

**** Page 1** A SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF THREE FORKS, MONTANA, JANUARY 13TH, 2026**

JANUARY 13TH, 2026, The Three Forks City Council met at the Three Forks City Hall at 206 S. Main Street and via Zoom. (Zoom is a virtual meeting tool which the City began using due to COVID-19 and social distancing guidelines and continues to use to encourage participation from the safety of one's home.) The meeting was chaired by Mayor Randy Johnston, who called the meeting to order at 6:03 P.M.

ROLL CALL: City Council members Ed Tharp, Gene Townsend, Robert Buchholz, Reagan Hooton, (Warren) Garret Buchanan, and Alex Blackburn were present. City Treasurer Kelly Smith and City Clerk Crystal Turner were present at City Hall. No staff attended via Zoom.

The record reflected a quorum with the attendance of six (6) Council members and the meeting was held.

The **Pledge of Allegiance** to the American Flag was led by Mayor Johnston. Mayor Johnston reminded the audience that this meeting was audio- and video-recorded and may be streamed via Zoom and on our Facebook page.

GUESTS: George Chancellor, Gloria Howland

PUBLIC COMMENTS/CONCERNS (For items not on the agenda)

There were no public comments or concerns for items not on the agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

- a) Claims Paid due to Timeliness including to Mail Utility Bills on 12/31/2025 in the Amount of \$190,741.46
- b) City Claims to be Paid
- c) Three Forks Rodeo Arena Board Claims paid due to Timeliness on 12/31/2025 Totaling \$1,183.00
- d) Three Forks Rodeo Arena Board Claims for Approval
- e) Council Minutes of 11/25/2025 and 12/9/2025
- f) Extension of Existing AE2S contract (Signed by Mayor 12/19/2025) to Perform SCADA Software Programming Services
- g) Service Agreement with HydroSolutions for Professional Guidance as Requested by Susan Swimley or Dana Pepper at a Rate of \$163/hour (Signed by Mayor 12/5/2025)
- h) Record Destruction Request #30 (Completed Infrastructure Construction Documents, Expired Intergovernmental Agreements, Closed Grants, Old Bids/RFPs, 1096 and I-9 Forms of Former Employees, 1099 Copies of Paid Vendors from 2020, Customer ACH Signup forms no longer used, "Shut Off" Lists from 2021 and 2022, Job Advertisements and Applications through 3/2022, Payroll Registers from pre-1975, and Paid off Loans)

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- i) Draw #8 for the Jefferson River Flood Mitigation Project Reimbursements of Expenses Totaling \$35,983.45
- j) Draw Packet #38 for the Three Forks Water Supply Project: for MCEP \$2,204 and for ARPA MAG \$27,858.38 for a Grant Total of \$30,062.38

Gene Townsend asked the Mayor about the contract with HydroSolutions, wondering if the purpose was to bring a conclusion to the water rights? Mayor Johnston explained HydroSolutions has all the maps of the aquifers for the water project. Crystal Turner corrected the Mayor's response, noting the contract lists specific "Scope of Services", and said she believes they just wish to have him on contract in the event they need an expert's opinion in Water Court. Alex Blackburn asked if it was a legal retainer then? Crystal replied, "He has been our expert on the Water Project for the past five years, so I think they just want to have him as an expert on hand."

Councilman Townsend moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilwoman Hooton seconded the motion. There were no public questions or comments.
Motion Passed Unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public Hearing and Decision on a Resolution to Rescind Resolution #243-2015, and Remove the Reference to it from the Fee Schedule

Mayor Johnston read the resolution into the record in its entirety, noting it would be #465-2026.

Councilman Blackburn moved to pass Resolution #465-2026, rescinding Resolution #243-2015 and removing its reference from the Fee Schedule.
Councilman Tharp seconded the motion. There was no public comment.

Motion Passed Unanimously.

REPORT OF OFFICERS

City Clerk Crystal Turner reported on her annual Business License Report, asking for the Council's direction on sending those in violation to the City Attorney, Susan Swimley, and/or the Gallatin County Sheriff Office to enforce. Garret Buchanan confirmed how many reminder letters have been sent to each business, which was three. He asked if we send this on to the Sheriff, what is the outcome? Crystal said it would be up to Sgt. Doonan but they could get a ticket. Garret Buchanan said that seemed reasonable. Robert Buchholz noted the letters reference a late fee, "Do they reference a ticket?" Crystal replied no, because the [business license] ordinance does not specifically say that, but it references the general code for violations of 1-4-1. The Council recommended sending remaining violations on to the Gallatin County Sheriff and Susan Swimley. Kelly Smith recommended a phone call first to the those left outstanding,

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which Crystal and Kelly will do and then forward on any remaining violations.

She also reported that she sent a couple emails to the Council: one from the Big Sky Passenger Rail regarding a virtual meeting which will be held tomorrow if anyone is interested; and one to just Robert and Alex for newly elected officials about online trainings.

City Treasurer Kelly Smith reported the Chamber would like to meet with the Town Property Committee regarding putting a visitor's center back into Milwaukee Railroad Park (Committee members are Robert Buchholz, Ed Tharp and Garret Buchanan) adding that after 5PM works for the president of the Chamber. "It used to be in the caboose, and that is not ADA compliant at all. They do not currently have any place to call home," Kelly said. After 6PM is more do-able for Garret and Robert. It was agreed to reach out to the Chamber asking that 1/21/2026 at 6PM work for all. Gene Townsend asked if they built a building, what kind of inspections would they have to comply with if they built something like a pre-fabricated shed? Kelly Smith said a floodplain permit and a commercial building permit, as well as maybe an electrical permit for power, would be required. Gene asked if the Historical Society would be asked for any input, and Kelly replied yes.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Jefferson River Floodplain Project

This item was skipped over by the Mayor.

Water Project

This item was skipped over by the Mayor.

REPORTS FROM COUNCIL COMMITTEES (if any)

This item was skipped over by the Mayor.

NEW BUSINESS

Election of Council President for 2-Year Term per Resolution #360-2022

Reagan Hooton asked what the President's duties are and who is the current President. The Mayor replied it is currently Gene Townsend, "The President chairs the meetings in the absence of the Mayor."

Councilman Blackburn nominated Gene [Townsend] to continue as President.
Councilman Tharp seconded the motion. Reagan Hooton asked Gene if he was still interested. Gene said he was fine with it.

Motion Passed Unanimously.

Mayor Committee Assignments

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Mayor Johnston read his assigned committees, to which Garret Buchanan realized he was on six committees. So, they rearranged Parks as follows: Tharp, Blackburn and Hooton; and Public Safety: Buchholz, Townsend, Blackburn. Crystal Turner will edit and reprint and post on the website.

Board Appointments: Zoning & Planning Board

Mayor Johnston read the Board Appointment memo into the record.

Councilman Townsend moved to accept Amy Laban as a member of the Zoning & Planning Board. Councilwoman Hooton and Councilman Buchanan second in unison.

Motion Passed Unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/CONCERNS (For items not on the agenda)

There were no public comments or concerns that were not on the agenda.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Johnston would like to tour Alex Blackburn and Robert Buchholz on the Water and Sewer infrastructure.

Reagan Hooton asked if it was still the intent to continue Arbor Day and plant more trees this year? The staff answered yes. Reagan said, "If you can think of anywhere that could take a tree, please keep that in mind and let me know."

The next meeting will be on February 10, 2026, and will have the following items:

- Public Hearing and Decision on a First Reading of an Ordinance Creating Title 11, Chapter 29: Regulations for the Use of the Right-of-Way by Providers of Telecommunications Services
- Public Hearing and Decision on a First Reading of an Ordinance Creating Title 11, Chapter 30: Small Cell Regulations

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Councilwoman Hooton. Councilwoman Hooton seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned without a vote taken by the Mayor's gavel at 6:34P.M.

Randy Johnston, Mayor

Crystal Turner, City Clerk