

**Town of Ennis**  
**Local Government Review Commission**  
**Public Hearing #1**  
**February 20, 2025 @ 6pm**  
**Madison Public Library**

**Public Hearing minutes**

**Commissioners Present:** Kelly Elser, Brittney Hirsch, Karen Ketchu

Community members present: Mary Sedwick, Bob & Shirley Bayley, Nikki Hankins, Tina Allison, Town Commissioners John Way & Cory Hardy, Brian & Dawn Conklin, Brandi Palmerton, Gayle Schabarker, Katie Coyle, Mayor Nici Haas, Mark Odegard, Lincoln Roberts, Chris Hirsch, Dale Olson, Carla Smith (and others). Total participants were approximately 35 community members.

Public Hearing was presented in an Open House Style. Several questions were presented to the public on large format posters hung on the wall. Participants were provided colored sticker dots to answer the questions. Surveys were also provided for the attendees to fill out.

Roberts gave a summary of the Local Government Review Commission and how it came about. The Montana Constitution provides citizens the opportunity to review the form of Local Government every 10 Years. 70% of voters in the primary election voted for the Local government review.

**Public Comment:**

Nikki Hankins made comment with thanks to the Study Commission for their efforts in the evening event

Cory Hardy made comment regarding the different forms of government available to the towns and counties of Montana

Marc Odegard commented on the donut effect, implying that what happens inside Town limits impacts a radius of residents outside of town. He also made comment that he was involved in a city that had a manager and he found it a very positive experience and that having a manager is very effective but he did not believe Ennis could afford a Town Manager.

Brian Conklin commented regarding an MSU study that was conducted showing the net positive benefit of counties and towns hiring a manager - while the cost may be significant, the study showed that the savings and efficiency that the governments experienced far outweighed the cost of hiring a manager

Shirley Bailey asked the question of how the local government review came about. Commissioners answered her question to the entire room, explaining the Montana Constitution and the 70% voter approval to do this review in June 2024.


Gayle Shaybarker made a comment regarding the uniqueness that Montana is the only state that allows its residents to have an optional review of the government every 10 years.

Nici Haas made a comment in favor of the 2015 Study Commission's recommendation to implement a required training policy for newly elected officials.

The public hearing concluded at 8pm.

Attached are pictures of the questions presented to the community members

Approved by:

  
Kelly Elser, presiding officer

**Would**  
changing the form of government  
be more effective for managing town  
services?

Yes

No



# What

elements of local government are most important to you?

Transparency

Responsiveness

Effective management of taxpayer funds

Being responsive to change

Being proactive to challenges

Employee retention


Consistent Leadership

Business


# Do You

Think these areas could be improved?


Transparency 

Responsiveness 

Effective management of taxpayer funds 

Being responsive to change 

Being proactive to challenges 

Employee retention 

Consistent Leadership 

Fairness 