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# Group recommends Libby have charter, hire city manager

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The Libby City Government Study Commission recommended in its tentative report this week that the city adopt a charter form of government and hire a full-time city manager.

The first of two public meetings on the recommendation has been set for 8 p.m. May 12, at City Hall.

The present form has served Libby well in the past, said Don Howard, chairman of the commission, but he feels a city manager will improve the economy and "get more mileage out of our dollar."

The city has grown and is going into business with its purchase of the water system, he said, so the government must be upgraded to modern times and include a full-time manager, who would be accountable to the City Council and mayor.

Such a person could devote the time needed for proper growth and planning for a more effective and efficient operation, Howard said, and would provide full-time leadership.

Municipal managers are trained for this type of

management, he said, and would know "loopholes" to expand the city and enlarge its tax base.

In a charter form of government, a charter would be written defining the municipal government's powers — which can include any powers not forbidden by the state or federal governments.

The study commission's decision to recommend this form was reinforced by its examination of Whitefish, Howard said. Whitefish changed from a mayor-council form to a charter-city manager form after the 1974 study commission there gave its report.

All the Libby City Government Study Commission does is recommend what it feels will benefit the community, Howard said; the people of Libby will have to make up their minds and decide on a ballot.

The commission is to answer questions and accept comments at the May 12 public meeting and at a second meeting scheduled for June 9, before submitting its final report and recommendation.