



City of Helena

CITY OF HELENA

City Commission Meeting

October 14, 2025 - 5:30 PM

City-County Building; Commission Chambers, Room 330 / Zoom Events: <https://zoom.helenamt.gov/j/36053471/publicmeetings>
Commission Special Meeting

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call**
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Communication/Proposals from Commissioners**
4. **Regular Items**
 - A. Review of City Manager Recruitment Discussion from Special Commission Meeting held on October 6, 2025.
 - B. City Manager Recruitment Process Update
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.

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, Anne Pichette, 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

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

Rules of Procedure:

Good evening and welcome to the City of Helena City Commission Meeting. We appreciate your attendance and participation. To ensure our meetings are productive and respectful, we ask everyone to adhere to the following guidelines:

Decorum and Expectations:

- Please maintain respect towards the Commission, presenters, and other participants. All participants are expected to avoid using profanity or hostile language. Inappropriate behavior or continued disruptions may result in action by the Commission.

Zoom Participation Decorum:

- Please keep your microphone muted unless you are speaking to minimize background noise.
- Use the “Raise Hand” feature if you wish to speak and wait to be recognized by the chair.
- If available to you, please ensure your video is on if you are speaking, to maintain transparency and engagement.
- Participants joining by telephone may raise their hand by pressing *9 and mute/unmute themselves using *6.

Public Comment:

- Public comments will be recognized only during designated periods by the presiding officer.
- State your name for the record when recognized to speak.
- **Each speaker will be given two minutes to make their comments. At two minutes, you will be asked to begin wrapping up. Please keep comments respectful, concise, and non-repetitive.**
- Individuals may speak once per agenda item and during the general comment period at the end of the meeting.
- **Comments will first be taken from people present in the room, followed by online participants.**
- Online participants may also use the Q&A feature to submit written comments.
- **If you ask a question during public comment, it will be recorded but you likely will not receive an answer. The purpose of public comment is for you to share your thoughts on a topic, not ask questions to City staff.**
- Members of the Commission may ask clarifying questions during the comment period.
- **All comments will be recorded in the permanent record. Formal statements can be submitted via the General Public Comment form on the City’s website. Comments on public engagement pages and media are public records under MCA 2-6-1003.**

Montana’s Right to Participate and Right to Know Laws:

- In accordance with Montana’s right to participate law (MCA 2-3-103), the public is encouraged to engage in the decision-making process.
- The right to know law (MCA Article II Section 10) ensures that all meetings are open to the public and that records are accessible. We strive to maintain transparency and accountability in all our proceedings.

Public Meetings and Recordings:

- **Please be aware that all public meetings and recordings are considered public records. These records are accessible to the public at any time.**
- **By participating in this meeting, you acknowledge that your comments and participation will be part of the public record.**

Thank you for your cooperation and for contributing to a respectful and effective meeting.

City of Helena, Montana

October 11, 2025

To: The Helena City Commission

From: Wilmot Collins, Mayor
Sean Logan, Commissioner
Dannai Clayborn, Clerk of the Commission

Subject: *City Manager Recruitment Discussion Review and Selection Process Update*

Present Situation: On September 30th, City Manager Burton formally announced his intent to retire at the end of the year. In response, the City Commission-Manager Relations Committee—comprised of Mayor Collins and Commissioner Logan—initiated preliminary discussions with Communication and Management Services, LLC (CMS) to assess their availability to provide recruitment services for the City Manager position. Additionally, the committee reviewed and discussed several recommendations regarding the recruitment process, with the intent to present to the full Commission for consideration.

UPDATE:

On October 6th, 2025, the Commission unanimously voted at a Special City Commission Meeting to approve a contract with CMS for the City Manager Recruitment Process. On October 7, 2025, CMS met with Mayor Collins and Commissioner Logan to begin this process and provided the materials CMS used in the previous recruitment of the City Manager in 2023 to Mayor Collins and Commissioner Logan. CMS proposed these documents be updated with contemporaneous edits and several accomplishments to highlight the stability and achievements of the organization over the past several years to attract potential candidates. CMS also proposed a Process Overview document which was to be shared broadly with the Commission and the Public to set expectations for the upcoming recruitment and outline next steps.

The City Manager position was posted on both the City's website and with CMS following the October 6th, 2025, meeting.

Background Information: Communication & Management Services, LLC (CMS) provided recruitment services for the City of Helena in 2022-2023, including a City Manager Selection Process Assessment.

Proposal/Objective: Commission – Manager Relations Committee would like to make the following recommendations:

- The salary range should increase to a range of \$175,000 to \$205,000.
- The interview process should include a Director level engagement and Town Hall style forum open to the public.
- The job posting for the position should occur within ten days, and initial screening to occur within 30 days.
- To enter into a contract with CMS for recruitment of the City Manager position.

UPDATE:

- Review and discuss the City Manager Process Overview document.

Advantage:

The established relationship with CMS provides continuity and familiarity with City processes and goals, contributing to a more seamless and efficient recruitment process.

Notable Energy Impact:

N/A

Disadvantage:

N/A

Notice of Public Hearing:

N/A

**Staff Recommendation/
Recommended Motion:**

Discuss City Manager Recruitment Process Overview and next steps.



Media Release

For Immediate Release: October 10, 2025

Contact:

Dannai Clayborn
Clerk of the Commission
City of Helena
(406) 447-8410
dmclayborn@helenamt.gov

City of Helena Accepting Applications for City Manager

HELENA, Mont. – On Thursday, Oct. 9 the City of Helena Commission will begin accepting applications for City Manager. The City Commission recently approved an agreement with Communication and Management Services, LLC (CMS), who will lead the recruitment process. The first review of applications will begin on November 5, 2025, and continue until the City fills the position.

The City Manager, as an appointed role, provides leadership to eleven departments and approximately 380 full-time employees, manages the City budget, which in Fiscal Year 2026 totaled \$113.25 million.

The City's current City Manager Tim Burton announced last week his intent to retire at the end of December. Over the past three years, Helena made significant strides under the leadership of the City Manager and Commission. Together with staff and community partners, the City established a comprehensive Strategic Plan, improved operational efficiency, strengthened financial stability, and renewed its commitment to being a transparent, high-performing organization.

The next City Manager will build on this progress and guide implementation of the Strategic Plan's next phase. Key priorities are:

- **Maintain and Elevate City Services:** Continue modernizing operations, expanding digital access, and upholding accountability in public communication.
- **Holistic Development and Housing:** Streamline permitting, coordinate housing affordability and homelessness initiatives and protect Helena's distinctive sense of place.
- **Infrastructure and Sustainability:** Deliver on capital improvement plans, champion proactive maintenance, and embed sustainability into long-term infrastructure investments.

- **Employer of Choice and Culture:** Strengthen workforce engagement, retention, and professional growth while sustaining competitive total rewards.
- **Financial Stewardship:** Advance long-term forecasting, budget refinement, and capital funding strategies to secure Helena's fiscal health.
- **Partnerships and Governance:** Cultivate strong relationships with Lewis and Clark County, local agencies, and community partners to drive shared success.
- **Community Trust and Transparency:** Reinforce open, responsive, and accountable governance built on clarity, accessibility, and genuine public engagement.

More information on the position, including qualification criteria and compensation, visit www.helenamt.gov/employment/.

Application Process: Candidates interested in the position should submit a cover letter, detailed resume, and three professional references electronically to [\[Helena City Manager Application Portal\]](#) or copy and paste the following URL in your browser: <https://wkf.ms/3VOYzqG>.

Or mail to:

CMS
P.O. Box 1251
Helena, MT 59624

Candidates asserting their right to privacy should indicate their assertion in the cover letter.

The position is open until filled. The first review of applications will occur on November 5, 2025. Please apply by that date to ensure consideration.

The City Manager Relations Subcommittee will conduct initial interviews via Zoom. Meetings of the Helena City Commission are generally open to the public. However, meetings to screen the candidates may be closed pursuant to Sect. 2-3-203(3), MCA, if the Mayor determines the discussion relates to a matter of individual privacy and the demands of individual privacy clearly exceed the merits of public disclosure.

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.

###



CITY MANAGER



THE COMMUNITY

Nestled less than **20 miles from the Continental Divide**, Helena, Montana was born in 1864 when four weary prospectors stumbled onto gold in what they called “**Last Chance Gulch**”—a twist of fate that turned a mining camp into Montana’s capital by 1875. Today, echoes of that bold beginning live on along Millionaires’ Row and in the heartbeat of a downtown that blends frontier grit with modern charm. The city remains a powerhouse of state, county, and local government—serving residents statewide and several tribal nations—while anchoring a diverse economy and creative community.

Helena pairs its rich history with a thriving present: the world-renowned Archie Bray Foundation, Broadwater Hot Springs, a lively arts scene, and museums that tell Montana’s story from the inside out. Strong K–12 schools and colleges fuel an educated workforce, and **recently approved bonds to modernize local schools demonstrate Helena’s continued investment in its future**. Beyond city limits, adventure calls—Great Divide Ski Area, sweeping trails, a hot spot for geocaching and rockhounding. Plus, the nearby lakes and forests offer a daily escape. In Helena, history isn’t something you visit; it’s something you live.



BY THE NUMBERS

- **13 minutes** -
average commute

113.25M
FY 2026 Budget

34,729
population

15,471
households

9.1%
poverty rate

16.82 sq
city miles

Sources: [Census.gov](https://www.census.gov); [Census Reporter](#)

5,468'
elevation of
Mt Helena
620-acres of
parks and
trails!

85.1%
of households
have broadband
internet

7 nearby lakes
150+ miles of
trails

380 city
FTE

53 sworn
police officers

42 full-time
firefighters



1 Private College **1** Community College **2** High Schools **10** Elementary Schools



POSITION

The City Manager serves as the driving force that turns the City Commission’s vision into reality by advancing community priorities through collaboration, innovation, and integrity. Acting as a bridge between the Commission, department leaders, and the public, the City Manager oversees citywide operations and ensures that every initiative moves Helena toward a more connected, sustainable future.

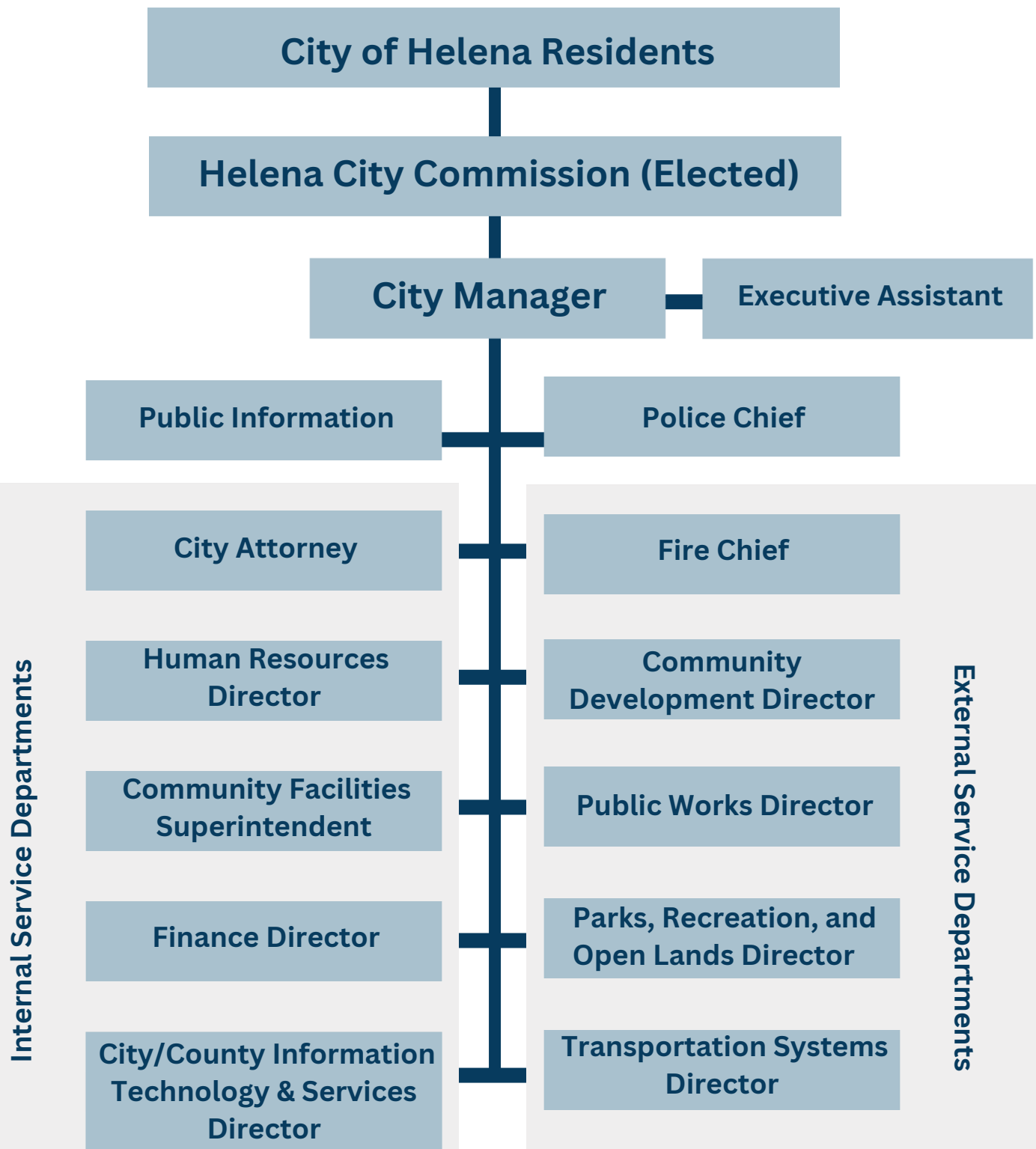
The successful candidate will lead with composure, inclusivity, and clarity—making timely, informed decisions that reflect both data and community values. As the City’s chief executive, the City Manager guides the Commission in effective policymaking through rigorous analysis, transparent communication, and strategic foresight. This is a role for a leader who sees a city not just as it is, but as it could be: walkable, vibrant, and built to last.



- Appoint, direct, and evaluate department head attainment of administrative and operational goals and objectives.
- Prepare and deliver the City budget for review and approval by the City Commission.
- Oversee expenditures and report on financial and administrative activities.
- Provide executive management continuity through strategic and succession planning efforts.
- Represent the City in the community, at professional meetings, and with other governmental agencies.
- Oversee all improvement projects; review plans, specifications, and advertisements for bid notices and contracts.
- Lead development of vision, plans, and future goals.



ORGANIZATION



ACCOMPLISHMENTS & PRIORITIES

In just three years, Helena has redefined what progress looks like under the leadership of its City Manager and Commission. Guided by staff and community partners, the City launched its first comprehensive Strategic Plan—aligning every department around shared goals and measurable results. Operations have become leaner, finances stronger, and decision-making more transparent. Helena is now a high-performing organization with momentum—and the next City Manager will carry that energy into the plan’s next phase, steering a city that’s ready to grow **smarter, faster, and sustainably**.

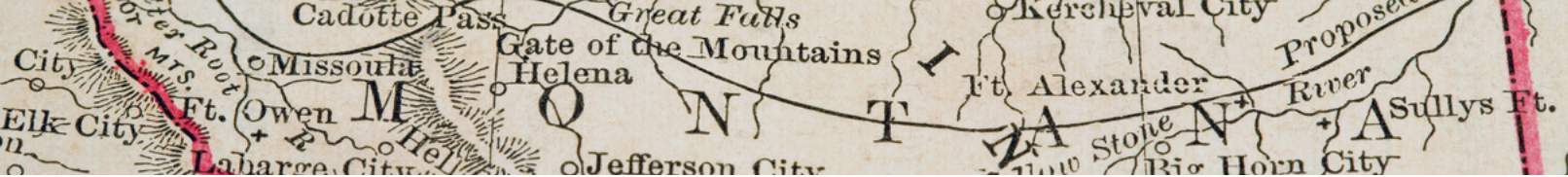
Recent Accomplishments

- **Strategic Planning and Alignment:** Completed Helena’s first citywide Strategic Plan (2024), establishing unified goals, strategies, and accountability metrics across all departments.
- **Infrastructure Investment:** Finalized master plans and rate studies for water, wastewater, and transportation systems; launched a multi-year sidewalk and transit expansion program to strengthen mobility and access.
- **Public Safety Capacity:** Earned voter-approved funding for a much needed third fire station based on population growth.
- **Operational Modernization:** Deployed major technology upgrades, including a new ERP system, digital permitting platforms, and expanded public information tools for faster, more transparent service.
- **Employer of Choice Initiative:** Adopted a competitive, market-based pay plan; enhanced leadership development, flexible scheduling, and succession planning to attract and retain top talent.
- **Community Engagement:** Deepened transparency through open records, proactive communication, and collaborative partnerships with neighborhoods, businesses, and regional organizations.

Current Priorities

- **Maintain and Elevate City Services:** Continue modernizing operations, expanding digital access, and upholding accountability in public communication.
- **Holistic Development and Housing:** Streamline permitting, coordinate housing affordability and homelessness initiatives, and protect Helena’s distinctive sense of place.
- **Infrastructure and Sustainability:** Deliver on capital improvement plans, champion proactive maintenance, and embed sustainability into long-term infrastructure investments.
- **Employer of Choice and Culture:** Strengthen workforce engagement, retention, and professional growth while sustaining competitive total rewards.
- **Financial Stewardship:** Advance long-term forecasting, budget refinement, and capital funding strategies to secure Helena’s fiscal health.
- **Partnerships and Governance:** Cultivate strong relationships with Lewis and Clark County, local agencies, and community partners to drive shared success.
- **Community Trust and Transparency:** Reinforce open, responsive, and accountable governance built on clarity, accessibility, and genuine public engagement.





IDEAL CANDIDATE

The City of Helena is seeking a forward-thinking, collaborative leader to serve as its next City Manager—someone who can unite vision with action and guide the organization through its next chapter of growth. The ideal candidate will bring a balance of innovation and practicality, helping the City Commission shape effective policy rooted in research, transparency, and shared purpose. This is a leadership role for a strategist who can inspire teams, strengthen community trust, and champion a sustainable, people-centered future—advancing initiatives that make Helena more walkable, connected, and resilient while keeping its legacy of service excellence thriving in a rapidly changing world.

Preparation for the role includes education and experience equivalent to a **bachelor's degree** in management, public or business administration, or a related field, plus seven years of progressively responsible leadership experience in government, financial management, urban planning, human resources, or equivalent organizational leadership. The Commission may consider alternative combinations of education and experience. Preferred qualifications include a master's degree, ICMA credentialing, and a track record in economic or community development and municipal government leadership. The City Commission is seeking a City Manager who is strategic, innovative, and community-minded—a leader who can translate civic goals into tangible results and values into action, fostering a city that grows sustainably and serves all who call Helena home. 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, and effectively represent all city departments.
- Understanding of essential services provided by municipalities, including public lands, development and recreation options.
- Knowledge of human resources including employee and labor relations, compensation, policy, performance management, and motivation.
- Skill 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.
- Ability to provide effective budget development and to adjust for influxes of revenue, to coordinate with the chief financial officer, and to mobilize resources to facilitate leadership and resource prioritization.
- A proactive, thoughtful, and methodical approach for modernization and process improvements.
- Ability to gain a solid understanding of the city Charter and government processes.



COMPENSATION

The annual salary range is **\$175,000 to \$205,000** depending on qualifications. In addition to a competitive salary, the City of Helena offers exceptional benefits coverage including medical, prescription, dental, vision, and hearing aid benefits; life insurance; and retirement plan contributions. An additional 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 or Flex Spending Account options.

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. The City also provides an additional 8% deferred compensation contribution and a monthly car allowance.

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 will be subject to background and reference checks, and must be bondable.

Candidates interested in this exceptional career opportunity must submit a detailed resume, cover letter and three reference contacts to [Helena City Manager Application Portal](#). The cover letter should describe why the candidate is interested in the position and relevant background information. 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. Candidates claiming veteran's preference must provide a copy of their DD214 with their application materials to verify preference.

Applicant reviews will begin on **November 5, 2025**. The position is open until filled. Candidates are requested to include in their cover letter whether they assert their right to individual privacy. 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 of Communication and Management Services, LLC, at (406) 442-4934.





City Manager Selection Process Overview

The Helena City Commission is conducting its search for the new City Manager. The City Manager Relations Committee will coordinate the preliminary selection efforts and will consist of Mayor Collins and Commissioner Logan, with Mayor Pro Tem Dean serving as an alternate. The full Commission will make the final hiring decision. Communication and Management Services LLC (CMS) is supporting the Committee and Commission in these efforts.

The Commission feels it is important to ensure the successful candidate's vision and approach align with the City of Helena's values and needs. To support this determination, the Commission will observe how the candidates interact with City leadership and the public. Because the Commission is the final decision-maker, it is not asking participants to rank or vote on candidates, but rather, to interact with candidates and provide their feedback to the City Manager Relations Committee regarding this interaction.

Following is an overview of the selection process including events that the City Manager Relations Committee is arranging to enable citizen and City leadership participation in the process:

1. The Commission defined the salary range, interview process, and posting timeframe and reviewed and approved the contract with CMS during the October 6, 2025 Commission Meeting. The position is open until filled. The first review of applications will occur within 30 days of the posting, beginning on November 5, 2025 and the City will continue accepting applications until it acquires a qualified applicant pool. The City is requiring a resume, cover letter and three professional references.
2. Commissioners and the City Manager Relations Committee will review and screen applications based on pre-defined criteria to identify semi-finalists. CMS will provide Commissioners access to the Applicant Tracking System. Commissioners will agree to maintain the confidentiality of all candidates who assert their individual right to privacy in the process.
3. CMS will conduct preliminary pre-screening interviews with semi-finalists to discuss the terms and conditions of employment and the selection process and verify candidates are interested in proceeding.
4. The City Manager Relations Committee will conduct preliminary screening interviews (videoconference) with semifinalists to narrow the field to finalists. The video interviews are tentatively scheduled for November 2025 (contingent on the City receiving a qualified applicant pool by that time).

Finalists will come to the City of Helena for in-person interviews and meetings to include:

5. The full City Commission will conduct an in-person interview with finalists. The Commission will base the interview on pre-defined questions and rate responses using valid and reliable criteria. The interview meetings are open to the public.
6. City Leadership will conduct an in-person interview with individual finalists in an open meeting. City Leadership should request input from their staff on issues of concern or interest to them. The City Manager Relations Committee will work with leadership to develop questions and parameters for the interview, will have CMS facilitate the interviews, and will have Commission members observe. We will ask leadership to provide their assessment of the candidate's presentation and interview performance. The Commission will consider this input when making the decision. *
7. Finalists will make a presentation and have a question-and-answer session in a Town Hall public meeting with interested parties to include the Commission, City leadership, and citizens. The Commission will determine the presentation topic(s). The presentations will be brief and allow time for questions and answers. Attendees can suggest questions using index cards, which will be vetted prior to presentation to candidates. The Commission will observe candidate interactions with City leadership and citizen representatives to determine if candidates are responsive to issues and concerns. *

**Citizen representative and leadership input are not the only determining factors in the decision. The Commission must also consider candidate backgrounds, Committee and Commission interview performance, and reference and background checks. While citizen and city leadership input is vitally important to the Commission, it is possible the final decision may not align with this input due to these additional considerations.*

8. *Potential timeline**

Activity	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12
	10/6	10/13	10/20	10/27	11/3	11/10	11/17	11/24	12/1	12/8	12/15	12/22
Define position & profile												
Determine \$, duration, ads												
Recruitment period												
Send acknowledgement letters												
Resume screening												
Preliminary (screening) interviews												
Finalist interviews, panel, etc.												
Reference and background checks												
Job offer												
Negotiate comp. & contract												
Notify unsuccessful candidates												
Successful candidate starts TBD												

**The timeline is contingent on the size and quality of the applicant pool. The City Manager Relations Committee will begin reviewing applications on November 5, 2025 and will continue to accept applications until the position is filled (or until a sufficient applicant pool is developed).*