



TO: Toni Henneman, Research Analyst, MT Legislative Services
FROM: Dan Clark, Director, MSU Extension Local Government Center
RE: Local Government Center's Advisory Committee Recommendation
Date: January 14, 2020

On November 12, I shared with the Local Government Interim Committee (LGIC) a memo outlining the MSU Extension Local Government Center's (LGC) need for 9.0 FTE in order to adequately address the unmet needs of local governments across Montana. Following that meeting, the LGIC requested the LGC meet with its Advisory Committee to develop a strategy and determine the necessary resources for sustainable operations. I am pleased to share with your committee the following funding proposal.

On Friday, January 10, the MSU Extension Local Government Center Advisory Committee met for a full day to discuss the Center's current scope of work, its funding structure, and additional resources that would be necessary to ensure the Center is sustainable into the future. After a full day of deliberations, the Advisory Committee reached a consensus on a recommendation to the LGIC and realizes this is a first step in a broader strategy of capacity building for the Center to meet the growing needs of local governments.

The Advisory Committee proposes the Local Government Center receive an additional \$230,000 to be added to MSU Extension's base funding. This additional funding will add 2.55 FTE, to include a 1.0 FTE Associate Director and 1.55 FTE Associate Specialists, thus increasing the size of the LGC from 3.45 FTE to 6.0 FTE. This expanded capacity will allow the Center to:

- Set more realistic expectations and achievable goals
- Enhance training and technical assistance across local government entities
- Ensure Center leadership into the future
- Provide continuity of service and sustainable succession

The additional resources will allow the LGC to increase training, facilitation and technical assistance to local governments on policy-driven financial stewardship, effective long-term management of public resources and professional development of elected and appointed officials.

The Local Government Center Advisory Committee includes Eric Bryson, Executive Director of MACo; Tim Burton, Executive Director of MLCT; Alan Hulse, CEO of MMIA; Ted Barkley, Belgrade City Manager; Jim Hart, Madison County Commissioner; James Schell, East Helena Mayor; Bill Berg, Park County Commissioner; Kisha Miller, Columbus City Clerk; Jim Doar, Gallatin County CAO; Carly Anderson, Beaverhead County Clerk of District Court and Suzanne Stluka, MSU Extension Associate Director.

The Local Government Center has performed a valuable service to the state of Montana for over 34 years and its continued success is contingent upon additional investment from the legislature. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dan Clark
Director
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Montana State University Extension

**Local Government
Center**

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