

**MILES CITY  
GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMISSION**



**1986  
FINAL  
REPORT**

Prepared by  
Miles Citizens  
for Miles City

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To the Citizens of Miles City:

At your request, the Miles City Study Commission has reviewed the existing government of Miles City, and studied the other forms of government available under state law.

Over the past two years, we have sought the views, advice and information from those people currently in city government as well as former city officials and study commissioners; scheduled public hearings to obtain input from Miles City residents; and conducted a telephone survey to identify any additional concerns of Miles City citizens.

Based upon our study and review, we offer our Final Report and recommend the citizens of Miles City adopt the Council-Manager form of government. Our concern has been to offer a form of government that will be responsive to local citizens and provide the opportunity for devising solutions to local problems. This form of government offers the citizens a full-time administrator. Our Opinion Survey indicated that a clear majority, 61.6% of Miles City residents contacted, supported the concept of full-time, professional administration of city government affairs. We believe this form of government will provide the most efficient, effective and economic delivery of services to the citizens of Miles City. (See page 7 for more detailed information on the proposed Council-Manager form of government.) Since our proposal recommends a five-member council, please refer to the map on pages 10 and 11 to review the proposed districts. In addition, we offer the citizens of Miles City a choice of partisan or non-partisan local government elections. A copy of the official ballot appears on page 13.

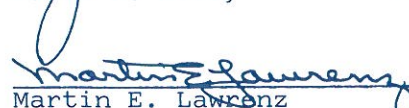
The citizens of Miles City now have a choice to determine their future form of local government. Your Study Commission believes the the Council-Manager from of government offers the best opportunity for effective delivery of services.

Respectfully submitted,

  
John R. Tooke, Chairman

  
Ronald E. Gersack

  
Janet R. Kelly

  
Martin E. Lawrenz

  
Edith Botnen

# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Miles City Local Government Study Commission having thoroughly studied our present form of city government and the alternative forms of government available to cities under state law, and having studied the future governmental needs of the city, recommends the following:

1. Miles City should adopt, effective January 4, 1988, the council-manager form of government with general government powers. A council, or elected legislative body, of five (5) members shall be elected for four (4) year terms of office. Each member shall be elected from districts in which they reside and which are apportioned by population.
2. The question of whether or not elections shall be conducted on a non-partisan or partisan basis shall be submitted to the voters of the city as a sub-option as authorized in MCA 7-4-413.
3. The question on the form of government and the sub-option shall be submitted to the voters of Miles City on November 4, 1986.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY COMMISSION

During the past two years this commission has studied the existing form of city government to determine whether it meets the present and future needs of the people. We have interviewed various city officials including the mayor, current and former council members, department heads, and former study commission members. We have conducted public hearings and polled residents to learn their concerns and opinions. We have studied the functions of city government in the delivery of services as well as the people charged with managing those services. Problem areas identified during the course of our study indicate that the current form of government does not offer the best opportunity for efficient and responsive delivery of services or effective management of available financial resources.

Specific problem areas which were identified during the course of our study include the following:

1. There are no clearly defined lines of authority currently established within city government which fix responsibility and accountability, and delegate appropriate authority. Administrative policy is not defined and appropriate job descriptions are not in place. Accordingly the separation of legislative and administrative functions is blurred and dependant upon the personalities of those involved in government. City officials and employees must have a full understanding of their responsibilities and the authority available to them to do their jobs.
2. The demands on city government and the diminishing revenues and resources available to meet these demands require greater attention than can be provided by part-time administration. The current form of government does not provide the most effective and efficient framework to manage the need for services and match those needs with available resources. Full-time professional management of human and financial resources available to city government offers the opportunity for better accountability and more efficient use of these resources.
3. Representative government requires greater participation by city residents in the governing process. Our studies of the governing process in Miles City indicate that party designation as well as the current makeup of legislative districts or wards both contribute to the lack of participation. Time requirements placed on elected officials in administering the current government are also a factor contributing to lack of involvement. In order to stimulate increased participation in government we have recommended the adoption of non-partisan elections on a local basis. We have redrawn districts to make them similar in makeup and allow for equal representation on the council. The council-manager form of government will require less time of elected officials in administering government and place more responsibility on them to establish policy and adhere to their legislative function.

This cost comparison is based on the 1985-1986 Fiscal Year budget worksheet which was prepared by the City Treasurer's office.

## COST ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENT FORM OF CITY GOVERNMENT (MAYOR-COUNCIL)

|   |    |           |              |
|---|----|-----------|--------------|
| Administrative costs of the policy making body          |    |           |              |
| Mayor .....   | \$ | 10,270.00 |              |
| Eight Member Council .....                              |    | 31,435.00 |              |
| City Attorney .....                                     |    | 19,735.00 | \$ 61,440.00 |
|   |    |           |              |
| Administrative costs of the day-to-day functioning body |    |           |              |
| City Financial Advisor .....                            |    | 36,960.00 |              |
| Payroll Clerk .....                                     |    | 27,130.00 |              |
| Computer Coordinator .....                              |    | 26,490.00 |              |
| Clerk .....   |    | 21,245.00 |              |
| Cashier .....   |    | 13,790.00 |              |
| Secretary .....   |    | 16,500.00 | \$142,115.00 |

**TOTAL COST OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE BRANCH OF CITY GOVERNMENT . . . . \$203,555.00**

*These figures include not only payroll but also the benefits which these individuals receive. (Work. Comp., Insurance benefits, PERS. Retirement, FICA)*

## COST ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSED FORM OF CITY GOVERNMENT (CITY MANAGER-COUNCIL)

|   |    |           |              |
|---|----|-----------|--------------|
| Administrative costs of the policy making body          |    |           |              |
| Five Member Council .....                               | \$ | 10,800.00 |              |
| City Attorney .....                                     |    | 15,800.00 | \$ 26,600.00 |
|   |    |           |              |
| Administrative costs of the day to day functioning body |    |           |              |
| City Manager .....                                      |    | 32,500.00 |              |
| Payroll Clerk .....                                     |    | 27,130.00 |              |
| Computer Coordinator .....                              |    | 26,490.00 |              |
| Clerk .....   |    | 21,245.00 |              |
| Cashier .....   |    | 13,790.00 |              |
| Secretary .....   |    | 16,500.00 | \$137,655.00 |

**TOTAL COST OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE BRANCH OF CITY GOVERNMENT (CITY MANAGER-COUNCIL) . . . . \$164,255.00**

*The cost of a City Manager was suggested by Dr. Ken Weaver of Montana State University who is in charge of the Department of Political Science.*

Based on our studies the Council-Manager form of government will be cheaper to operate while also offering more productive use of available resources.

# COMPARISON OF EXISTING FORM OF GOVERNMENT AND PROPOSED FORM OF GOVERNMENT

## FUNCTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

### **Proposed Council-Manager Form:**

The council-manager form of government is characterized by having an appointed administrator and an elected policy making body. There is a clear distinction between the executive and legislative branches of government.

### **Existing Mayor-Council Form:**

The mayor-council form of government is familiar to the people of Miles City. The mayor or executive, who is elected, becomes the chief administrator for the city. The members of the city council who are also elected, set policy through approval of resolution and ordinances. They also participate in the administration of government as members of various city council committees and they are a common feature of the mayor-council form. There is a blurring of roles between the executive and legislative branches of government.

## ADMINISTRATIVE ROLE

### **Proposed Council-Manager Form:**

The manager is hired and removed by the council. Selection is based on experience and training. The manager administers local government affairs. This includes selecting and removing employees, supervising employees, preparing the budget for council approval, implementing the budget and preparing the council agenda.

### **Existing Mayor-Council Form:**

The mayor has well defined duties which are described by state law. The mayor acts in conjunction with the council in these areas: appointment powers, administrative supervision and control, and budget preparation. He may veto ordinances and resolutions which are subject to a two-thirds over ride vote of the city council. The mayor may only vote to break tie votes of the council.

The mayor's job is part time and the daily business of the city is usually carried out by appointed personnel. Since the mayor is elected, the community can count on having local leadership in their city government.

A common concern about the mayor-council form of government is that the voters cannot be certain that the people running for mayor have the expertise needed to manage government. Even if qualified people run there is also the concern that they may not be elected or re-elected.

# COMPARISON OF EXISTING FORM OF GOVERNMENT AND PROPOSED FORM OF GOVERNMENT

## LEGISLATIVE ROLE

### **Proposed Council-Manager Form:**

The council consists of five elected representatives, one from each of five districts, elected on a nonpartisan or partisan basis. The elected council sets government policy and supervises the manager in implementing this policy.

### **Existing Mayor-Council Form:**

The council consists of eight elected representatives, two of whom are elected from each of four districts or wards on a partisan basis. This system assures broad representation and responsiveness to the voters. The council is primarily responsible for policy making.

## ROLE OF MAYOR

### **Proposed Council-Manager Form:**

The chairman of the council will be selected by the council members. The chairman, who may be called the mayor, presides at council meetings and participates in the voting with the rest of the council members. This mayor has little resemblance to the mayor of the council-mayor form of government. The mayor in a council-manager form of government does not administer government. He or she participates in the usual official and/or ceremonial duties of a mayor, but has powers which are essentially the same as those of other council members.

Less time is demanded of public officials under this form of government because the administrator is responsible for the daily management of the city. It does make it easier for people who are otherwise employed to run for the office of council member.

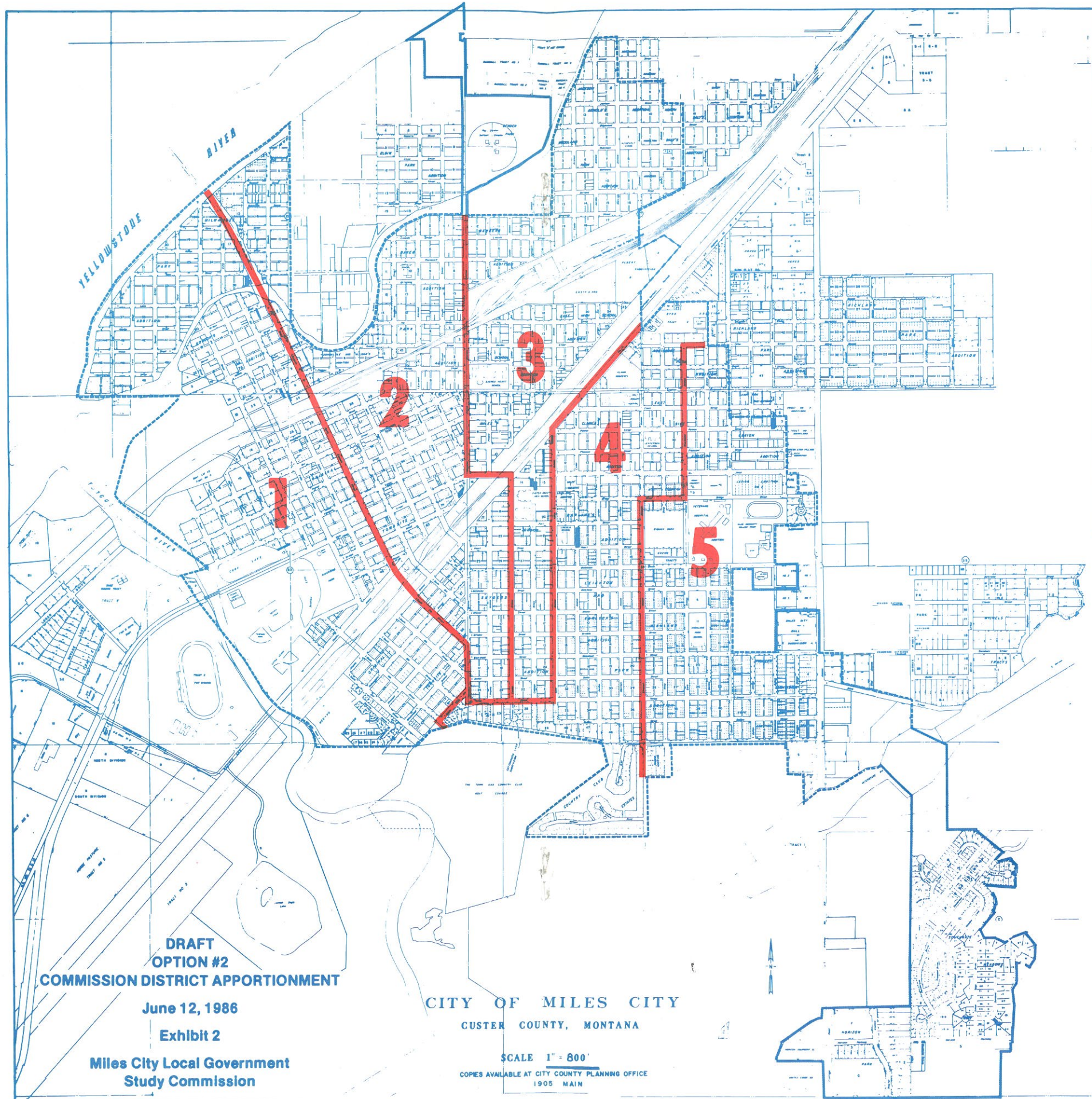
A typical concern about this form of government is that the manager has too much power, is not a home town person, and is not as directly accountable to the voter as an elected executive.

| CHARACTERISTIC  | EXISTING FORM OF GOVERNMENT  | PROPOSED FORM OF GOVERNMENT  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Form of Government</b>   | Council-mayor.<br>Elected council and separately elected executive (mayor).                | Council-manager.<br>Elected council determines policy. Manager is hired to administer policy.  |
| <b>COMMENTS:</b> Separation of executive (administrative) and legislative powers is blurred with council-mayor form. With commission-manager form the executive and legislative powers are separated. The manager is appointed on the basis of experience and training. |  |  |
| <b>Powers</b>   | General government powers.   | General government powers.   |
| <b>COMMENTS:</b> No change.   |  |  |
| <b>Governing Body</b>   | Council and mayor responsible for all legislative, executive and administrative functions. | The council makes policy. It hires a manager to carry out decisions and administer government. |
| <b>COMMENTS:</b> The council is freed from administrative role to concentrate on policy making role.  |  |  |
| <b>Chief Administrative and Executive Officer</b>   | The elected mayor administers government on a part time basis.                             | The hired administrator (manager) administers government on a full time basis.                 |
| <b>COMMENTS:</b> The voters now determine who shall administer government. The proposal allows the council to hire the administrator on the basis of merit.   |  |  |
| <b>Presiding Officer</b>  | The mayor who is elected by the voters.  | A chairman who may be called mayor is selected by the council.                                 |
| <b>COMMENTS:</b> The chairman presides at council meetings and represents the city at official or ceremonial functions, but has essentially the same powers as the rest of the council.   |  |  |
| <b>Term of Office</b>   | Four year overlapping  | Four year overlapping.   |
| <b>COMMENTS:</b> No change.   |  |  |



| CHARACTERISTIC  | EXISTING FORM OF GOVERNMENT   | PROPOSED FORM OF GOVERNMENT  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Election</b>   | Partisan.   | Partisan or nonpartisan.   |
| <b>COMMENTS:</b> Voters will decide as a sub-optional choice.   |   |  |
| <b>Size of Council</b>  | Eight members, two from each of four districts.   | Five members, one from each of five districts.   |
| <b>COMMENTS:</b> Will allow for full representation of the city, yet provide an efficient size for the legislative function.  |   |  |
| <b>Appointive Powers</b>  | The mayor appoints department heads and members of boards and commissions with the consent of the council.  | The council appoints and removes the manager. The manager appoints department heads and employees. The chairman of the council (who may be called the mayor) appoints members of boards and commissions with the consent of the council. |
| <b>COMMENTS:</b> Department heads are appointed on the basis of their qualifications under both forms. The members of advisory boards and commissions are appointed by the mayor with the consent of the council under both forms. The council is responsible for appointing the manager. |   |  |
| <b>Budget Preparation</b>   | The mayor prepares the budget with department heads. The council discusses, modifies and adopts the budget. | The manager prepares the budget which is discussed, modified and adopted by the council.   |
| <b>COMMENTS:</b> The manager can balance the priorities set by the council with available resources, and also balance the needs of each department with overall needs and the resources of the community.   |   |  |
| <b>Service Delivery</b>   | Performed by elected, part time officials in conjunction with local government employees.                   | Supervised by the full time manager who administers local government employees.  |
| <b>COMMENTS:</b> The full time manager, who is hired for his administrative capabilities, can give oversight to service delivery on a continuous basis.   |   |  |

**PROPOSED  
COUNCIL  
DISTRICTS**



**CERTIFICATE**

**FOR THE APPORTIONMENT  
OF COMMISSIONER DISTRICTS**

Districts described by census division (D.D.C.) and enumeration district (E.D.), with population and deviation from ideal are shown.

- District 1 List enumeration districts  
Population 1866 Deviation—2.8%
- District 2 List enumeration districts  
Population 2021 Deviation +5.3%
- District 3 List enumeration districts  
Population 1911 Deviation—0.5%
- District 4 List enumeration districts  
Population 1841 Deviation—4.1%
- District 5 List enumeration districts  
Population 1963 Deviation +2.2%


We, the Study Commission of Miles City do hereby certify that this is the official apportionment plan for commissioner districts approved by the Study Commission of Miles City.


In testimony whereof, we set our hands.


Done at Miles City this 20th day of August, 1986.


ATTEST:


  
Harvey E. Watts, City Clerk

  
John R. Tooke, Chairman

  
Ronald E. Gerlach

  
Janet R. Kelly

  
Martin E. Lawrenz

  
Edith Botnen

**CERTIFICATE**

**ESTABLISHING THE DATES OF  
THE FIRST PRIMARY AND GENERAL ELECTIONS  
OF MILES CITY  
IF THE ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL IS APPROVED  
AND ESTABLISHING THE EFFECTIVE DATE  
OF THE PROPOSAL IF APPROVED**

The date of the primary election for officers of the new government of Miles City shall be held at a special election on September 17, 1987.

The date of the general election for officers of the new government of Miles City shall be held at a special election on November 3, 1987.

The effective date of the alternative plan of local government of Miles City takes effect when the new officers take office at 10 a.m. (60 days after the election of new officers).


We, the Study Commissioners of Miles City do hereby certify that these are the dates of the special primary and general elections and the effective date of the alternative plan of local government of Miles City approved by the Study Commissioners of Miles City.


In testimony whereof, we set our hands.


Done at Miles City this 20th day of August, 1986.


ATTEST:


  
Harvey E. Watts, City Clerk

  
John R. Tooke, Chairman

  
Ronald E. Gerlach

  
Janet R. Kelly

  
Martin E. Lawrenz

  
Edith Botnen

**CERTIFICATE**

**ESTABLISHING THE DATE OF THE  
SPECIAL ELECTION AT WHICH THE  
ALTERNATIVE FORM OF GOVERNMENT  
SHALL BE PRESENTED TO THE ELECTORS  
OF MILES CITY, MONTANA**

The alternative form of government proposed by the Local Government Study Commission shall be submitted to the voters of Miles City at a special election to be held with the general election on November 4, 1986.


We, the Study Commissioners of Miles City do hereby certify that this is the date of the special election approved by the Study Commissioners of Miles City.


In testimony whereof, we set our hands.


Done at Miles City this 20th day of August, 1986.


ATTEST:

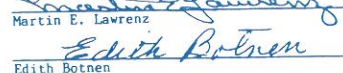
  
Harvey E. Watts, City Clerk

  
John R. Tooke, Chairman

  
Ronald E. Gerlach

  
Janet R. Kelly

  
Martin E. Lawrenz

  
Edith Botnen

# CERTIFICATE

## ESTABLISHING THE OFFICIAL BALLOT

### FOR THE NOVEMBER 4, 1986, SPECIAL ELECTION

Instructions to voters: Place an "X" in the boxes which express your preferences.

#### OFFICIAL BALLOT

#### BALLOT ON THE ALTERNATIVE FORM OF GOVERNMENT

If the proposed form of government fails to receive a majority of the votes cast on the question, the sub-option also fails. If the proposed form is adopted, the sub-option requires only a plurality of votes cast on the sub-option for adoption.

#### PLEASE VOTE ON BOTH ISSUES

1.

#### VOTE FOR ONE

For adoption of the Commission-Manager form of government proposed in the report of the Miles City Local Government Study Commission.

For the existing mayor-council form of government.

2.

#### VOTE FOR ONE

Sub-option to be included in the new form of government if it is adopted.

Local government elections:

Shall be conducted on a **non-partisan** basis.


Shall be conducted on a **partisan** basis.

We, the Study Commissioners of Miles City do hereby certify that this is the official ballot approved by the Study Commissioners of Miles City.

In testimony whereof, we set our hands.

Done at Miles City this 20th day of August, 1986.

ATTEST:

  
Harvey T. Watts, City Clerk

  
John R. Tooke, Chairman

  
Ronald E. Gersack

  
Jaye R. Kelly

  
Martin E. Lawrenz

  
Edith Botnen

## TRANSITION PLAN

If the proposed commission-manager form of government is adopted by the voters of Miles City, elections to fill the five commission positions will be scheduled at the time of the next regularly scheduled city election. The primary election will be September 17, 1987, the general election is November 3, 1987. The elected commissioners will draw lots to determine the length of their first terms. Two will serve two year terms, three will serve four year terms ensuring an overlapping sequence of terms of office. The commissioners will take office the first Monday in January, (January 4, 1988), which is also the effective date for the new form of government. The commissioners are responsible for hiring the city manager who will administer the city, and will do so as soon as is practicable after they are elected.

# CERTIFICATE

## ESTABLISHING THE EXISTING PLAN OF GOVERNMENT FOR MILES CITY, MONTANA

If retained by the voters, the government of Miles City shall be organized under the following provisions of Section 7-3-113, M.C.A. which authorizes the municipal council-mayor form of government.

7-3-113. Statutory basis for municipal council-mayor government. (1) For the purpose of determining the statutory basis of existing units of local government, each unit of local government organized under the general statutes authorizing the municipal council-mayor form of government, which does not adopt a new form, shall be governed after May 2, 1977 by the following sections:

- (a) 7-3-201;
- (b) 7-3-202(1);
- (c) 7-3-203;
- (d) 7-3-212(2);
- (e) 7-3-213(3);
- (f) 7-3-214(2);
- (g) 7-3-215(2);
- (h) 7-3-216(2);
- (i) 7-3-217(2);
- (j) 7-3-218(2);
- (k) 7-3-219(1);
- (l) 7-3-220(1);
- (m) 7-3-221(3);
- (n) 7-3-222(2);
- (o) 7-3-223(2);

(2) This form has terms of 4 years for all elected officials. The size of the commission shall be established by ordinance, but it may not exceed 20 members.

These sections establish the following form of government which shall be called the COMMISSION-EXECUTIVE FORM.

7-3-201. Commission-executive form. The commission-executive form (which may be called the council-executive, the council-mayor, or the commission-mayor form) consists of an elected commission (which may be referred to as the council) and one elected executive (who may be referred to as the mayor) who is elected at large.

7-3-202. Nature of government. The plan of government submitted to the qualified electors shall determine the powers of the local government unit by authorizing general government powers.

7-3-203. Duties of executive. The executive shall:

- (1) enforce laws, ordinances, and resolutions;
- (2) perform duties required of him by law, ordinance, or resolution;
- (3) administer affairs of the local government;
- (4) carry out policies established by the commission;
- (5) recommend measures to the commission;
- (6) report to the commission on the affairs and financial condition of the local government;
- (7) execute bonds, notes, contracts, and written obligations of the commission, subject to the approval of the commission;
- (8) report to the commission as the commission may require;
- (9) attend commission meetings and may take part in discussion;
- (10) execute the budget adopted by the commission;
- (11) appoint, with the consent of the commission, all members of boards; except the executive may appoint without the consent of the commission temporary advisory committees established by the executive.

7-3-212. Administrative assistants. The executive may appoint one or more administrative assistants to assist him in the supervision and operation of the local government, and such administrative assistants shall be answerable solely to the executive.

7-3-213. Supervision of personnel. The executive may appoint, with the consent of a majority of the commission, all department heads and remove department heads and may appoint and remove all other department employees.

7-3-214. Veto power. The executive may veto ordinances and resolutions, subject to override by a two-thirds vote of the commission.

7-3-215. Preparation of budget. The executive may prepare the budget in consultation with the commission and department heads.

7-3-216. Administrative supervision and control. The executive may exercise control and supervision of all departments and boards to the degree authorized by ordinance of the commission.

7-3-217. Financial officer. A financial officer (who may be called the treasurer) shall be appointed by the executive with the consent of the council.

7-3-218. Selection of commission members. The commission shall be elected by districts in which candidates must reside and which are apportioned by population.

7-3-219. Type of election. Local government elections shall be conducted on a partisan basis.

7-3-220. Chairman of commission. The commission shall have a chairman who shall be elected by the members of the commission from their own number for a term established by ordinance.

7-3-221. Presiding officer of commission. The presiding officer of the commission shall be the executive, who shall decide all tie votes of the commission but shall have no other vote (the chairman of the commission shall preside if the executive is absent).

7-3-222. Terms of commission members. Commission members shall be elected for overlapping terms of office.




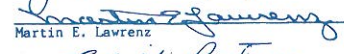

7-3-223. Size of commission and community councils. The size of the commission shall be eight (8), and community councils to advise commissioners may be authorized by ordinance.

We, the Study Commissioners of Miles City, Montana, do hereby certify that this is the existing plan of government as established by Section 7-3-113 M.C.A.

In testimony whereof, we set our hands.

Done at Miles City this 20th day of August, 1986.

ATTEST:  
  
Harvey C. Watts, City Clerk

  
John R. Tooke, Chairman  
  
Ronald E. Gerlach  
  
James R. Kelly  
  
Martin E. Lawrenz  
  
Edith Botnen

# CERTIFICATE

## ESTABLISHING THE PROPOSED PLAN OF GOVERNMENT FOR MILES CITY, MONTANA

Upon approval of the majority of voters the government of Miles City shall be organized under the following provisions of Title 7, Chapter 3, Part 3, M.C.A.

7-3-301;  
7-3-302(1);  
7-3-303;  
7-3-304;  
7-3-305;  
7-3-312(1);  
7-3-313(2);  
7-3-314(1) or (2);  
7-3-315(1);  
7-3-316(2);  
7-3-317(2);  
7-3-318

These sections establish the following form of government which shall be called the COMMISSION-MANAGER FORM.

7-3-301. Commission-manager form. The commission manager form (which may be called the council-manager form) consists of an elected commission (which may be called the council) and a manager appointed by a commission, who shall be the chief administrative officer of the local government. The manager shall be responsible to the commission for the administration of all local government affairs placed in his charge by law, ordinance or resolution.

7-3-302. Nature of government. The plan of government submitted to the qualified electors shall determine the powers of the local government unit by authorizing general government powers.

7-3-303. Appointment of manager. The manager shall be appointed by the commission for an indefinite term on the basis of merit only and removed only by a majority vote of the whole number of the commission.

7-3-304. Duties of manager. The manager shall:

- (1) enforce laws, ordinances, and resolutions;
- (2) perform the duties required of him by law, ordinance, or resolution;
- (3) administer the affairs of the local government;
- (4) direct, supervise, and administer all departments, agencies, and offices of the local government unit except as otherwise provided by law or ordinance.
- (5) carry out policies established by the commission;
- (6) prepare the commission agenda;
- (7) recommend measures to the commission;
- (8) report to the commission on the affairs and financial condition of the local government;
- (9) execute bonds, notes, contracts, and written obligations of the commission, subject to the approval of the commission;
- (10) report to the commission as the commission may require;
- (11) attend commission meetings and may take part in the discussion, but he may not vote.
- (12) prepare and present the budget to the commission for its approval and execute the budget adopted by the commission;
- (13) appoint, suspend, and remove all employees of the local government except as otherwise provided by law or ordinance;
- (14) appoint members of temporary advisory committees established by the manager.

7-3-305. Employees of commission - manager government.  
(1) Employees appointed by the manager and his subordinates shall be administratively responsible to the manager.

(2) Neither the commission nor any of its members may dictate the appointment or removal of any employee whom the manager or any of his subordinates are empowered to appoint.

(3) Except for the purpose of inquiry or investigation under this title, the commission or its members shall deal with the local government employees who are subject to the direction and supervision of the manager solely through the manager, and neither the commission nor its members may give orders to any such employee, either publicly or privately.

7-3-312. Appointment to boards. All members of boards, other than temporary advisory committees established by the manager, shall be appointed by the chairman with the consent of the commission.

7-3-313. Selection of commission members. The commission shall be elected by districts in which candidates must reside and which are apportioned by population.

7-3-314. Type of election. Local government elections shall be conducted on a (1) partisan or (2) nonpartisan basis. To be determined as a suboptional choice by the voters.

7-3-315. Chairman of commission. The chairman of the commission shall be elected by the members of the commission from their own number for a term established by ordinance.

7-3-316. Terms of commission members. Commission members shall be elected for overlapping terms of office.

7-3-317. Size of commission and community councils; The size of the commission shall be five (5), and community councils to advise commissioners may be authorized by ordinance.

7-3-318. Terms of elected officials. The term of office of elected officials may not exceed 4 years and shall be established when the form is adopted by the voters.

We, the Study Commissioners of Miles City, Montana, do hereby certify that this is the proposed plan of government as established by Section 7-3-114 M.C.A.

In testimony whereof, we set our hands.

Done at Miles City this 20th day of August, 1986.

ATTEST:


  
Harvey L. Watts, City Clerk

  
John R. Tooke, Chairman

  
Ronald E. Gersack

  
Janet R. Kelly

  
Martin E. Lawrenz

  
Edith Botnen

# **SURVEY ANALYSIS**

## **MILES CITY VOTER REVIEW OPINION SURVEY**

### **PREPARED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CENTER, MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY**

This analysis encompasses the three interrelated components of the Miles City Government Review Survey (1) Demographic characteristics of the sample; (2) Citizen perceptions of the quality of certain city services; and (3) Citizen attitudes toward contemplated changes in city government.

#### **1. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample:**

I note that Custer County is home for approximately 13,400 persons of whom, some 9,600, or 71%, reside within the city limits of Miles City. By comparison, our survey random sample included 175 (72%) city residents of the total sample population size of 241. Although the sample size is a bit smaller than I would prefer, I am generally satisfied that the proportional distribution of the sample reflects the actual distribution of opinion. This is further confirmed by the age distribution of the respondents reflected at Q-10 indicating that 40% of the respondents were between the ages of 20 and 39 and that 53% were over the age of 40. This relatively mature sample age distribution generally conforms to the actual distribution of ages in Custer County. Finally, I note that some 82% of the survey respondents indicated that they are registered to vote in Custer County thereby assuring you that you not only have a valid survey of citizen opinion but also of voter opinion.

#### **2. Evaluation of City Services: (Miles City Respondents Only)**

Questions 13 and 15 through 19 were designed to evaluate the quality of certain city services. Q-13 was an open ended question that seeks, first, to measure the extent to which your community perceives problems with city government and, secondly, to identify any significant problem areas. The fact that nearly 50% of the city respondents were able to identify a problem suggests that there is a significant degree of concern in the community concerning local government affairs. A hand tabulation of the problems identified by the respondents further suggests that community concerns are focused on streets (24 responses), taxes and financial management (23 responses), and the general state of your local economy (10 responses). These spontaneously identified problems are confirmed, in part, by the fact that 45% of city respondents rated city streets as "poor" (Q-18). The significance of this problem is brought into focus when compared to evaluations of other city services: Police - 55% "good" (Q-15); Fire - 75% "good" (Q-16); Water and Sewer - 40% "good" (Q-17); Streets - 11% "good" (Q-18).

*NOTE: Question 14 was deleted prior to conducting the survey.*



### 3. Attitudes Toward Contemplated Changes in City Government Structures:

Question 20 was designed to assess the community attitude toward changing the present ward system of electing an eight member city council, comprised of two councilmen per ward, to the election of all councilmen at large. As indicated by the exact division of opinion among those respondents favoring the present, districted system (48.8%) and those favoring a change to the at large system (48.8%), we may infer that your community is indeed divided on the question. Therefore, if you are contemplating incorporating this change into your recommendations to the electorate, you may wish to consider offering it as a sub-optional choice to be decided upon directly by the voters. The outcome will be quite close.

Questions 21 and 22 both seek to measure the extent of community support for your contemplated recommendation of changing from the present council-mayor form of government to the commission-manager form. As indicated by the responses at Q-21, there is a clear majority (61.6%) of sample opinion supporting the concept of full-time, professional administration of city government affairs. This support is generally validated by the results of Q-22 which reflects nearly equally divided opinion on the much more direct question assessing the perceived need for a professional city manager (45.3% Yes and 44.2% No). I invite your particular attention to the fact that nearly 10% of the respondents had no opinion on the need for a professional city manager which suggests that a voter education effort will be quite important should you decide to proceed with a recommendation to change to the commission-manager form. In general, I would conclude that questions 21 and 22 indicate significant community support for the commission-manager form of government at the time the survey was conducted.

Finally, question 23 was designed to assess the degree of Miles City support for the consolidation of city and county government. While the survey data indicate that 51.7% of the sample population would vote for consolidation, I also note that nearly 11% did not express an opinion which again suggests the need for a voter education effort should you and the Custer County Study Commission jointly decide to recommend consolidation. Please note that such a recommendation would require a majority vote of both study commissions.

Following are the questions that were asked during the phone survey conducted for both the Custer County Government Study Commission and the Miles City Government Study Commission. Only those questions relating to Miles City Government are printed here.

9. Do you think it would be a good idea to combine the Custer County Sheriff's Office and the Miles City Police Department into a single, county wide law enforcement agency?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know
4. Refused

10. Which of the following groups includes your age?

1. Under 20
2. 20-39
3. 40-59
4. 60 or older
5. Refused

11. Are you registered to vote in Custer County?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know
4. Refused

12. Do you live within the city limits of Miles City?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Refused

13. If you were a Miles City councilman, which problem would you give most attention to?

- 1. Identify problem, if any \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Can't think of a problem
- 3. No opinion
- 4. Refused

14. How would you rate certain Miles City services and departments? As I name each service would you tell me whether you think the service is good, adequate or poor?

- 15. Police .....( ) Good ( ) Adequate ( ) Poor ( ) Don't Know
- 16. Fire .....( ) Good ( ) Adequate ( ) Poor ( ) Don't Know
- 17. Water and Sewer .....( ) Good ( ) Adequate ( ) Poor ( ) Don't Know
- 18. Streets .....( ) Good ( ) Adequate ( ) Poor ( ) Don't Know
- 19. Parks .....( ) Good ( ) Adequate ( ) Poor ( ) Don't Know

20. At present, two city councilmen are elected from each of our four council wards (districts). Do you think we should:

- 1. Continue to elect two councilmen from each ward (district), or
- 2. Change to the election of only one councilman from each ward.
- 3. Don't know
- 4. Refused

21. Would you agree or disagree with the following statement?

*"The day-to-day problems of Miles City government require the attention and experience of a full-time, professional administrator"*

- 1. Agree
- 2. Disagree
- 3. No Opinion
- 4. Refused

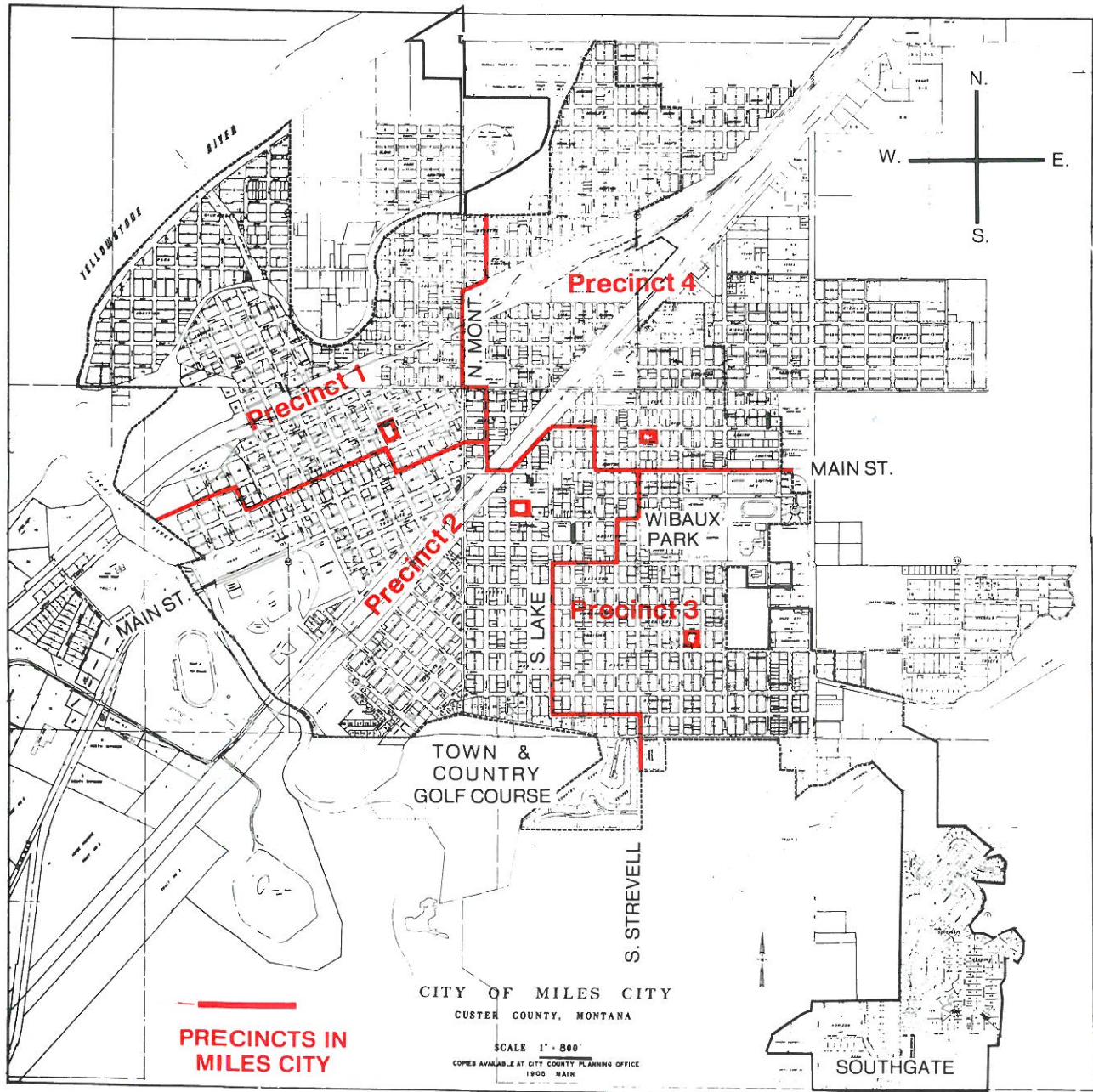
22. Do you think Miles City needs a professional manager to run the day-to-day business of city government?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know
- 4. Refused

23. Would you vote to combine Custer County Government with Miles City government in order to help hold the line on property taxes?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know
- 4. Refused

# General Election Nov. 4, 1986



- PCT. 1 — WASHINGTON SCHOOL
- PCT. 2 — CUSTER CO. HIGH SCHOOL
- PCT. 3 — HIGHLAND PARK SCHOOL
- PCT. 4 — JEFFERSON SCHOOL