



City of Helena

ADMINISTRATIVE MEETING

November 20, 2025 - 3:45 PM

Online Meeting: Zoom ID <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89234316790>

City Manager Semi-Finalist Interviews: Candidate C & Candidate D

AGENDA

1. **Call to Order / Roll Call**
2. **Open Session**
3. **CMS Report / Brief**
4. **Commission comments, questions**
5. **Closed Session**
 - a. The City Commission may close all or portions of agenda item #5 to the public pursuant to Sect. 2-3-203(3), MCA, if the Mayor determines the discussion relates to a matter of individual privacy and the Mayor determines that the demands of individual privacy clearly exceed the merits of public disclosure.
 - b. 4:00 - 5:15 PM: Candidate C
 - c. 5:30 - 6:45 PM: Candidate D
6. **Open Session**
7. **Public Comment**
8. **Adjourn**

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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.

CMS

Communication and
Management Services, LLC

City Manager Semi-Finalist and Finalist Selection - November 10, 2025

Finalist Interview Process Discussion

1. Semi-Finalist Selection November 10 [preferably 8 semi-finalist and 2 alternates].
2. Screening Interviews (**Handout**).
3. Video Interviews (First Interview Questions are final) November 19 - 21.
4. Identify Finalists November 21.
5. Leadership Assessment: SoundMind Leadership Hogan Assessment. November 21 – December 5.
6. In-Person Interviews (Candidate Agenda)
 - a. Commission Interviews (Second Interview Questions are final).
 - b. City Tour (volunteers to take candidates on tour, ensure process and if possible, people are consistent, design a structured way for input – directors?).
 - c. Director Engagement.
 - d. Town Hall / Public Forum and Feedback Discussion.
 - e. Other: meal with candidate, housing inventory tour (REALTOR®), key business partners.
7. Reference and background checks (criminal and credit?)
8. Job Offer & Contract Negotiation

5.c. Director Engagement*

- Directors request a semi-formal interaction with candidates. Directors will nominate topics; the Commission will vet and prioritize the topics to structure the conversation. Directors suggested lunch with candidates.
- We will have Directors prepare a written report of candidate interactions (including the conversation, lunch and tour).
- Commissioners will observe interaction (open meeting, recorded, present?).

5.d. Town Hall / Public Forum and Feedback Discussion*

1. Potential sources of presentation topics:
 - Strategic Plan
 - Commission priorities
 - Commissioner input from constituents (direct, community survey, listening session).
2. Commission can provide input to CMS who will develop candidate instructions and participant rating criteria (we will ask participants to provide input on candidates: forms, QR code).
3. Logistics: who to invite and how to invite them
4. Candidate Presentation
5. Question and Answer

*We will clarify with citizen and staff participants that under Helena's Commission–Manager form of government (City Charter and Title 7, Chapter 3, MCA), the City Commission (the Mayor and four

Commissioners) appoints, evaluates, and, if necessary, removes the City Manager. Under this structure, citizens or staff do not directly choose the City Manager. The Commission is responsible for gathering, weighing, and interpreting citizen feedback and then translating that input into city priorities and hiring criteria. *Citizen and leadership input are not the only determining factors in the decision. The Commission must also consider candidate backgrounds, candidate 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.*

Closed Session: Semi-Finalist Selection

Step 1: Orientation (5–10 minutes)

- Review the purpose of the meeting (to reach consensus on semifinalists).
- Confirm shared understanding of the screening criteria and job priorities (2 handouts – screening criteria and short survey summary).
- *The goal is to identify strong interview candidates, not make final judgments yet.*

Step 2: Brief Individual Input (45 minutes total)

- Each Commissioner and the Mayor shares their top 10 names and any short comments (1–2 sentences each) on standout candidates.
- Record all names mentioned on a shared board or spreadsheet (e.g., list each candidate with checkmarks for how many commissioners mentioned them).

Step 3: Consensus Discussion (30–40 minutes)

- Identify candidates with broad support (4+ mentions) these typically advance automatically.
- Discuss the middle group (2–3 mentions) to see if they should advance based on collective judgment.
- Candidates with little or no support (0–1 mention) can be set aside unless a Commissioner strongly advocates otherwise.
- Aim to land on 8 semifinalists with at least 2 alternates by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, allow a simple ranked vote (each Commissioner selects up to 10, and top totals advance).

Step 4: Confirm Next Steps (10 minutes)

- Summarize the semifinalist list.
- Confirm Zoom interview logistics (e.g., 45-minute interviews, 30 minutes in-between, standardized questions, scoring rubric, November 19 – 21, debrief on 21).
- Confirm timeline for narrowing to 3 finalists after the Zoom round.

Open Session:

Recap the number of semi-finalists selected, interview dates, and timeframe for identifying and announcing finalist selection (or interview additional semi-finalists).