2016, those funds will go back into the general fund.

The group decided to decrease the Operating Supplies budget to \$250.00 and increase the Postage budget to \$700.00.

Terry Galled moved to approve the Budget Resolution for the 2014-2015 Study Commission (per MCA 7-3-184); seconded by Adam Vauthier.

Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion – Timetable for Deliberations and Actions (per MCA 7-3-184)

Prior to adopting a timetable, the Study Commission took action to set its monthly meeting dates for the second Thursday of each month.

The Study Commission proposed the following timetable for deliberations and actions:

- *June 11, 2015* – Public Hearing/City-County Meeting to gather citizen input on the form, functions, powers, and problems of the city/county government and the adequacy of services
- *August 13, 2015* – Adopt a tentative report
- *October 8, 2015* – Public Hearing/City-County Meeting to gather citizens’ response to the tentative report
- *February 11, 2016* – Adopt a Final Report and provide County Clerk & Recorder ballot language if a proposal is to be placed on the General Election Ballot of November 1, 2016
- *March 10, 2016* – If Final Report proposes an alteration of local government, prepare public education materials to help citizens understand the proposal and compare the proposal with existing government form, structure and powers
- *April 4, 2016* – Approve public education material and conduct public forum regarding educational material
- **November 10, 2016** – If a proposed alteration of the government is approved by the voters, initiate transition planning and draft the transition advisory plan
- **December 8, 2016** – Adopt transition advisory plan
- **December 31, 2016** – Deposit all minutes and other Study Commission documents with County Clerk & Recorder

Ex-officio member and Commission Chair, Kevin Hart suggested that the Study Commission focus on the Charter and educate the public as to the pros and cons of the Charter form of government.

Terry Galle agreed and stated that the Study Commission’s job is to educate the public with regard to the Charter; not to influence the public or advocate for any changes to the Charter or current form of government.

Heather Edwards proposed that members of the Study Commission meet individually with civic/community groups “on behalf of the Study Commission” to disseminate information about the

Study Commission and get feedback from those groups and bring it back to the Study Commission. She went on to inform the group that the handbook that was given out at the training has a set of 20 potential questions that the Study Commissioners can ask when they meeting with civic/community groups.

The group also discussed doing a community-wide mailing in order to educate and get as much feedback/input as possible from all residents of Anaconda-Deer Lodge County.

Adam Vauthier clarified what, if anything would be on the ballot in November 2016. Kevin Hart explained that if the Final Report recommended a change to Anaconda Deer Lodge County's form of government, which would need to be put before the voters on the ballot in November 2016. However, if there are small changes to the Charter, those changes would be in the form of a supplementary report and would not be required to be on the ballot.

Discussion – Ideas for Policies and Procedures for the ADLC Study Commission

The group discussed possible options for policies and procedures. Ideas discussed included the following:

- Defining a purpose for the Study Commission
- Setting monthly meeting dates as the 2nd Thursday of the month at 6:00 p.m. with an agenda that has the following format:
 - Call to Order
 - Approval of Minutes
 - Financial Report
 - Old Business
 - New Business
 - Public Comment for items not appearing on the agenda
 - Adjournment
- Adam Vauthier suggested that the presiding officer run the meeting and in her absence the vice-chair will run the meeting
- The group concluded that the meetings will be informal in order to allow for open discussion between Study Commission members and the public
- The group discussed allotting 3-5 minutes for the public comment. Adam Vauthier and Terry Galle both stated that the Study Commission may establish this policy.

Heather Edwards stated she will draft policies and procedures for approval at February's meeting.

Discussion – List of Priorities – who to meet with first and when?

Keeping in mind with timeline deadlines, Heather Edwards suggested sending invitations to department heads to attend a Study Commission meeting to offer their input regarding the Charter. In addition, Linda Sather volunteered to begin calling and meeting with civic organizations in order to get feedback regarding the Charter. At the next meeting, the Study Commission will come up with a format for collecting information from civic organizations.

Miscellaneous

No Miscellaneous

PUBLIC DISCUSSION – Items appearing on the agenda

Rose Nyman – 121 E. 3rd: Ms. Nyman informed the Study Commission that according to Montana’s open meeting laws, public discussion must be allowed to take place after each agenda item. She went on to comment on the budget resolution and stated that it cost Head Start approximately \$9,000 to have their measure on the ballot.

With regard to the proposed timetable, Ms. Nyman thought it was important that the public be made aware that they can view the Charter and she stated that the public wants to vote on any issues related to the Charter during the primary election in 2016. However, Kevin Hart informed Ms. Nyman that if there were any changes to the Charter, these changes would not take place immediately and therefore have not effect on the 2016 elections.

Lastly, Ms. Nyman pointed out that the Study Commission cannot impose a time limit on public discussion without a policy in place. Heather Edwards stated this item will be placed on the next month’s agenda and voted on.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION – Items *not* appearing on the agenda

Rose Nyman – 121 E. 3rd: Ms. Nyman inquired as to whether or not the agenda is being emailed out to the same group of people that receive the Commission Meeting agenda. Heather Edwards stated that it is not at this time but may be in the future.

She went on to suggest having the Anaconda Leader write an article about the Study Commission in order to inform/educate the public.

Ms. Nyman informed Heather Edwards that both she and vice-chair, Adam Vauthier will need to re-affirm their oath of office as they were only appointed as chair and vice-chair temporarily in November. Heather Edwards will place this on next month’s agenda.

Lastly, she requested that Study Commission members not interrupt each other or talk over one another as it is difficult to understand what is being said.

Meeting adjourned: Adam Vauthier moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Linda Sather. The meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.



Julie Hoffman
Administrative Assistant



Heather Edwards
Study Commission Chair