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Tuesday, September 30, 2025

Helena City Commission
316 N. Park Ave.
Helena, MT 59623

Mr. Mayor and Helena City Commissioners,

I am writing to provide formal notice of my intention to resign from the position of City Manager and retire, effective December 31, 2025.

When I accepted the Commission's offer to return as the interim City Manager in March 2022, I anticipated staying only a few months. I chose to stay in the permanent position because I wanted to continue working with the Commission, City staff, our community partners, and the public to stabilize operations and processes and work on issues that were facing the City after a challenging time with high turnover in key leadership positions and in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. To that end, I am very proud of the gains we have made as a team in the last, nearly four years.

Under the direction of this Commission, we have drastically improved our ability to recruit and retain qualified staff by investing in the wellbeing of our employees. Restructuring the employee health benefits program to provide better and more affordable coverage for families, addressing wage compression and misalignment, and prioritizing prudent cost of living increases have enabled the City to offer a competitive compensation package.

With a more stable workforce, we were able to build a shared vision for improved infrastructure and more holistic growth and development by revamping the development review process and taking on several critical planning processes, including the Commission Strategic Plan, the Integrated Solid Waste Master Plan, the City-County Joint Infrastructure study, the Helena Forward Land Use Plan, the City Engineering Standards and the establishment of the Metropolitan Planning Organization and forthcoming Long Range Transportation Plan.

Using these plans as guides, the City has implemented new policies and modernized systems to better meet the needs of the public. We onboarded two new mission-critical software solutions with the Tyler Enterprise Resource and Planning solution (the city's financial system), and the computer aided dispatch and resource management system. Your investments in the City's records retention, digitization, and preservation program as well as the implementation of a new website and communication tools have helped improve transparency and provided greater citizen access to information.

The Commission was also supportive of increasing staff resources for grant seeking, which has paid dividends for the City in the last few years, including securing funds for two major infrastructure projects that I believe are incredible opportunities for the City. The Eastside Arterial Connector project (at the South Helena interchange), funded through a U.S. DOT BUILD grant, will open hundreds of acres of land for affordable housing and commercial development. The funding from the U.S. DOT Railroad Crossing Elimination grant will support a grade separation on Montana Ave. that will provide safer motorized and non-motorized travel and enable enhanced economic development in the Railroad District.

The Commission, along with City staff and the public, walked through a thorough and thoughtful process for allocation of state and local COVID recovery funds which resulted in significant investment in the areas of affordable housing, emergency shelter, food security, wildfire resiliency, aging city-infrastructure and buildings, solar energy projects, and an emergency services study which laid the groundwork for passing the bond for the third fire station. This work will benefit the residents of Helena for generations to come.

It has been my honor to serve the people of this community. I look forward to spending more time with my family and friends, and a few more weekends up at the cabin.

In service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tim Burton". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "T" and a cursive "Burton".

Tim Burton
City Manager
City of Helena, MT