



# City of Helena

## CITY OF HELENA

City Commission Meeting

February 22, 2023 - 2:00 PM

City - County Building Room 326 / Zoom Online Meeting; <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89512890375>

Commission Interview: Michael Thomas

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call**
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Communication/Proposals from Commissioners**
4. **Candidate Interview with City Commission**
  - A. Candidate Profile
  - B. Public Comment
  - C. A PORTION OF THE MEETING MAY BE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC PURSUANT TO SECT. 2-3-203(3), MCA, TO CONDUCT CITY MANAGER CANDIDATE DELIBERATION, SHOULD THE MAYOR DETERMINE THAT THE DEMANDS OF INDIVIDUAL PRIVACY CLEARLY EXCEED THE MERITS OF PUBLIC DISCLOSURE.
5. **Public Communications**
6. **Adjournment**

It is the policy of the City Commission to take public comment on any action item. For further information on any of the items mentioned above, please contact the City Clerk's Office at 447-8410 or [dmclayborn@helenamt.gov](mailto:dmclayborn@helenamt.gov).

To read packet information while attending a City Commission Meeting please use the City/County wireless network COMM\_MEET during the meeting.

The City of Helena is committed to providing access to persons with disabilities for its meetings, in compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Montana Human Rights Act. The City will not exclude persons with disabilities from participation at its meetings or otherwise deny them the City's services, programs, or activities.

Persons with disabilities requiring accommodations to participate in the City's meetings, services, programs, or activities should contact the City's ADA Coordinator, Ellie Ray, as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to arrange for the requested accommodation, at any of the following:

Phone: (406) 447- 8490

TTY Relay Service 1-800-253-4091 or 711

Email: [citycommunitydevelopment@helenamt.gov](mailto:citycommunitydevelopment@helenamt.gov)

Mailing Address & Physical Location: 316 North Park Avenue, Room 445, Helena, MT 59623.

# MICHAEL D. THOMAS

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December 17, 2022

CMS LLC  
Hiring Authority  
City of Helena, City Manager  
629 Helena Ave, Suite 1  
Helena, MT 59624-1251

Dear Sir/Ma'am:

I am your choice for the next Helena City Manager! I will meet the needs of Helena going forward as I have proven success, solid experience, and high potential to achieve in this position. With my three graduate degrees, added to my 3 ½ years as Amity's City Administrator, and leadership roles in the Air Force which included time working in the Pentagon and combat experience, I have the experience and diverse background you seek to thrive in this position.

As the City Administrator of Amity, Oregon, I am serving a community which has tight resources, a small staff doing incredible work, and many contract services, such as city planning and law enforcement. Plus, I am successfully navigating the constantly changing world that was thrust upon us back in early 2020. My resume shows my comprehensive public administration knowledge, creative problem-solving ability, and strong leadership skills, which I have honed during my service to Amity. I've worked with my community to undertake large scale infrastructure projects, including a \$11.9 million water project. My mayor and I worked with our County Commissioners and State Representatives to secure \$2.6 million in ARPA funds for the community's infrastructure needs. I am also engaged with my community in promoting local businesses, supporting and celebrating their successes. I'm also collaborating with our Friends of the Library to obtain a \$1.5 million Community Development Block Grant to improve our library. Each of these successes aligns with my City Council's goals and achieving council goals is something Helena seeks to obtain with its new manager.

A brief review of my resume will also demonstrate the work I have accomplished that supports Helena's need for someone who is well versed in interagency, community outreach, and intergovernmental work, as well as integrating with people from all walks of life. I am committed to equity in the workplace, and I do everything I can to be respectful to every one of Amity's community members. After my military career, I went back to college, where I was often the oldest person in my classes. I relished the opportunity that brought me to help expand my viewpoints and improve my perspective on many topics. I will bring this humility, openness, and willingness to work hard with me to Helena to keep it a vibrant and inclusive community for everyone.

While I know that many applicants will have more time working in municipal government, I spent 20 years in the military where I had the opportunity to lead large organizations and budgets. I am capable of stepping into this position without hesitation. More importantly, what I bring to Helena is a diverse background of leadership, service, potential, aptitude, and drive, while lacking the "set in one's ways," adversity to change mindset that many with years of experience may bring to the position. I am open to new opportunities, willing to learn, and flexible to accomplish the work required; all the things needed in this position. Plus, I will not "over promise" and "under deliver" as I recognize I will have a steep learning curve; that I will overcome quickly!

Finally, I will obtain residency within Helena within the year, as well as transfer all my residency requirements, too. I have been to Montana before, and I love all that it has to offer! I will ensure that Helena remains committed to its values of serving the community while working effectively and efficiently to ensure the city remains vibrant in the region and into the future.

Sincerely,



Michael D. Thomas  
City Administrator  
City of Amity, OR

# MICHAEL D. THOMAS

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## SUMMARY

City Administrator of Amity, Oregon and veteran with experience in leading and managing large, complex organizations, with knowledge of current public administration practices. Proven abilities in city administration and diverse leadership. Capable of leveraging this experience to successfully step-in, engage, manage, and lead complex organizations!

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## WORK EXPERIENCE

CITY OF AMITY | Amity, OR

### City Administrator

7/2019 – Present

- Lead and manage a City Staff of 7 full time employees, 5 contractors, 1 part time employee, and 1 volunteer providing services to a municipality of 1,809 resident and a total budget of ~\$5 million.
  - Manages city contracts for Attorney, Planning, Chief Financial, Engineering, and Law Enforcement services
- Served the city through 4 Mayors in under 3 years, plus an entire changeout in City Councilors
- Member Chemeketa Cooperative Regional Library Service Council – Municipal Government Representative
- President of Board of Directors for Yamhill County Affordable Housing Corporation
- During 3½ years on the job, accomplished the following:
  - With ARPA funds, replaced all the City's water meters with digital meters, brought online new billing system
  - Enforced City ordinances through court system – Amity's 20-yr Municipal Judge said I was the 1<sup>st</sup> to ever do so
  - Led the City's response to the COVID-19 pandemic; managed \$51,000 in relief funding; established a \$15,000 Micro grant program for the community
  - Executed \$10,000 City Hall renovation in response to COVID; improved operating efficiency, overall safety, and kept City running throughout pandemic
  - Completed the refurbishment of \$80,000 in park facilities after windstorm damage
  - Working with Public Works, PGE, and Yamhill County kept Amity from running out of water when power failed at our Water Treatment plant during the winter ice storm of February 2021
  - Completed 4-year stuck Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) worth \$2.1 million; finished massive renovations to City's water reservoirs and filtration system
  - Began construction on 6-year delayed \$11.9 million USDA/RD water infrastructure project
  - Working with our Mayor, Council, and State legislature, secured \$2 million in state funding for additional water infrastructure projects
  - Secured \$600,000 in loan and grant funding to relocate the City's main water transmission line to a safer location
  - Secured \$200,000 in Small Cities Allotment grants for badly needed road paving across the city
  - Oversaw arrival of Dollar General in Amity; 2-year project resulted in store opening 2-months early
  - Completed Labor Union contract negotiations on an expired Collective Bargaining Agreement for 4 employees
  - Hired a City Clerk and contracted a Direct Reporting Charge
  - Initiated and led a \$10,000 project to fully overhaul and codify Amity's ordinances into a new code
  - Created and enacted Amity's new parking citations and towing tags
  - Searched, interviewed, and contracted a new Municipal Court Judge and a new City Auditor
  - Placed psilocybin restrictions for Amity as a November 2022 ballot measure

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON | Eugene, OR

### Graduate Student | Veterans Program Coordinator, Graduate Employee | City of Eugene, OR, Intern

- Capstone project: consulted for both Gresham and Eugene to provide policy recommendations for implementation of Autonomous Vehicles and Transportation Network Companies in each city.
- Integrated 400+ veteran and military-affiliated students into university life, developed and implemented programs to increase awareness of military presence on campus and improve student veteran graduation rates
- Researched and evaluated Eugene's Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption (MUPT) program using financial data. Provided recommendations to citizen oversight committee regarding MUPT program improvements. Gained knowledge about urban redevelopment, affordable housing, and economic incentives within cities.

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE (USAF) | Worldwide

### Lieutenant Colonel | Squadron Commander | Master Navigator and Electronic Warfare Officer

5/1996 – 6/2016

- Squadron Commander of 375+ military, unionized civilian, & contractor personnel in most diverse aircrew flight training organization in USAF. Enforced military law, maintained morale, set goals, and established fiscal budgets.
- Led and oversaw day-to-day operations of a training school, responsible for \$1.8 billion worth of capital equipment; developed and executed over 100 academic syllabi graduating 1,200 students per year into 25 different aviation career paths, with most students applying their skills in combat action within 120 days of program graduation.

- Executed and managed a 10-year, \$1.2 billion unique USAF aircrew training program contract. Conducted contract oversight, Quality Assurance programs, and new contract negotiations.
- Executive Assistant to senior Pentagon-level executives. Supervised their staffs, drafted official correspondence & policy directives, ensured deadlines for deliverables were met, managed travel & expense budgets, and coordinated event scheduling.
- Engaged with multiple media outlets as a Public Affairs Officer. Conveyed the social and economic value of Air Force operations to New Mexico residents. Improved public's trust through active community outreach programs.
- Combat aircrew veteran. Proven experience delivering successful results in highly dynamic and stressful environments.

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## EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON | Eugene, OR  
**Master of Public Administration**

AIR UNIVERSITY | AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE | Maxwell Air Force Base, AL  
**Master of Military Operational Art and Science** | Distinguished Graduate (Top 10% of Class)

TRIDENT UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL | Cypress, CA  
**Master of Business Administration** | Magna Cum Laude

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY | Colorado Springs, CO  
**Bachelor of Science, Management**

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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- **Technical Skills:** Adobe Professional Suite, Microsoft Office Professional, PowerPoint, Stata, Qualtrics
- **Member:** ICMA | OCCMA | Engaging Local Government Leaders | APA
- **Honors:** General O'Malley Award - Best Reconnaissance Crew in entire USAF (2000)  
Distinguished Graduate & Divisional "Best Research Paper" Award – United States Air Force Weapons School (2001)
- **Security Clearance Obtained:** Top Secret with Special Compartmentalized Information (SCI) approvals
- **Miscellaneous:**
  - Covid-19 Vaccinated and boosted
  - Guest lectured 3 University of Oregon public administration classes
  - Cast as an extra in movies and TV between 2012 - 2016





# CITY MANAGER





# THE COMMUNITY

Helena was established in 1864 during the Montana gold rush. It became a wealthy community and the city's well-known mansion district was home to nearly 50 millionaires. Helena's three-block downtown shopping district sits atop Last Chance Gulch, one of the most famous placer deposits in the West.

Helena is proudly home to the Archie Bray Foundation, an internationally renowned ceramics center, Broadwater Hot Springs, the Myrna Loy Performing Arts Center, and the Holter Museum of Art. The Great Divide Ski Area, miles of trails, and multiple lakes and rivers provide our residents year-round outdoor recreation.



## BY THE NUMBERS

**33,120**  
population

**14,668**  
households

**11.8%**  
poverty rate

**16.82 sq**  
city miles

**-13 minutes-**  
average commute

**109M**  
FY2023 Budget

**83.8%**  
of households  
have broadband  
internet

**70** nearby lakes  
miles of trails

**5,468'**  
elevation of  
Mt Helena

**350** city  
FTE

**53** sworn  
police officers

**42** full-time  
firefighters



**1** Private College **1** Community College **2** High Schools **8** Elementary Schools



# POSITION

The City Manager serves as an effective liaison between the public, City Commission, and subject matter experts including department heads. The position coordinates and supervises the overall administrative activities and operations of the City and advises and assists the City Commission in exercising independent judgment and initiative.

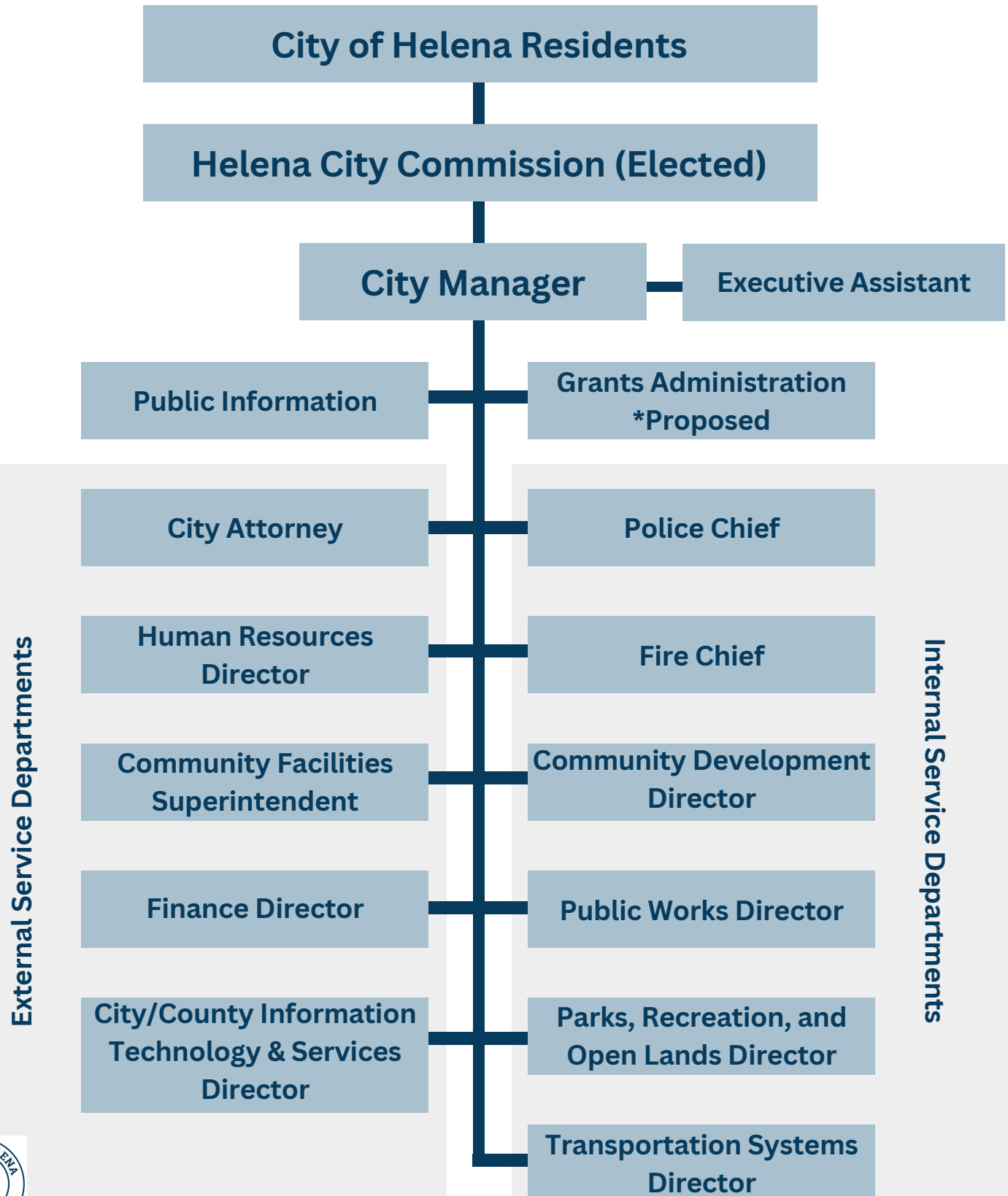
The City Manager must make timely and informed decisions, lead with diversity and inclusion as primary values, demonstrate composure, and coordinate the efforts and decisions of five policymakers. The position guides the City Commission toward effective policymaking and provides counsel and recommendations based on thoughtful research and consideration of options.



- Appoints, directs, and evaluates department heads concerning administrative and operational goals and objectives
- Prepares and submits the City budget for review and approval by the City Commission
- Oversees expenditures and reports on financial and administrative activities
- Provide continuity in executive management through strategic and succession planning
- Represents the City in the community, at professional meetings, and at other governmental agencies as required
- Oversees all improvement projects; reviews plans, and specifications, advertisements for bid notices, and contracts



# ORGANIZATION



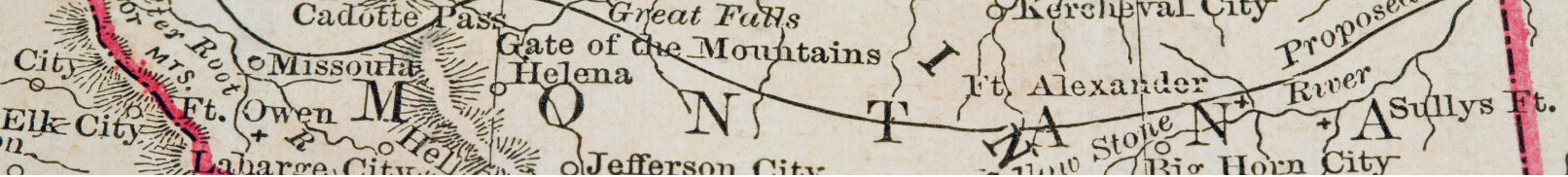


# PRIORITIES

The City Manager will be expected to work with stakeholders and leaders to develop a formal strategic plan to address the following preliminary community priorities:

- Improve neighborhood livability, vitality, and diversity as Helena grows.
- Promote healthy and sustainable growth that preserves Helena's unique history.
- Promote a community where all residents equally feel safe in their homes, neighborhoods, downtown, and in other public facilities.
- Establish the city as an employer of choice through the reorganization of healthcare benefits and a market-based pay study to curb employment challenges
- Increase transparency and citizen access by increasing capacity in records retention, digitization, and preservation.
- Implement best practices for financial security and capital replacement.
- Assess the long-term financial condition, budget process, and capital needs.
- Identify funding priorities and incorporate proactive and innovative financial strategies to accomplish the Commission's goals.
- Establish departmental and staff work plans which align with the strategic priorities.
- Strengthen relationships and build trust in City leadership with community members, stakeholders, business leaders, civic associations, and intergovernmental and regional partners.
- Identify new or updated policies necessary to improve operations, ensure consistency, and support and implement diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Meet regularly with the Lewis and Clark County Administrator to work on issues of importance to both jurisdictions including City/County interlocal operations and agreements (information technology, records/dispatch, landfill, city/county building, law and justice center, etc.).
- Assist coordination of regular meetings of the County and City Commission.
- Develop an Economic Development strategy that promotes a strong, vibrant, and diverse local economy with the Commission and staff.
- Support the City's Downtown Master Plan and Growth Policy and efforts to implement the Downtown Master Plan including the creation of an Urban Renewal Manager.
- Review, update and develop neighborhood/district plans as appropriate.





# IDEAL CANDIDATE

The City of Helena seeks an experienced strategic leader to provide innovation, unity, and direction as its City Manager. The position requires a candidate that will guide effective policymaking and recommend actions based on thoughtful research and consideration of options. The successful candidate will establish and communicate a vision that motivates the organization to continue providing service excellence to citizens.

This position requires education and experience equivalent to a bachelor's degree in management, public or business administration, or a related field and seven years of progressively responsible experience including local government, financial management, and human resource management experience. Preferred qualifications include a graduate degree in a related field, International City/County Management Association credentialing, economic and community development experience, and municipal government leadership experience.

The City Commission seeks a candidate with the following characteristics:

- Ability to gain a clear understanding of the city and its values.
- An inclusive, participatory leadership style and ability to establish trust, stabilize operations, and move organizations forward.
- Ability to explain complex issues in a clear and understandable manner.
- Understanding of essential services provided by municipalities including water, wastewater, sanitation, fire protection, and community policing.
- Knowledge of human resources including employee and labor relations, compensation, policy, performance management, and motivation.
- Skilled in active listening, conducting organizational assessments, and integrating plans from multiple work units into a comprehensive and measurable strategic plan that encourages policymakers to focus on the future.
- Capacity to develop partners and stakeholders, foster diversity and inclusion, lead with empathy and compassion, and motivate teams through change.
- Experience creating succession plans and sharing authority with subordinates to ensure continuity in organizational leadership.
- Provides effective budget development and can adjust for influxes of revenue, coordinate with the chief financial officer, and mobilize resources to facilitate leadership and resource prioritization.
- A proactive, thoughtful, and methodic approach for modernization and process improvement to address changing community needs.



# COMPENSATION

The annual salary range is xxx,xxx to \$200,000 depending on qualifications.

The City of Helena offers exceptional benefits including medical, prescription, dental, vision, hearing aid benefits, life insurance, and retirement. The Mutual of Omaha life insurance policy premium is paid by the City. Supplemental benefits are available through pre or post-tax payroll deductions as well as HSA and Flex Spending Account options. Please see the comprehensive and detailed list of benefits at the following website: <https://intranet.helenamt.gov/human-resources/benefits>

The Montana Public Employees Administration (MPERA) administers the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS). The City and the employee contribute a percentage to the fund as set by State Law. Additional retirement options are available on a pre or post-tax basis.

# PROCESS

The City of Helena is an equal-opportunity employer. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply. The City prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, age, race, color, religion, creed, national origin, physical or mental disability, marital status, political beliefs, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or genetic information.

Candidates interested in this exceptional career opportunity must submit a detailed resume and cover letter to [cms@mt.net](mailto:cms@mt.net). The cover letter should describe why the candidate is interested in the position and the candidate's background. The resume should include employment details, the size of staff and budgets managed, and career highlights. Candidates are encouraged to submit their application materials early for review by the City Commission.

Applicant reviews will begin on January 23, 2023. The position is expected to be filled by April 2023. Candidates are requested in their cover letter to note whether they assert their right to individual privacy in their submission. Following submission of the applications, a meeting will be scheduled for purposes of initial screening. Meetings of the Helena City Commission are generally open to the public. However, please note that meetings to screen the candidates may be closed if the Mayor determines that the demands of individual privacy clearly exceed the merits of public disclosure. Confidential inquiries are welcome and may be directed to James Kerins, Communication and Management Services, LLC at (406) 442-4934.

