

Supplementary Report to the Town of West Yellowstone

The West Yellowstone Study Commission has spent eighteen months studying the local government. During that time town employees and local citizens were surveyed. The form of government was studied and compared with others allowed by Montana statute. The delivery of services was examined. A public hearing was advertised and conducted. Minutes of the hearing and the citizen and employees questionnaire responses are attached.

The Study Commission found the lack of communication as one of the main concerns. The survey responses indicate good accessibility to the elected officials, however, a lack of response to concerns seem to be the prevailing opinion.

Suggestions are:

- notice of council meeting agenda be published in the paper
- radio and newspaper recap information needs to be reported after every meeting
- have minutes of the council meeting available to the public within a day or two of the council meeting
- three and five year town management projections need to be developed and publicized for local citizens to read, understand and respond to
- when citizens inquire at the town office for current information (i.e. bid specifications, meeting notices, etc.) the information needs to be available

A town employee in administration may be appointed to **public relations** to perform these services for the community.

The survey and public hearing addressed the need for formal training. Due to the growing complexity of Local Government, all elected officials should feel responsible to attend the Local Government Center training held in Bozeman on an annual basis. All departments need formal training in their areas of responsibility. Personnel management seems to be suffering, evidenced by the recent formation of an employees union and the frequent turn over of employees in one town department.

There were several concerns expressed about the selection of Mayor. Consideration needs to be given to the top vote getter being appointed to Mayor after a specific "get acquainted" time has been served. This would not be a difficult position to fill if the Town of West Yellowstone's previous Charter amendment direction is followed.

The study commission determined combination of services is not recommended at this time. The continued increase in numbers of personnel to various departments has been addressed as a concern. It may be possible that the Local Government Center at MSU could have a graduate student do a study on efficiency and distribution of duties, with consideration being given to our seasonal needs.

The Local Government Study Commission recommends that the Town Council investigate and take appropriate action on the afore mentioned concerns.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMISSIONERS

646-9500

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The Study Commission found the lack of communication as one of the main concerns. The survey responses indicate good accessibility to the elected officials, however, a lack of response to concerns seem to be the prevailing opinion.

Recommendations:

- publish notice of council meeting agenda in the paper
 - report actions taken to radio and newspaper after every meeting as a Town Council reporter
 - prepare minutes of the council meeting and have available to the public within three working days after council meeting
 - develop three and five year projections on Capitol Improvements and Town Council Goals and publicize for local citizens to read, understand and respond to
 - make available current information (i.e. bid specifications, meeting notices, etc.) at the administration office for the public
 - rethink the nature of Government
- strongly requests someone specifically be appointed to **public relations**, other than employees now in regular positions as they are too busy with daily functions to do it. This person needs to be open to receive ongoing public input and give out public information on a daily basis

The survey and public hearing addressed the need for formal training. Due to the growing complexity of Local Government, all elected officials should feel responsible to attend the Local Government Center training held in Bozeman on an annual basis. This training is held during the slack spring season and the town government pays for the travel, housing, meals and registration expenses.

All departments need formal training in their areas of responsibility. Personnel management seems to need review, evidenced by the recent formation of an employees union and the frequent turn over of employees in one town department.

Considerable feeling in the community was expressed for direct election of a Mayor. This would be a good consideration for a ballot item in the immediate future.

The Local Government Center at MSU could be held with an Economic study on efficiency and distribution of duties, with consideration being given to our seasonal needs, keeping in mind that the Center is the organization that helped us understand the need for our Resort Tax and assisted us in accomplishing that benefit for the town.

We ask that these recommendations be given your study and review. We will ask for agenda time in 1997 to see how the report stands.

This concludes our Supplementary Report to the Town Council.

A Final report will follow.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMISSIONERS