

MINUTES for Town of Sheridan Study Commission, Educational Session, on April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at 4 pm at Senior Center

Attendance: Chairperson Doris Fischer, Ralph Sand, Tammy Todd, Michael Walter.

Guest: Ashley Kent from the Montana State University Local Government Center (MSU LGC).

Chair Doris opened the meeting, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The educational session began with introductions. Questions by the Study Commission regarding the government review process were presented to Ashley. Group discussions were held with some key points as follows: The process is to be voter-driven as 53% of the town voters indicated the need for review in the June 2024 election. Montana is the only state to have a mandatory option every 10 years to review the current type or form of government and determine if a new form or amendments are recommended; the final decision for changes is determined by the voters. There are six forms of government: 1. The Commission-Executive form (council-mayor); 2. The Commission-Manager form; 3. The Commission form/ Elected County official form; 4. The Commission-Presiding Officer form; 5. The Town Meeting form; and 6. The Charter form. Each form was briefly described with encouragement to review Montana Code Annotated and/or refer to MSU LGC informational materials. The Town of Sheridan currently and historically has had the Commission-Executive form (Council-Mayor). It has been amended once in 1989, when the officials were elected in wards and changed to elected at-large. The Study Commission (SC) purpose is to guide the Government Review process and present recommendations to the governing body, i.e. Town Council. The Town Council, in turn, would present to the voters through election the recommendations for changes. Ultimately, it is up to the voters! There was discussion relative to how does the SC get public participation and input. We were reminded of the open meeting laws and Sunshine laws, i.e. the public's right to examine documents and observe the deliberations of public bodies, which assist transparency and public participation in government operations. The SC agreed to tentatively meet with Town Officials individually on or before May 22<sup>nd</sup> to consider questions about the current form of government. The SC is to establish a brief survey for the Council, Mayor, and employee department heads.

The educational portion adjourned at 5:28 pm.

Respectfully submitted by: Tamara Todd, Ex officio