

SC MINUTES for Information Forum on April 28th, 2025, at the Senior Center, 6:30 pm

Present: Chairwoman Doris Fischer, Ralph Sand, Michael Walter, Ex officio Tammy Todd, and MSU LGC guest Ashley Kent.

Public Attendees: Janice Hansen, Chris Roberts, Nancy Mapes, Jan Bowey, Bob Stump, Claire Leonard, online DD (left early).

Ashley Kent was the presenter from Montana State University Local Government Center (MSU LGC). Informational materials were distributed to the public. Ashley identified the purpose of the government review and its history in the state of Montana. Montana is the only state that allows the voters to decide whether to have a review every 10 years. The process is voter driven. The Red Light/Green Light chart clarifies what a government review is, and what it is not. The Town of Sheridan voters amended their form only once in 1989. The amendment was to elect officials “at-large versus in wards.” The scope of the Study Commission and process was presented. Municipalities have either general governing power or self-governing power as outlined in Montana state statutes. There is to be a balance between the executive and legislative branches. Most towns and cities in the state have general governing power. Self-governing power is more of a gray area.

There are six forms of government in the state: 1. The Commission-Executive form (elected Council-Mayor), which is what Sheridan has. 2. The Commission-Manager form (elected officials, manager hired depending on qualifications). 3. Commission form (serve as both executive and legislative). Madison County has this form. 4. The Commission- Presiding Officer (elected officials and the Commission elects Presiding Officer from its own members). Example is Virginia City. 5. The Town Meeting (everyone comes together once a year to make decisions; 10% of population is legislative, Mayor is elected). 6. The Charter form (written document establishing executive, legislative, and administrative structures and organization; it has self-governing power). Example is Dillon.

Ashley encouraged the review of State Statutes 7-3-213 through 7-3-224. She also agreed that the Draft Current Government Structure Options in the form of a table is a good idea. The SC Timetable was distributed and reviewed. She reminded the SC that if there is a quorum of two, there is legally to be no “hearing, discussing, or acting,” otherwise it is seen as an illegal meeting.

Thank you, Ashley, for your presentation! Thank you, citizens, for your participation!

The session adjourned at 8:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Tammy Todd, Ex officio