

TOWN OF WHITEHALL
P.O. BOX 529
WHITEHALL, MT 59759
Posted December 12th, 2025

*There was a regular council meeting of the Whitehall Town Council on **Monday, December 15th, 2025 at 7:00 pm**. The meeting was held in the Town Hall Council Chambers at 207 East Legion Ave.*

Live stream of meeting is available at townofwhitehallmt.com by clicking on "Council Meeting Live Stream (when available)" button on the homepage and under Quicklinks section at the bottom of each webpage.

The agenda is as follows:

AGENDA

I. CALL TO ORDER *The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.*

II. INTRODUCTIONS *Katy James, Linda Jung, Bill Lanes, Roy McBride, Shawn Hoagland, Mary Janacaro Hensleigh, and Sara Unruh. Guests include Liz Pullman, Jim Buterbaugh, Kerry Buterbaugh, Kory Klapan, Arica Klapan, Dan Hagerty, Jessica Ward, Allissa Christensen, Sam Kraha, Colton Howser, Connie Hamilton, Keith Hamilton, Maxine Samuelson, and Ron Jung*

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

Allissa Christensen stated she is the Court Clerk and she appreciated Mary Janacaro Hensleigh letting her know that the Court Clerk contract termination was on the agenda. She has been the Court Clerk for 5 years and 2 of the years has been as a contractor. She stated when she started, County payments had not been made for 5 years and she rectified it. She has kept the finances in order and said she hopes the Council will keep her contract.

V. AGENDA APPROVAL *Linda Jung motioned to approve and Katy James seconded. The motion passed unanimously.*

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES *Linda Jung motioned to approve the minutes with an amendment of a correction of a sentence. Bill Lanes seconded and the motion passed unanimously.*

VII. PRESENTATIONS *None*

VIII. REPORTS - PLEASE KEEP REPORTS WITHIN A 3 TO 5-MINUTE SYNOPSIS

a. Mayor's Report and Public Service Announcements

Mary Janacaro Hensleigh stated it is her last meeting after serving for 12 years. She thanked the Council and employees. She also thanked those who have served on advisory boards, engineers, and contractors. She said a special thanks to Joe Davis, Jim Hicks, Rich Shepard and the Whitehall Garden Club. She said thanks to all the high school teachers and students who have helped with Spring Clean over the years. She listed the major projects over those 12 years including the sewer lagoons, ambulance barn (now Town Hall) construction, Golden Sunlight pavilion, playground, bike park, maintained the pool, and multiple park improvements. She stated the biggest project was the water treatment plant that has taken over 8 years and should be distributing by February. Another large project was rebuilding the Rec Complex. She stated that all this was done while staying on budget and having clean audits every year. She said she wanted to thank everyone and it has been an honor being mayor.

b. Officer's Reports

a. Attorney - None

b. Clerk – *Sara Unruh reported the Town has a contract for the audit and the process has started. Two bonds have been closed for the water treatment plant and the sewer headworks projects. 2026 dog licenses are now available at half price until January 31st. 2026 business licenses can now be renewed as well. Utility bills have switched from the summer rates with average sewer usage to the winter rates with actual sewer usage.*

c. Public Works – *Kory Klapan reported that water samples were taken December 10th which also included the three and nine year samples. Hardrock has started chlorinating the lines and then water will be flushed in the water treatment plant which should take two weeks. The headworks project is moving along well and the building is up. A survey was scheduled today for the roads and corner of west First Street and Meadow View Lane but it was unsure if it had been surveyed. He thanked the 4-H clubs for their help decorating the park for Christmas. Alley clean up has been happening on mild weather days. The parts for the water treatment plant have been moved over there.*

d. Fire Chief – *Colton Howser reported there were 16 calls this past month and 202 calls year to date.*

e. Sheriff - None

f. County Commissioner – *Dan Hagerty reported that solid waste has purchased a new truck which will be ready in April 2026. He also wished*

good luck to Mary Janacaro Hensleigh and Shawn Hoagland after their last meeting tonight.

c. Committee/Board Reports

- a. Planning Board – *Arica Klapan reported that the special presentation from Montana coop housing was postponed until they can make it to a meeting in-person. One application was received and is on the consent agenda. Linda Jung resigned and there will be two board member openings available if anyone is interested.*
- b. Sewer, Water, Garbage, Streets, Alleys, and Sidewalks – *No quorum*
- c. Parks, Trees, and Cemetery - *None*
- d. Pool Board - *None*
- e. Rec Complex Board - *None*
- f. Whitehall Tax Incremental Finance District – *Roy McBride reported that an additional \$7,000 was approved for the Rec Complex flagpole. A company will install the flagpole (with the concrete and electrical work included) and their quote was \$7,000 more than the purchase (no installation offered) of the flagpole from a different company. The school's painting project was tabled due to not yet receiving the county tax.*

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA – *Katy James read the consent agenda. Roy McBride motioned to approve and the motion passed unanimously.*

WSGSAS Board – Mayoral Approval

3 Whitetail Road - \$337.47 credit
110 Second Street East - \$29.96 credit
110 First Street East - \$56.64 credit
11 Whitehall Street North - \$153.89 credit
5 Whitetail Drive - \$310.77 credit
104 First Street East - \$109.78 credit

Business License

The Plumbing Dr

Planning Board

Development Permit – 36 Corbett Loop – Fence
Linda Jung Resignation

TIFF Board

Town of Whitehall – Flagpole – Additional \$7,000

XI. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Filing with Montana Secretary of State for Whitehall City Court
Roy McBride motioned to approve and Linda Jung seconded. Roy McBride stated that the bank had requested changes to the account. The account was started approximately 10 years ago, assumably by the clerk at the time and was not switched to the new clerk when Allissa Christensen became the contracted Court Clerk. Roy McBride suggested that the account be named back to the Town and have new signors (including the future mayor, Linda Jung, and the current treasurer, Jessica Ward). He stated that this is a minor change and the bank requested that it be in the minutes which will be submitted into their records. Mary Janacaro Hensleigh stated that this will make the Town of Whitehall the principal on the account. The motion passed unanimously.
- b. **Resolution No. 2025-17** – A Resolution of the Town Council of the Town of Whitehall, Montana Establishing a Floodplain Permit Application Fee and After-the-Fact Penalty
Roy McBride motioned to approve. Bill Lanes seconded and it passed unanimously. There was no discussion.

XII. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Oath of Office** – Linda Jung and James Buterbaugh
Mary Janacaro Hensleigh asked them both to come to the front. She swore in Linda Jung first and then swore in Jim Buterbaugh.
- b. Authorize Linda Jung as signor and Remove Mary Janacaro Hensleigh on Town Bank Accounts – Roy McBride and Jessica Ward remain on the account – Effective January 1, 2026
Shawn Hoagland motioned to approve. Bill Lanes seconded and the motion passed unanimously. There was no discussion.
- c. Terminate Court Clerk Contract
Katy James motioned and Roy McBride seconded. Linda Jung stated that Sara Unruh is not the floodplain administrator and would be able to take on the Court Clerk responsibilities. This could save the Town money and she stated this is how it has been done in the past. She stated the Allissa Christensen was the exception and this was the only time the Court Clerk has been contracted. She had requested this item be on the agenda. She stated she received phone calls from Judge Scott Owens and Prosecuting Attorney Sam Martins and she explained it was due to financial reasons and not Allissa Christensen's performance. They both suggested a transition period of training if the contract is terminated. Linda Jung

amended her motion to terminate the contract and include a transition period of three months. Shawn Hoagland asked what is the cost to the Town if it comes back in-house and wanted to know what the transition period would look like. Linda Jung said she assumed Mary Janacaro Hensleigh had spoken to Allissa Christensen about training and Mary Janacaro Hensleigh stated she had only let Allissa Christensen know it was an item on the agenda.

Bill Lanes asked if there were any figures comparing the cost previously in-house and with the contract. Mary Janacaro Hensleigh stated that when Allissa became Court Clerk she was in-house and the past two years have been contracted. Linda Jung stated the first contract was a flat fee of \$500/month and approximately a year ago Allissa Christensen had asked for \$25/hour. Allissa Christensen stated she did not ask for \$25/hour; she had asked for a stipend of \$600/month. She stated she had been willing to quit but the judge had asked the Council to negotiate and the Council approved the hourly wage.

Roy McBride asked Allissa Christensen if she was willing to train Sara Unruh for three months. Allissa Christensen said she does not think it is possible with both of them working full-time jobs. She said the judge does not do any training for the Court Clerk. Linda Jung said the judge told her over the phone today that he does train but Allissa Christensen will be able to train more thoroughly. Allissa Christensen said he does not change and he is a new judge. Mary Janacaro Hensleigh asked if she would be willing to do any training from now to the end of the year. Allissa Christensen stated she was currently feeling disgruntled and she would not be able to train.

Shawn Hoagland said that is a good point and it is an issue and he does not want to table this item. He asked what the amendment was for. It was stated that the amendment included the transition period. He said the motion can be amended but if Allissa Christensen is not willing to train, it is a situation. Linda Jung asked how any previous Court Clerks were trained and she knew of schooling in Helena. Allissa stated before she started, it was the previous Town Clerk and before her, Judge Guilo provided his own clerk, Mary Richie, who was an independent contractor. He was the judge for approximately 20 years before he retired. The Town Clerk predecessor to her had just decided she was Court Clerk.

Shawn Hoagland asked about the financial offset while having a contractor for the floodplain and a contractor for the Court. Dan Hagerty added that back before Allissa Christensen's time, they would send Court Clerks to train at Justice Court with the County. He thinks Eric Rickle

oversees any training now. Katy James asked Allissa Christensen about her hours. Allissa Christensen stated she works mostly in the evenings and weekends. She suggested that Sara Unruh would have to go to full court training. She also stated she would be willing to go back to the \$600/month stipend since she enjoys the work. It was agreed that hours can fluctuate and jury trials are unpredictable. Linda Jung stated the Town will still need to know how to train a new Court Clerk in the future.

Bill Lanes seconded the amended motion. Roy McBride asked Allissa Christensen what stipend she would go back to and she stated \$600/month. Shawn Hoagland said if it was a set amount it would help the Council work on their annual budget. Roy McBride said terminating the contract would only save money in the short term and Shawn Hoagland was in agreement. Katy James and Roy McBride would like to see if some training could happen over the next year. Jim Buterbaugh suggested the Council should research the Court Clerk role for three months. Liz Pullman asked about job descriptions and manuals. Maxine Samuelson said she thought Allissa Christensen is "burned out" and Allissa Christensen said she is not. She was caught off guard since she did not know the Council was interested in terminating the contract. She is happy being the Court Clerk and is not willingly terminating the contract. If she was, she wouldn't mind training someone else, but she is currently very disgruntled. Maxine Samuelson said she thinks this needs to be tabled and more discussion and research needs to be done.

Bill Lanes stated that there has been new employees and the Town has enough in-house staff to save the Town money. Roy McBride stated the Town runs on a 1970's budget and they are always looking for ways to save money. He is worried about the transition of a new Court Clerk. It doesn't have anything to do with Allissa Christensen's performance, the decision is based on finances. He is concerned about a new Court Clerk having to start in the Court system without proper training and knowledge. Mary Janacaro Hensleigh stated the amended motion must be voted on and if it is not approved, it can be brought back to the agenda at a later time. Liz Pullman asked how much of Sara Unruh's work was floodplain administration. She replied it was less than 10% of her job. No one voted for; all were opposed. The motion failed unanimously.

d. Jefferson County Property Deeded to Town of Whitehall

Roy McBride motioned and Bill Lanes seconded. Kory Klapan stated he's been working with the County to obtain a parcel across from Stageline Pizza. He went to the County Commissioners meeting and they granted the parcel to the Town pending on the Council accepting the parcel. He

stated there is money available to plant grass and install sprinklers on the parcel since it is next to Legion Park. He hopes that will encourage people to no longer dump trash there. Roy McBride asked if a fence would be necessary. Kory Klapan said it wouldn't be needed and that it takes less than five minutes to mow and would be part of zone 3 of the park sprinklers. The parking area will remain the same for now. The Town has currently been maintaining the parcel for many years. The County wants to make sure that the Town would not sell the parcel for at least five years. Kory Klapan stated it can be zoned as a park and could never be sold. The County agreed that if it is zoned as park they won't want a contract. Kory Klapan stated it will need to be annexed and a public hearing will be needed. The motion passed unanimously.

XIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

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.

Keith Hamilton stated that he talked to Kory Klapan and Bill Lanes about road encroachment on his property along Meadow View Lane. He would like it to be resolved.

XIV. UNSCHEDULED MATTERS

Kory Klapan stated that the Town accidentally encroached the Hamilton's property while trying to widen the corner of Meadow View Lane and First Street. The existing road appears to be encroaching the property by approximately six feet. The property is platted but has never been surveyed. It was scheduled to be surveyed this morning and he will call the surveyor tomorrow. He stated he has apologized several times and is working to correct this.

Connie Hamilton stated that the road work had just started when she called Kory Klapan. She told the Council she would like prior notice of anything effecting property owners in the future. She said Kory Klapan had said something approximately a year prior. She would like notice a week ahead of time.

Katy James stated the silver water tower has had trespassers come through private property to climb the tower. She would like a fence to be installed around the tower. She also stated that there are two council seats that are available.

Mary Janacaro Hensleigh presented a personalized gavel to Linda Jung as mayor elect.

Katy James presented a crystal appreciation award to Mary Janacaro Hensleigh from the Council members.

Linda Jung stated that anyone interested in serving on an advisory board or Ward 3 should contact her and submit a letter of intent. She encourages the public to apply.

XV BILL/CLAIM APPROVAL LIST TO BE SIGNED BY ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS *Roy McBride motioned and Bill Lanes seconded. The motion passed unanimously.*

XVI. ADJOURNMENT *Bill Lanes motioned and Roy McBride seconded. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.*

Next Regular Council Meeting, **Tuesday, January 20th, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.**