



Helena Citizens' Council
316 N. Park Avenue, Room 324
Helena, MT 59623
Phone: 406 594-0010
www.helenamt.gov/hcc/

May 28, 2025

TO: City of Helena Mayor and Commissioners
FROM: Helena Citizen's Council
RE: HCC Coordinator Position

Introduction

HCC members recently learned that the Helena City Clerk has proposed that the City Commission approve a significant reduction in the hours the half-time coordinator serves the administrative needs of the HCC. Specifically, the Clerk proposed to reduce HCC assistance from 20 to 8 hours per week.

Findings

First, HCC vehemently objects to a proposed restructuring of the HCC Coordinator position without any prior consultation with Council members. The proposed reduction in hours of service to the HCC has been put forth in the absence of any consideration of HCC needs or preferences.

Second, HCC outlines below the services currently provided to the Council by the Coordinator to demonstrate the continuing need for dedicated support for the Council on a weekly, monthly and annual basis:

- Manages zoom, takes minutes and attends full board, executive committee and outreach committee meetings
- Prepares for meeting agendas, makes copies and packets for members
- Sets up for meeting rooms, manages zoom and recordings
- Organizes at least two public open houses/information sessions each year for members to meet with constituents and gather comment on transportation, housing, land use planning, and other topics
- Posts public notice on website or all district, outreach, executive committee and full board meetings in accord with open meeting laws
- Organizes members to attend commission meeting and advisory board meetings and sends out useful reminders
- Prepares minutes of full board, executive committee and outreach meetings
- Downloads and archives files to comply with all public records requirements
- Addresses HCC public email correspondence and prepares timely responses on a daily basis

- Maintains HCC website, Facebook posts, reminder emails to members
- Prepares and files HCC recommendations to city manager, mayor and commissioners
- Gathers public input for grant applications at the request of department heads
- Designs and arranges printing for outreach materials such as brochures, yard signs, banners and tote bags
- Maintains the inventory of HCC gear and supplies
- Prepares for bi-annual HCC election and swearing in; organizes meeting materials, invites new members by telephone

The newly proposed position titled “Commission Administrative Support and HCC Coordinator” allotted 10% of one FTE to HCC business (4 hours). Subsequent to the protest expressed by HCC Chair, the City Clerk raised that allotment to 20% of one FTE (8 hours)

Conclusions:

Open communication and timely responsiveness of government officials are enormously important for the HCC and for members of the public. Public engagement in the affairs of city government is critical to sound decision-making.

HCC members have been able to contact the current HCC Coordinator at all hours, even on weekends. The Coordinator has consistently responded quickly to all queries and addressed all concerns in a timely manner.

The HCC is composed of a diverse collection of individuals who are **elected** volunteers. Many of us work for state or federal government; many are new to working with local government. All volunteer their time to the business of the Council, some devoting inordinate hours to the project. The Coordinator has served as the central communication hub for the HCC and has been very responsive to all inquiries. In addition to keeping the HCC’s public engagement at a high level and facilitating all meetings, the Coordinator has timely organized and made materials available for art walks, block parties, special events.

As an independent, elected body of neighborhood representatives who work to promote public participation in the affairs of local government, the HCC has greatly benefited from a dedicated employee working 20 hours per week on the business of the Council. We fear that our organization will diminish in cohesiveness if the hours of the Coordinator are significantly reduced as presently proposed.

Recommendation:

The HCC recommends the City Commission continue to fund a dedicated half-time position to assist the HCC in conducting its regular course of business.

This recommendation was approved by the members of the Helena Citizen’s Council at the May 28th, 2025, full board meeting.