

**CHARTER  
OF  
THE TOWN OF MANHATTAN, MONTANA**

**PREAMBLE**

WE, THE PEOPLE OF THE TOWN OF MANHATTAN, COUNTY OF GALLATIN, STATE OF MONTANA, in accordance with Article XI, Section 5 of the Constitution of Montana, do hereby adopt this Charter.

**ARTICLE I  
POWERS OF THE TOWN**

**Section 1.01 Powers of the Town of Manhattan**

The Town of Manhattan shall have all powers not prohibited by the Constitution of Montana, the laws of Montana, or this Charter.

**Section 1.02 Interpretation of Powers**

The powers and authority of this self-government town shall be liberally construed. Every reasonable doubt as to the existence of a town power or authority shall be resolved in favor of the existence of that power or authority.

**Section 1.03 Restrictions**

The mill levy shall be limited to that of Montana municipal governments with general government powers, except with the prior approval of a majority of the electors voting on the question in a general or special municipal election.

**Section 1.04 Charter Supremacy**

As provided by Article XI, Section 5 of the Constitution of Montana, provisions herein establishing executive, legislative and administrative structure and organization are superior to statutory provisions.

## **ARTICLE II LEGISLATIVE BRANCH**

### **Section 2.01 Town Council**

The legislative branch shall consist of the town council, which shall be the governing body of the town.

### **Section 2.02 Qualifications for Office**

Anyone who is 18 years of age or older, a citizen of Montana, a resident of the Town of Manhattan for a period of at least one year immediately preceding his/her election to office, and a qualified elector pursuant to Article IV, Section 2 of the Montana Constitution is eligible to hold the office of council member.

### **Section 2.03 Composition**

The Town of Manhattan shall have a town council of four (4) members.

### **Section 2.04 Term of Office**

Members of the town council shall be elected for four (4) year, overlapping terms of office.

### **Section 2.05 Election**

1. Local government elections shall be conducted on a nonpartisan basis.
2. Council members shall be elected at large. Two council members shall be elected at large every two years.

### **Section 2.06 Chairman of the Council**

The council shall have a chair who shall be elected by the members of the council from among their own number. The chair of the council shall preside at council meetings when the mayor is absent, and shall vote as other members of the council.

### **Section 2.07 Vacancy in Office**

The office of council member becomes vacant as prescribed by law.

### **Section 2.08 Removal from Office**

A council member may be removed from office by a finding, adopted by the affirmative vote of three (3) council members, that the office has become vacant as

prescribed by law or by recall of a council member by the electors of Manhattan, as prescribed by law.

### **Section 2.09 Filling Vacancy on Council**

1. When a vacancy occurs in the office of council member, the position shall be considered open and subject to nomination and election at the next general municipal election, except the term of office shall be limited to the unexpired term of the person who originally created the vacancy. Pending such election and qualification the council shall appoint, by the affirmative vote of the majority of the remaining council members, a person possessing the qualifications for office required by law and this Charter, within 30 days of the vacancy to hold the office until the successor is elected and qualified.

2. If there are fewer than three (3) council members serving in office at the time an appointment to fill council vacancies is required, the mayor shall appoint with the written consent of each of the incumbent council members, a person possessing the qualifications for office required by law and this Charter within 30 days of the vacancy to hold the office until the successor is elected and qualified.

### **Section 2.10 Powers and Duties**

1. The town council shall be the legislative and policy determining body of the town. All powers of the town shall be vested in the town council except as otherwise provided by law or this Charter and the council shall provide for the exercise thereof and for the performance of all duties and obligations imposed by law or this Charter.

2. The council may override the mayor's veto by the affirmative vote of three (3) members of the council.

### **Section 2.11 Legislative Action**

Unless otherwise required by law or this Charter, the affirmative vote of a majority of the council members present at a lawful meeting of the council shall be required for all official actions of the council. A minimum of three (3) council members must be present to convene a lawful meeting of the council.

### **Section 2.12 Procedure**

The council shall establish its rules of procedure and time and place of meetings by resolution.

## **ARTICLE III EXECUTIVE BRANCH**

### **Section 3.01 Mayor**

The Mayor shall be the chief executive and chief administrative officer of the Town.

### **Section 3.02 Qualifications for Office**

No person shall be eligible for the office of Mayor unless he/she shall be at least twenty one (21) years old, a qualified elector pursuant to Article IV, Section 2 of the Montana Constitution, a resident of the State for at least three (3) years, and a resident of the Town for two (2) years immediately preceding his/her election to said office. The Mayor shall reside in the Municipality during his/her term of office.

### **Section 3.03 Term of Office**

The mayor shall be elected for a four (4) year term of office.

### **Section 3.04 Election**

The mayor shall be nominated and elected at large on a nonpartisan basis.

### **Section 3.05 Vacancy in Office**

The office of mayor becomes vacant as prescribed by law.

### **Section 3.06 Removal from Office**

The mayor may be removed from office by a finding, adopted by the affirmative vote of three (3) council members that the office has become vacant as prescribed by law or by recall of the mayor by the electors of the Town of Manhattan, as prescribed by law.

### **Section 3.07 Filling Vacancy in the Office of Mayor**

When a vacancy occurs in the office of mayor the position shall be considered open and subject to nomination and election at the next general municipal election, except the term of office shall be limited to the unexpired term of the person originally creating the vacancy. Pending such election and qualification the council shall appoint, by the affirmative vote of three (3) council members, a person possessing the

qualifications for office required by law and this Charter within 30 days of the vacancy to hold the office until the successor is elected and qualified.

### **Section 3.08 Powers and Duties**

The mayor shall:

1. enforce laws, Charter, ordinances, and resolutions;
2. perform the duties required by law, Charter, ordinance or resolution;
3. administer the affairs of the town government;
4. carry out policies established by the council;
5. recommend measures to the council;
6. report to the council on the affairs and financial condition of the town government;
7. execute bonds, notes, contracts, and written obligations of the council, subject to the approval of the council;
8. report to the council as the council may require;
9. prepare the council agenda, preside at council meetings and may take part in council discussions;
10. execute the budget adopted by the council;
11. appoint, with the consent of the council, all members of boards, except the mayor may appoint without the consent of the council temporary advisory committees established by the mayor.

### **Section 3.09 Administrative Duties**

The mayor may:

1. appoint one or more administrative assistants to assist in the supervision and operation of the town government, and such administrative assistants shall be answerable solely to the mayor and the Town Council;
2. appoint, with the consent of a majority of the council, all department heads including either a clerk, treasurer or clerk-treasurer; remove department heads; and may appoint and remove all other employees;
3. prepare the budget in consultation with the council and department heads;
4. exercise control and supervision of all departments and boards.

### **Section 3.10 Legislative Authority**

The mayor shall decide all tie votes of the council, but shall have no other vote. The mayor may veto ordinances and resolutions, subject to override by the affirmative vote of three (3) members of the council.

### **Section 3.11 Compensation**

The compensation of the mayor shall be set by resolution of the town council.

## **ARTICLE IV JUDICIAL BRANCH**

### **Section 4.01 City Court**

There shall be a Town court as provided by law.

## **ARTICLE V DEPARTMENT STRUCTURE**

### **Section 5.01 Organization of Departments**

The organization of town departments shall be prescribed by ordinance.

## **ARTICLE VI GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **Section 6.01 Amendment of Charter**

This Charter may be amended only as prescribed by law.

### **Section 6.02 Effective Date**

This Charter shall become effective on January 1, 2006.

### **Section 6.03 Oath of Office**

Before entering upon the duties of office, all elected town officials shall take and subscribe to the oath of office as prescribed in Article III, Section 3 of the Constitution of Montana.

### **Section 6.04 Severability**

If any provision of this Charter is held invalid, the other provisions of this Charter shall not be affected thereby. If the application of the Charter, or any part of its provisions, to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the application of the Charter and its provisions to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

## **ARTICLE VII TRANSITION PROVISIONS**

### **Section 7.01 General Transition**

Transition to this charter form of government shall be as prescribed by law. The Study Commission shall provide for such transition with an advisory plan consistent with law. The provisions of this transition article shall not be published as part of the Charter after June 30, 2008.

### **Section 7.02 Continuation in Office**

No town employee or elected official holding a town office will lose employment or elected position solely because of the adoption of this Charter. Elected officials holding office on the date this Charter is adopted may continue in office until the end of the term for which they were elected.

### **Section 7.03 Review of Existing Ordinances**

All town ordinances, resolutions and rules of the Town of Manhattan shall remain in effect until reviewed, revised or repealed by the town council. The town council shall review and, where necessary, revise or repeal all town ordinances to provide for compliance and consistency with this Charter and state law no later than June 30, 2008.