

TOWN OF DRUMMOND
REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Drummond Town Hall, 114 A Street, Drummond, MT 59832
JANUARY 20, 2026 - 7:00PM

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Gail Leeper called the January Regular Town Council Meeting to order at 7:00pm. Present were Mayor Leeper & Council Members McLure, Clute, O'Dell and Speer; Town Attorney Tim Dick; Town Clerk-Treasurer Wight and Public Works Director Harrington.

PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE: JB Ray, representing Blackfoot Communications; Charlene Bucha, representing Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority; Bob Teruel and David Salvador, representing Drummond Motel; and resident Scott Dunkerson.

GUEST COMMENT:

JB Ray, representing Blackfoot Communications

JB Ray provided update on the fiber optic project throughout Granite County. Fiber optic construction will be proceeding through the winter as weather permits; they are hoping to cut over by August of 2026. The grant deadline expires in August 2026 and there's still a lot of work to do before that time. Drummond should expect contractors again this spring. They will be providing work from landowner homes to the mainline. Most of the large construction at this point is completed.

The project delay resulted from 2025 labor issues, which caused them to miss the previous deadline set. Blackfoot now has a base crew established working in Philipsburg and Missoula; they're hoping to have approximately 30 people available to cut over connecting needed areas and areas signifying issues.

Discussion was had between Mayor Leeper, the council and JB; regarding previous gravel delivered for fill in areas. That gravel was not sufficient, as it was more like sand equivalent material; which did not pack down and washed away. Discussion concluded, with the determination larger gravel size would be provided to the Town of Drummond; a least a whole load of one inch gravel.

Charlene Bucha, representing Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority

Charlene Bucha sits on the board for Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority, she provided an update to the proposed route of the passenger rail line from the Pacific Ocean to Minnesota, which would be the longest passenger rail line within the United States.

They're looking at the proposed route and if Drummond would be a stop along that route. She asked for feedback, of the council's thoughts pertaining to a stop in Drummond. Charlene will be a conduit for Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority and the Town of Drummond as they're working through this process.

Currently all delegates are on board throughout the state of Montana for funding and engagement with this project; there are twenty counties in the state involved and a \$15 million grant. Charlene continued, the project is about five to six years out for the passenger rail and it will take more funding.

Ms. Bucha asked, if she could come quarterly and provide an update to the town council; asking if they would consider, if there should be a depot and stop in Drummond. They're hoping to gather this information as they're moving into the planning stage of the grant study analysis for the passenger rail. Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority is looking at a full range of activities for analysis.

Currently the United States is the only country not utilizing passenger rails, which would provide another form of travel across the country from East to West; enabling travelers to link into other transport

systems along the way. Currently they're focusing on a depot station in Deer Lodge and Missoula; and considering a depot in Drummond. There would be numerous considerations to discuss, such as location of a depot, parking, and congestion should Drummond elect to have a depot.

Mayor Leeper suggested a public meeting be held at the Drummond School Library as one of their "Night at the Library" presentations; which would be a great opportunity for information and feedback from the community, and gather impact for pros and cons. Currently Drummond donates \$100 a year to Big Sky Rail Authority for this study assessment.

Bob Teruel and David Salvador, representing Drummond Motel

Mr. Teruel was in attendance at the Drummond Town Council meeting in response to a letter he received from the Town Attorney Dick, addressing the water encroachment violation upon the town's roadway.

Discussion was had between Mr. Teruel, Mr. Salvador, Mayor Leeper, and the Town Attorney in regards to this encroachment. During this discussion Mr. Teruel and Mr. Salvador, explained the heater was out due to dealing with continuous old pipe breakage; repairing one issue, then another issue would present, finding continuous with new holes and leakage.

The Drummond Motel is currently turning off resident water at night from 8:00 PM to 4:00 AM, to prevent additional water build up on the roadway. They are hoping to have a good handle on this issue by Monday February 23rd. Mayor Leeper informed Mr. Teruel, a construction permit for any work on the property would be required.

Attorney Tim Dick explained, that this is a problem; the Town needs to know a timeline that this will be repaired, that this cannot go on. They have received a letter bringing attention to this problem, the town needs to know when this will be fixed, when the repairs are completed, when the leakage has stopped.

The Town understands that the heater is out due to a pipe burst and that that water is a result of those issues. Mr. Teruel indicated that they need to replace the pump and he will be utilizing Mr. Salvador with the help of Mr. David Rodriguez in these repairs. Town Attorney Tim Dick stated, they need to report back with a letter of progress, that these repairs have been concluded.

Mayor Leeper continued, that we're having a mild winter this year, should this have been a regular winter this would have caused a hazard on the roadway with the water freezing. She continued, asking Mr. Teruel if it would be possible; to redirect the water off of the public right-a-way street and alley onto his own property. Adding, she hopes that he fixes this problem for his tenants. Clerk-Treasurer Wight provided Mr. Teruel a construction permit, to complete and return to Town Hall.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Scott Dunkerson, Drummond resident

Resident Scott Dunkerson inquired of the mayor and council, of an article that he had read in the Phillipsburg Mail and the correctness of that story. The article in the paper incorrectly reported; summarizing, should the Town of Drummond not receive \$50,000 STIP revenue from Granite County for the Interlocal Law Enforcement Agreement that the town would not be able to afford law enforcement.

Mayor Leeper clarified, the County Commissioners' meeting from which this article was written, the Town of Drummond reached out to the county for PILT Funds for the Interlocal Law Enforcement Agreement providing the ability to release those funds back into the Town's coffers; making those previously allocated funds available to purchase a needed truck for snow plowing.

Mayor Leeper continued, the full entitlement shares from the state each year all goes towards the Interlocal Law Enforcement Agreement with Granite County Sheriff's Office; leaving no additional funds in

the Town's coffers for such needed purchases.

Further stating, Drummond is currently working on the 9.5- million-dollar wastewater treatment facility upgrade project, which approximately 84% is covered through grants and forgiveness; sewer fees had not been raised in quite a long time.

Our current snowplow truck was purchased through Granite County surplus many years prior, and has reached its functional reliability. The town uses the taxpayer's money frugally; adding, Drummond does not pad the fiscal year budget leaving a very lean budget to work with in emergencies.

LAW ENFORCEMENT: Law Enforcement Report was provided to Drummond Town Council, for the January Town Council Meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA:

MINUTES:

December 16, 2025 Regular Town Council Meeting

Mayor Leeper asked for a motion to approve the December Regular Town Council Meeting minutes. Council Member Clute made a motion to approve the December Regular Town Council Meeting minutes. Council Member O'Dell seconded the motion. All yeas, none opposed. Mayor Leeper concurred.

Roll Call Vote:

AUTHORIZATION TO APPROVE MINUTES	Yea	Nay	Abstain
Mayor Gail Leeper	NA		
Council President McLure	YEA		
Council Member Clute	YEA		
Council Member O'Dell	YEA		
Council Member Speer	YEA		

CLAIMS:

Mayor Leeper asked for a motion to approve the claims. Council Member Clute made a motion to approve the claims. Council Member McLure seconded the motion. All yeas, none opposed. Mayor Leeper concurred.

Roll Call Vote:

AUTHORIZATION TO PAY CLAIMS	Yea	Nay	Abstain
Mayor Gail Leeper	NA		
Council President McLure	YEA		
Council Member Clute	YEA		
Council Member O'Dell	YEA		
Council Member Speer	YEA		

INVESTMENTS: Investment sheet provided to the Town Council.

Sewer Certificate of Deposit rolled over, interest earned is indicated within Council Packets.

FINANCIALS: Financial sheet provided to the Town Council.

MMIA is ceasing to provide Worker's Compensation Coverage as an option from their organization.

Clerk-Treasurer Wight is looking into coverage through a private brokerage company for the Town to purchase Worker's Compensation coverage, through the State Fund.

Clerk-Treasurer Wight will report back at the February Town Council Meeting with five brokerage companies of consideration to discuss and for the Council's decision; based on her findings and preference.

ACTION ITEMS: None

MAYOR'S REPORT:

LEPC | CWPP

LEPC meeting addressed updating CWPP Community Wildlife Protection Plan within Granite County. Updating the CWPP is a long process, especially in relation to mapping; once updated, it is valuable resource in the case of a wildfire. The cost to update the CWPP is \$60,000, which is being funded by grant revenue.

Discussion was had regarding how much has changed since the last CWPP update, this updated document will be an asset to the community.

HEADWATERS

There is current financing available through Headwaters to assist community residents. Those residents would need to reside within Granite County.

Mayor Leeper will follow up this Commissioner McLure and Planning Board Linda Bouck.

COMMISSIONERS | PILT

Town of Drummond received the PILT funds from Granite County in the amount of \$50,000 for the Interlocal Law Enforcement Agreement, which now makes those previously allocated funds available in the General Fund for a truck purchase. The Town can now actively move forward in negotiating for a replacement truck to meet the needs of snow plowing.

Once we have made a decision on a replacement truck, we will have a mechanic go through the new-to-us truck ensuring it is in working order.

The Town will continue to move forward seeking the METAP Grant, for both funding of the snow plow truck; as well as, two radar signs to be placed on Front Street.

On a side note, while Mayor Leeper was at the Commissioner's regarding PILT Funding; she did look into previously allocated County funding for Law Enforcement, which assisted community emergency needs such as stranded motorists. Those funds in the amount of \$10,000 are still allocated on an annual basis.

We have all at one time or another used our personal funds in assisting with community needs in the Township and County. These funds were allocated in the law enforcement County budget previously to help alleviate the need of employees or elected officials having to pay to assist others out of their own pockets.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Mayor Leeper informed the Council, Clerk-Treasurer Wight and herself will be going before the legislation interim grant committee as panelists members January 22nd; working with other community panelists and the legislative interim committee on how there could be more collaboration between the federal government and the state of Montana how they stack grants and the possibility of reducing some redundant tasks, creating a more uniform system for Clerk, Treasurers and Grant Admins throughout the state possibly through a standardized grant portal.

Further discussing, with stacking grants what currently works, what doesn't work, and what poses obstacles in utilizing multiple grants in singular projects.

Drummond will be utilizing the 1998 Wastewater project, to the current Wastewater treatment Facility Upgrade project currently underway. The Town currently has a balance of \$148,000 on the prior project, moving into this 9.5-million-dollar project.

We will emphasize small towns have the same reporting requirements as larger cities; with limited smaller staffing to complete the same required reporting and tasks.

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

Drummond has a beautification group that has formed, which Mayor Leeper is calling the Beauty's.

This group will be focusing on re-stringing the Christmas lights and garland around our Christmas light pole decorations. Also focusing on the old 911 building, cleaning up around the building; as well as, sand blasting and coating with plans to place a mural on the West side of the building. They will utilize an old wagon on Front Street to place flowers in as part of the beautification effort.

This group plans to reach out to businesses in the area to assist financially with donations for this undertaking; helping make our Township more beautiful and appealing, bringing more travelers and tourist into our community.

The group also plans to talk with other businesses, encouraging in these beautification efforts. Further discussion will be had, regarding a donation account for those willing to donate to this cause.

The Town plans to assist on a limited capacity; as beautification efforts do need to go through businesses, private entities, land owners, residents and chamber. Municipal government's main priority is infrastructure; however, the Town will assist as we can.

There is consideration of leaving the lights on continuously at the large pine tree, as part of this Town beautification.

ATTORNEY:

Letters were drafted and mailed, as discussed at the December Town Council Meeting those copies were provided in the council packets.

PARKS:

February 1, 2026 the 25-year Fish, Wildlife and Fishing Boat Access Agreement will expire, this agreement will not be renewed. The Town is considering closure of the park during the winter months; as there is currently a problem with vandalism, dumping of debris, vehicular misconduct and illicit activity at times.

Law enforcement was notified of the misconduct at the park. That misconduct was caught on camera and was dealt with by law enforcement.

Once a decision has been made regarding the park and closure times, new signage will be made to address rules and time the park is available.

ROADS:

Northwestern Energy

Northwestern Energy has asked, if they could wait to repair road and alleyways until the spring of 2026. The Town will request two-inch stone be placed in areas where NWE conducted repair work; per contract, they are to bring back areas of repair to original state.

Council Member O'Dell will reach out to Northwestern Energy on a property owner's modular home delivery.

Mayor Leeper will aid the homeowner in recuperating her funding, for a paid claim to Northwestern Energy that a contractor mandated be paid up front.

A second situation with Northwestern Energy, is they are not seeking dig tickets prior to placement of poles. There is a situation in Drummond where a Northwestern Energy pole was placed through land owner's sewer line, that landowner has been without sewer ability for five months due to this issue. The landowner has a picture showing where the pole has gone through their sewer line.

The Town did notify the landowner that their contractor has to be licensed and insured when dealing with sewer lines.

Should this continue to be a problem Attorney Tim Dick may need to draft a letter to Northwestern Energy regarding competing easements and failure to request dig tickets on public right-a-way.

Thirdly, regarding Northwestern energy; Public Works Director Harrington will gather a list of alleyways and streets that need to be addressed by Northwestern Energy, that list is to be prepared by the end of February. This list will be forwarded by email, to Northwestern Energy from Clerk-Treasurer Wight's email.

SINK HOLE

The previously discussed sinkhole at the December Town Council Meeting still needs to be addressed at a future date.

FLOODPLAINS: None

SEWER:

Wastewater Treatment Facility Project

The Ultraviolet Disinfection Building samples were provided by Triple Tree Engineering; Mayor Leeper picked out block color and roof color for the contractor from the samples provided.

Triple Tree Engineering has been working with Public Works Director Harrington for new testing requirements of the lagoon. The Town did need to purchase a special PH tester and supplies to perform

these tests, which will be performed monthly and test samples delivered to Helena. Clerk-Treasurer Wight was able to save the Town \$700.00 by ordering direct.

Samples will be taken three times per week which equals one set. This testing will be an ongoing procedure and required to have a chain of custody attached to samples when delivered. Town representatives approved for chain of custody of testing drop off will be Brad Koon, Justin Harrington, Earl Clute, Gail Leeper and Robin Wight.

These tests are mandated by DEQ Department of Environmental Quality as the Town will now be discharging into the river; the Town has not discharged in years. Triple Tree Engineer Aaron Peters is assisting Public Works Director Harrington with collection and reporting process through the learning curve of this new procedure.

For those visiting the site, there are strict check-in protocols to be followed with Jackson Contractors at the on-site trailer office.

The Town would like to recognize; there was a Christmas Tree contest among Jackson Contracting. The on-site construction trailer for the Drummond Wastewater Treatment Facility Upgrade project won their company contest. They constructed a "Turd Tree" with a toilet base. The money won for this contest Jackson put back into the Drummond Community purchasing gifts for the Drummond School. Jackson Contracting is spot on when it comes to being involved and giving back to the communities they are working with and in.

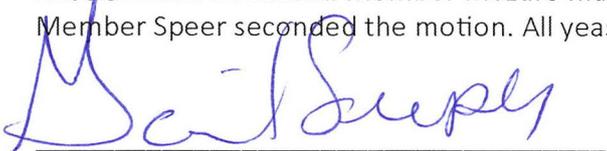
CITY COURT: None

NEW BUSINESS: None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

Next Town Council Meeting: Scheduled Tuesday, February 17, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT: Council Member McLure made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:39pm. Council Member Speer seconded the motion. All yeas. None opposed. Mayor Leeper concurred.



GAIL LEEPER, Mayor



ROBIN WIGHT, Town Clerk/Treasurer/Paralegal

