

Agenda

I. 1:05p Vice Chair Lawler, Welcomes and Opens Meeting

- a. Roll Call, Anastasia Matheison
 - i. Commissioners Present: Vice Chair Rob Lawler, Commissioners Becky Nelson, Autumn Coleman, Dawn English*, Clifford Kipp*, Vicki Turner*, Pete Pace, Jim Larson*, Jake Strissel*, Donnie Wetzel, Zack Hawkins, Thomas Risberg* Excused Absence: Chair Morgan Hubbard
 - ii. GOCS Staff Present: Director Sarah Sadowski; Keena Irby, Fiscal Officer; Kristina Jordan, Program Officer; Elaine Dahl, Grants Specialist; Anastasia Matheison, Program Specialist
 - iii. Guests: Duane Schlabach, Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP); Tracy Cook, Montana State Library; Toni Goroski*, Action for Eastern Montana Senior Companion Program; Mēghan Scott*, Justice for Montanans (MLSA-JFM); Lizzy Daly*, Montana Campus Network for Civic Engagement (MCNCE);
- *Indicates attendance by Zoom*
- b. Introductions, All
- c. Video message – Governor Gianforte
- d. Opening Activity, [donation to Good Samaritan Ministries Thrift Store](#)
 - i. If attending online, be encouraged to support local charity with warm clothing and share a picture.
- e. Group Photo with the State Christmas tree
- f. Approval of [October 2, 2025 Minutes](#)
 - i. Moved by Commissioner Wetzel and Seconded by Commissioner Hawkins – Approved unanimously
- g. Commissioner Updates – engage with GOCS since October? Community opportunities?
 - i. Commissioner Wetzel: The Department of Labor and Industry is bringing tribal employment leaders and entities together Dec 16 at Billings Convention Center to share resources and opportunities. All are welcome.
 - ii. Commissioner Kipp: Involvement with the Last Best Alumni Council.
 - iii. Commissioner Coleman: Had the opportunity to attend Big Sky Watershed Corps (BSWC), AgCorps and FWP end of service presentations. Department of Natural Resources and Conservation has hosted AmeriCorps members. It was very uplifting to hear what they accomplished.
 - iv. Vice Chair Lawler: Attended close of service for AgCorps and FWP. Seeing the full circle from talking about the grants to the impact on the members and the community they serve is cool.
 - v. Commissioner Hawkins: Had the privilege to speak at the AgCorps and FWP close of service and reflect on my AmeriCorps experience. I also donate blood every 8 weeks. Encourage all to donate if you can.
 - vi. Commissioner English: Attended the BSWC end of service presentations. It is encouraging to see what these members do. AmeriCorps Seniors, RSVP, has an annual Friendsgiving to recognize seniors for their work in the community. Was able to talk to them about the Threshold of Life memorial.
 - vii. Commissioner Pace: Shout out to Commissioner Nelson. About 8-9 years ago, funding for the High School House was cut in half. As we have been building this program back up, she has done a wonderful job advocating the program and promoting jobs for students. This fall we hosted Mike Rowe and Governor Greg Gianforte at the High School House site. The program was also in the Governor's 7th day of giving where he donated a part of his salary. These are good kids who participate in this program, and it means a lot to them for the Governor and Mike Rowe to come out and support them.

II.

- AmeriCorps Office of Regional Operations, Senior Portfolio Manager – not available**

III. 132p Director's Update, Director Sadowski

- a. FFY2026 budget, Threshold of Life Memorial, Staffing, Confidentiality Statements
 - i. Office relocated to 301 S Park October 9.
 - ii. Hiring Administrative Specialist and Compliance and Training Specialist in the new year.
 - iii. FY26 there is a continuing resolution until January 31st. FY25 funds have been awarded. Thank you, Commissioners who reviewed grants.
 - iv. Threshold of Life workgroup – Marie Stark, community member, has joined the workgroup. Thank you, Commissioners Larson and Turner, along with the other workgroup members Sean and Wetzel.
 - v. Presented at the Lions Club and Hometown Helena. Lions donated \$500. Was interviewed on Aging Horizons, will air on December 28th. Waiting for decisions on requests from other possible funders.
 - vi. Appreciate commissioners being involved in your community and program events.
 - vii. BSWC exited 46 members in November. FWP and AgCorps through MCNCE exited 8 members.
 - viii. Commissioner Kipp: Will you travel to meet with organizations interested in the Threshold of Life?
 - 1. Director Sadowski: Yes.

IV. 143p Last Best Alums Update, Commissioner Kipp

- a. A network to stay connected with Montana-based AmeriCorps alumni. Council meets quarterly. GOCS hosts the website and provides updates. [Like us on Facebook](#) and visit our website at www.lastbestalums.com/
- b. Strategic framework was shown including goals and objectives.
- c. Will have a panel on the Friday of the ServeMontana Symposium and will host a meetup that week.

V. 2p Governor's Office of Community Service Updates

- a. ServeMontana, Anastasia Matheison, Program Specialist
 - i. [Youth Serve Montana Scholarship](#) applications open until January 31st. There are ninety \$1,500 scholarships available for qualified high school seniors.
 - ii. [ServeMontana Awards](#), nomination form opens early January, overview & call for nominations
 - iii. Commissioner Spotlight, please fill out the form www.surveymonkey.com/r/CommissionerHighlight.
- b. Financial, Keena Irby, Fiscal Officer
 - i. Financial Status Report
 - 1. DLI may be initiating changes that remove general fund appropriation for GOCS but has not provided information or timeline – more to come.
 - 2. Commission Investment Funds: spending down FFY2024 funds under a no cost extension due to staff vacancies, and will then expend FY25 funds.
 - ii. Honorarium end of year report-out and selection
 - 1. \$1,300 was donated this year through waived honorariums, thank you.
 - iii. Donate Life License Plate approved, will be featured on social media, newsletter, and a press release
 - 1. Director Sadowski will share with commissioners.
- c. AmeriCorps, Kristina Jordan, Program Officer
 - i. Subrecipient Grants update
 - 1. Competitive grant review completed using FY25 materials, as FY26 NOFO is not published by AmeriCorps. After recommendation approval, applicants will enter a clarification period.
 - 2. Current competitive programs: BSWC, JFM, and MCNCE
 - a. BSWC end of service was in November and will start 46 members in January. They hosted Senator Sheehy's staff in Butte, Kelly Cotton, during the end of service.

- b. JFM started 23 members in September and November.
 - c. MCNCE is closing their competitive program grant. As part of regular oversight, GOCS identified a National Service Criminal History Check disallowance of \$5,661.54 due to late or incomplete NSCHC of two FY23 members. GOCS initiated the process with AmeriCorps and is waiting for a reply and further instruction.
 - 3. Current formula programs: AgCorps, Community Health Corps Montana, and FWP.
 - 4. Current formula planning grants: Montana State Library and MCNCE.
- ii. ServeMontana Symposium: March 11-13, 2026
 - 1. Requested sponsorship from State Farm (pending reply) and MT Farmers Union (declined).
 - 2. Please share the call for breakout session proposals or submit one yourself. There are only 8 slots available this year. Priority deadline is December 21st. Info on [our website](#).
 - iii. Commissioner engagement opportunity: Program orientations in January: BSWC, FWP, AgCorps, and Community Health Corps, will follow up with information.
 - iv. Commissioner Lawler: Attended State Library planning grant stakeholder meeting as part of his job duties.

VI. 210p New Business

- a. AmeriCorps Grant Review Workgroup Recommendation, Commissioner Risberg – action item
 - i. JFM continuation and BSWC recompete – described applicants and explained process.
 - ii. Moved by Commissioner Risberg, Seconded by Commissioner Larson - Approved unanimously as presented.
- b. ServeMontana Award Workgroup – formation
 - i. Commissioners Larson, Lawler, and Kipp volunteered for this workgroup.
- c. Engagement opportunity, MLK Day, January 19, 2025
 - i. Helena: Hygiene drive drop-off at MLSA in the Steamboat building and cooking dinner for those at God's Love. Habitat for Humanity opportunity to volunteer at the Restore or on a house build site.
 - ii. Missoula: Read for Peace event through Missoula Public Schools.
 - iii. Great Falls: Opportunity through Self Help Law Centers.

VII. 225p Public Comment

- a. Public comments were made by Commissioners Larson and Lawler, and guests Tracy Cook and Mēghan Scott.

VIII. 237p Adjourn

Vice Chair Lawler: Adjourned meeting

Next regularly scheduled Commission meeting Wednesday, March 11, 2026...10am!
ServeMontana Symposium, March 11-13, 2026