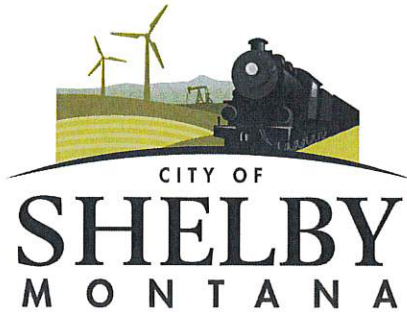


# CITY OF SHELBY

112 First Street South  
Shelby, MT 59474  
Telephone: (406) 434-5222  
FAX: (406) 434-2039  
[www.shelbymt.com](http://www.shelbymt.com)



**Mayor:** Gary McDermott  
**Council:** Joe Flesch, Sanna Clark, Jayce Yarn,  
Lyle Kimmert, Bill Moritz, Pat Frydenlund  
**Attorney:** William E. Hunt, Jr.  
**City Supt.:** Eric Kary  
**Building Inspector:** Rob Tasker  
**Community Development:** Lorette Carter  
**Finance Officer:** Jade Goroski  
**Judge:** Donna Whitt

## **Montana Historic Preservation Grant Program City of Shelby ~ Historic Shelby Town Hall Exterior Façade Improvement Project January 5, 2023**

Thank you very much to the Montana Department of Commerce – Historic Preservation in your recommendation to fund the City of Shelby’s Historic Shelby Town Hall Exterior Façade Improvement Project.

Constructed in early spring of 1923, Shelby Town Hall served as city offices, a local citizens meeting hall and a few years later, a jail for the bustling oilfield community. The Town Hall was quite modern considering the streets were dirt and sewer and electrical lines were just being laid in the community.

The Shelby Town Hall was constructed in only two months anticipating the “droves” of fight fans and media who would be flocking to Shelby for the infamous World Heavyweight Championship Fight of Jack Dempsey & Tommy Gibbons slated for July 4, 1923. The building was to be the headquarters for the media men who would be covering the big event and a glowing symbol of the progress of Shelby. More importantly, it was built to serve the growing needs of a small, bustling oil community just beginning to lay its roots.

Of course, the crowds did not come, the money did not roll in and Shelby nearly went bankrupt from the “fight fiasco.” City council reports do not even show whether Frank Bossuot or J.P. Humphrey were ever paid in full for the design and construction of the town hall, but the building stands as a landmark of local government and the early progress of Shelby, Montana.

Much to the credit of area homesteaders, oil producers and businessmen, Shelby did survive the “fight fiasco.” The “Town Fathers” quietly paid their debts, journalists, fight fans and curiosity seekers left without a trace, and Shelby returned to the peaceful community it once was. Drought periods came and went and area farmers found their niche in dry land farming. Ranchers found grassland for their cattle and sheep, oil production stabilized and area businessmen kept Shelby thriving. The railway maintained Shelby as a distribution center and the coming of the interstate highway system further identified Shelby as a crossroads for the western region with the Shelby Town Hall serving as government offices and a community meeting space.

The Shelby Town Hall has continued to serve the community for 100 years, but the building has lost some of the historic look. The original façade had vertical and horizontal windows flanking the main entrance. With inclusion of an ADA ramp, the new main entry was positioned to face the south, losing the historic look of the front façade. The intent of the historic preservation project is to restore a true reflection of the historic 1923 façade with installation of vertical and horizontal windows, bringing light into the vestibule of the interior and reflecting the original historic façade.

Named to the National Register of Historic Places in 2005, city officials continue to be diligent in trying to maintain the character defining features and integrity of Shelby Town Hall. The proposed project would re-institute some of the character defining features and positively impact and protect the integrity of the historic property.

The City of Shelby will continue to maintain the building as a useful property serving the Shelby Area Chamber of Commerce/Visitor Information Center and most important, as a symbol of the incredible and colorful history of Shelby, Montana.

Thank you to the Long-Range Planning Subcommittee for considering our project and helping us restore and preserve a piece of Shelby's history and heritage.

Best Regards,



Lorette Carter

Community Development Director

Cc: Mayor Gary McDermott  
Shelby City Council