

August 7, 2005

Final Report to the Town of West Yellowstone
From the Local Government Study Commission
2005

The Local Government Study Commission (LGSC) has completed its task of studying the government of the Town of West Yellowstone. We received input from town department heads and town council members. A survey was sent to the public with questions regarding the town government and services; 100 surveys were returned. The LGSC conducted two public hearings. All minutes and results of the surveys are available at the town offices.

The LGSC is not recommending any major changes in the current form of government for the Town of West Yellowstone.

The commission is recommending changes to the Town Charter to bring it into compliance with the Montana Code Annotated (State Law), to delete confusing and obsolete language and to clarify the council/manager form of government that we currently have.

The LGSC heard concerns from a number of people regarding confusion and frustration with the chain of command in the Town government.

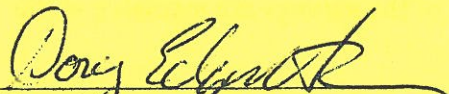
It is important to draw a clear line of responsibility and authority for the positions of Mayor and Town Operations Manager. This will be accomplished by changing the wording of Section 3.05 (5) and 3.06 (1 & 2). Section 3.05 (5) will read as follows: *The mayor shall be the ceremonial officer of the town and shall have no other duties or responsibilities except, when required by the council and in the absence of the town operations manager, the mayor shall perform all administrative duties of the town operations manager.* Section 3.06 (1 & 2) will read as follows: (1) *The town council shall appoint a town operations manager who shall serve under contract as the chief executive and administrative officer of the town.* (2) *The town operations manager shall implement and enforce the ordinances, resolutions, policies, directives and contracts approved by the Town council. The town operations manager shall administer the affairs of the Town, prepare the budget for council approval, supervise all town departments and offices and shall appoint, suspend or remove all employees of the town under the supervision and direction of the Town council.*


Sections of the Town Charter that were clarified and brought into compliance with State Law are Article I--Sections 1.02 and 1.03, Article III--Sections 3.01, 3.02, 3.03, 3.04, 3.05, 3.07. Article III Section 3.08 and Article VI were deleted because the language has expired and is no longer needed.

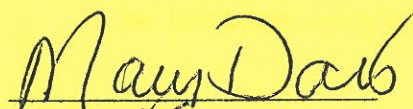
A copy of the current charter and a comparison of the present and proposed charters are attached to this report.

The LGSC will ask the Town council to pass a resolution to put the proposed changes to the West Yellowstone Town charter on the general election ballot for the November, 2005 election.

Respectfully Submitted,


Doug Edgerton


Pierre Martineau


Mary Davis

W.Y. Local Government Review Study Commission
59758-1570

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***Following SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE
WEST YELLOWSTONE STUDY COMMISSION***

Dear Citizens of West Yellowstone,

The West Yellowstone Local Government Review Study Commission, elected by the voters last November, are unanimous in proposing for consideration by the Town voters the following amendment to the present Town Charter:

We recommend no change in the basic plan of government, but the amended charter will clarify the roles of the operations manager and mayor by deleting obsolete and ambiguous language.

We urge all West Yellowstone Voters to study the proposed amendment (copies of which are available at no cost in Town Hall, 10 South Faithful) and to discuss the amendment with members of the Town Council or with the Mayor. If you have any questions, please don't be reluctant to contact the members of the Study Commission and any or all of your Town officials.

A copy of the original charter and the proposed amended charter is available at the Town Offices.

Sincerely,

Doug Edgerton, Pierre Martineau, Mary Davis
West Yellowstone Local Government Review Study Commission

Please Vote on November 8.

TOWN OF WEST YELLOWSTONE
COMPARISON OF SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE
EXISTING CHARTER AND THE PROPOSED AMENDED CHARTER

CHARACTERISTIC	PRESENT FORM OF GOVERNMENT	PROPOSED FORM OF GOVERNMENT	COMMENTS
FORM OF GOVERNMENT	CHARTER FORM with council manager plan of government Elected council performs policy-making functions. Appointed Operations Manager carries out policy and supervises Town Departments.	CHARTER FORM with council manager plan of government Elected council performs policy-making functions. Appointed Operations Manager carries out policy and supervises Town departments.	No change in the basic plan of government, but the amended charter clarifies the roles of the operations manager and mayor by deleting obsolete and ambiguous language.
POWERS	Self-government powers	Self-government powers	No change
GOVERNING BODY	Council with mayor as presiding officer is responsible for policy-making functions.	Council with mayor as presiding officer is responsible for policy-making functions.	No change.
Size	Five council members elected at large on a nonpartisan ballot.	Five council members elected at large on a nonpartisan ballot.	No change.
Term	Two year overlapping terms.	Two year overlapping terms.	No change.
Presiding Officer	Mayor serves as presiding officer and is selected by the council from among their own number.	Mayor serves as presiding officer and is selected by the council from among their own number	No change
CHIEF EXECUTIVE/ ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	The appointed Town Operations Officer serves as executive and administrative officer to carry out policy of the council and supervise all Town departments.	The appointed Town Operations Officer serves as executive and administrative officer to carry out policy of the council and supervise all Town departments.	No change.
Powers and Duties	The Town Operations Officer carries out the policies of the council, advises the council, executes the budget, and enforces laws, ordinances and resolutions.	The Town Operations Officer carries out the policies of the council, advises the council, executes the budget, and enforces laws, ordinances and resolutions.	No change.
Appointment Powers	The Town Operations Officer appoints department heads and other employees in consultation with department heads for approval by the council.	The Town Operations Officer appoints department heads and other employees in consultation with department heads for approval by the council.	No change.
Budget Preparation	Town Operations Manager prepares budget in cooperation with department heads. For approval by the Council.	Town Operations Manager prepares budget in cooperation with department heads. For approval by the Council.	No change.