

**BRIDGER,  
MONTANA  
1976**

**FINAL REPORT**

TO THE VOTERS OF BRIDGER, MONTANA:

Dear Voter:

You will have a rare opportunity, to take a personal part, on November 2, 1976, in determining the type of government you would like to live with in Bridger, Montana.

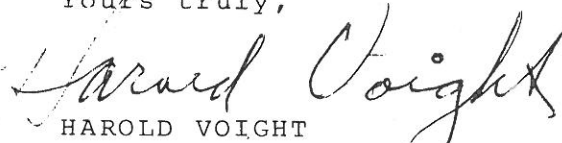
The Bridger government Review, which was elected by you, November 5, 1974, has spent many hours (without pay) to dilligently study the present form of your local government, and look for a better solution to localize governmental authority. The commission also attended several seminars to get professional advice and to compare our problems with towns of comparable size. The result is the attached document.

The local Study Commission, after much research, felt that minor but important changes should be made. The end result was, after deliberation, the writing of a new Charter.

This new Charter primarily gives the local administration self-government powers. I hope you will study the attached document as it will be yours, if passed, to live by.

I recommend that you register and vote in favor of the New Charter.

Yours truly,



HAROLD VOIGHT  
Member Bridger Study Commission

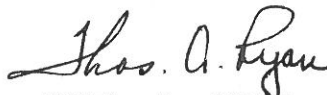
Dear Voter:

I truly believe that the following new form of Government for Bridger, Montana is ideal for the following reasons:

- A. The term of Mayor would be shortened to two years instead of the four years at present.
- B. There would be two townspeople appointed by the Mayor to assist each of the four council members, mainly to make suggestions in problem areas.
- C. The elimination of Wards in Bridger so that all registered voters would vote in one central location. This would save the town funds as they would not need as many people working at the poles on election day.
- D. In a community the size of Bridger there is no need for a partisan ballot, therefore we have decided upon non-partisan elections.

For the above reasons, I urge the passage of the new Charter form of government for Bridger, Montana.

Sincerely,



THOS. A. RYAN

Member Bridger Study Commission

Dear Voter:

After having spent several hours studying the town government of the Town of Bridger, it is my opinion that the government of this town is basically good and that no drastic changes should be made. Accordingly, I am very much in support of the tentative draft that the Bridger Study Commission has proposed, because of the fact that it does not change the form of government but makes a few minor changes which should benefit all of the people.

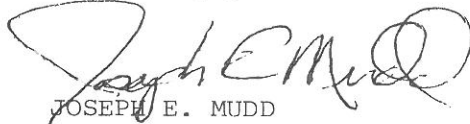
The only changes that are really made in our tentative draft are:

1. Reduction of the Mayor's term to two years. I believe that this is good because the Mayor is the subject of any complaint that a party has about town government and I believe that it is difficult to keep good Mayors in office if they know that they will have to take the type of abuse they often get for a period of four years. A good Mayor can surely be re-elected for an additional 2 years if he desires.
2. We have eliminated wards. It is my feeling that wards serve no useful purpose in a small town like Bridger.
3. We have created mandatory advisory councils of eight people from the town of Bridger who would serve in advisory capacity to the Town Council. I feel that this is one way to keep people involved in town government and to take some of the responsibility for controversial decisions off of the back of the councilman. I am totally in support of that proposed measure.
4. Finally we have adopted self-government powers. I find it hard to imagine more self-government powers can be detrimental to a town except with taxation powers. We, therefore, have limited the power of taxation to provide that the town government shall have self-government powers with limited taxation.

I believe that these changes are very beneficial to a town government like Bridger and ought to be passed.

The only other matter available for change is a matter which must be voted by the people. The legislature required that the town voters vote for partisan or non-partisan politics. We now have non-partisan and I would certainly hope that the voters in the town of Bridger vote to retain non-partisan politics. I strongly support adoption of the Charter. I am opposed to partisan politics in Bridger.

Very truly yours,



JOSEPH E. MUDD  
Member Bridger Study Commission

## COMPARISONS

PRESENT FORM	PROPOSED CHARTER FORM
One Mayor	One Mayor
Mayor-four year term	Mayor-two year term
Four councilmen	SAME
Councilmen Four year overlapping term	SAME
Town Clerk appointed by Mayor	SAME
Treasurer appointed by Mayor	SAME
Department Heads Appointed by Mayor	SAME
Two Wards	One Ward
No Community Participation	Mandatory Advisory Council of eight members
Taxation Currently set by State	SAME
Power of Council set by State law	Power of Council determined locally-self-government powers
Taxation limited by State law	SAME

ALL OTHER ASPECTS ARE THE SAME.

CHARTER PLAN OF GOVERNMENT

FOR

THE TOWN OF BRIDGER

FINAL DRAFT  
OF  
CERTIFICATE  
ESTABLISHING A CHARTER PLAN OF GOVERNMENT  
FOR  
THE TOWN OF BRIDGER

The government of the Town of Bridger shall be organized and shall operate under the provisions of the following charter:

(A) MAYOR-COUNCIL

1. The Mayor-Council shall consist of an elected council and one elected mayor who are elected at large.
2. The mayor shall:
  - (a) enforce laws, ordinances, and resolutions;
  - (b) perform duties required of him by law, ordinance, or resolution;
  - (c) administer affairs of the local government;
  - (d) carry out policies established by the council;
  - (e) recommend measures to the council;
  - (f) report to the council on the affairs and financial condition of the local government;
  - (g) execute bonds, notes, contracts, and written obligations of the commission, subject to the approval of the council;
  - (h) report to the council as the council may require;
  - (i) attend council meetings and may take part in discussions;
  - (j) execute the budget adopted by the council;
  - (k) 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.
3. The town government shall operate in the following manner:
  - (a) The mayor may appoint one or more administrative assistants to assist in the supervision and operation of the local government. Such administrative assistants shall be answerable solely to the mayor.

- (b) The mayor may appoint, with the consent of a majority of the council, all department heads. The mayor may remove department heads and may appoint and remove all other department employees.
- (c) The mayor may veto ordinance and resolutions subject to override by a two-thirds vote of the council.
- (d) The mayor may prepare the budget in consultation with the council and department heads.
- (e) The mayor may exercise control and supervision of all departments and boards to the degree authorized by ordinance of the council.
- (f) A treasurer shall be appointed.
- (g) The council shall be elected at large
- (h) Local government elections shall be conducted on a partisan or non-partisan basis as decided by vote.
- (i) The council shall have a chairman or president who shall be elected by the members of the council from their own number for a term established by ordinance.
- (j) The presiding officer of the council shall decide all tie votes of the council, but shall have no other vote. The chairman of the council shall preside if the mayor is absent

Two Council Members shall be elected every two years.

- (l) The size of the council shall be four (4) members, to be elected at large.
  - (m) The term of office of mayor shall be two (2) years. The term of office of council shall be four (4) years.
4. The mayor, subject to the approval of the council shall appoint an Advisory Council as follows:
- (a) Two citizens of the town, shall be appointed, without pay, to advise the council in each of the following areas:
    1. Sewer, water, and garbage;
    2. Parks and recreation;
    3. Streets and alleys;
    4. Budget and finance;
  - (b) The citizen advisory council shall meet semiannually or more, if required.
  - (c) Each area of advisory council shall be headed by one council member.



- (d) The council may change specific areas of advisory council authority, if necessary, by ordinance.
  - (e) The advisory council shall have no vote, and shall advise the council of public feelings in each area.
  - (f) The term of appointment shall be subject to mayor's discretion.
5. The Town Government shall have self-government powers subject to the following limitation in taxation:

The town may not levy any tax in excess of that allowed at any time for cities or towns of the class of the Town of Bridger by the legislature or laws of the State of Montana, unless said levy is approved by a majority of the voters in the Town voting upon the issue. Forty percent (40%) of the regular voters must vote before any additional levy can be approved.

We, the Study Commissioners of the Town of Bridger, do hereby certify that this is the official final draft of the Certificate establishing a Charter plan of government for the Town of Bridger, approved by the Study Commissioners of the Town of Bridger.

In testimony whereof, we set our hands.

Done at Bridger this 17<sup>th</sup> day of June, 1976.

ATTEST:

Norma Berry  
Town Clerk  
Town of Bridger

Denna C. Sanford  
Secretary for the Bridger  
Study Commission

Harold Wright  
Joseph E. Mudd  
Mrs. A. Ryan

CERTIFICATE

ESTABLISHING THE OFFICIAL BALLOT  
FOR THE NOVEMBER 2, 1976 SPECIAL ELECTION

INSTRUCTION TO VOTERS: Place an "X" in the boxes which express your preferences. The full text of the proposed form of government and of the existing form of government are available at your polling place.

OFFICIAL BALLOT  
BALLOT ON ALTERNATIVE FORM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

If the proposed form of government fails to receive a majority of the votes cast on the question, the sub-option also fails. If the proposed form is adopted, the sub-option requires only a plurality of votes cast on the sub-option for adoption.

PLEASE VOTE ON BOTH ISSUES

1.

Vote for one

- For alternate form  
 For the existing form of government

2.

Vote for one

Sub-option to be included in the new form of government, if it is adopted. Local government elections:

- Shall be conducted on a partisan basis  
 Shall be conducted on a non-partisan basis.

This ballot on the alternate form of local government shall be printed as a separate ballot.

We, the Study Commissioners of the Town of Bridger, do hereby certify that this is the official ballot approved by the Study Commissioners of The Town of Bridger.

In testimony whereof, we set our hands.

Done at Bridger this 4th day of MARCH, 1976.

ATTEST:

Norma Perry  
Town Clerk  
Town of Bridger  
Nonna E. Sanford  
Secretary for the Bridger,  
Study Commission

Joseph E. Mudd  
Harold Wright  
Thomas G. Ryan  
Town of Bridger Study Commissioners

CERTIFICATE

ESTABLISHING THE DATE OF THE SPECIAL  
ELECTION AT WHICH THE ALTERNATIVE FORM  
OF GOVERNMENT SHALL BE PRESENTED TO  
TO THE ELECTORS OF THE TOWN OF BRIDGER

The alternative form of government proposed by the  
Local Government Study Commission shall be submitted to  
the voters of the Town of Bridger at a special election to  
be held with the general election on November 2, 1976.

We, the Study Commissioners of  
the Town of Bridger do hereby  
certify that this is the date  
of the special election approved  
by the Study Commissioners of  
the Town of Bridger.

In testimony whereof, we set our  
hands.

Done at Bridger this 4th  
day of MARCH, 1976.

ATTEST:

Norma Berry  
Town Clerk  
Town of Bridger

Donna E. Sanford  
Secretary for the Bridger  
Study Commission

Joseph E. Muelers  
Harold Knight  
Thos. A. Ryan  
Town of Bridger Study Commissioners

EXISTING PLAN OF GOVERNMENT

FOR

THE TOWN OF BRIDGER

CERTIFICATE  
ESTABLISHING THE EXISTING PLAN OF GOVERNMENT  
FOR  
THE TOWN OF BRIDGER

If retained by the voters, the government of the town of Bridger, shall be organized under the following provisions of Section 47A-3-203: Revised Codes of Montana, 1947. Commission-executive form.

- (1)
- (2)
- (3) (a) (ii)
- (3) (b) (iii)
- (3) (c) (ii)
- (3) (d) (ii)
- (3) (e) (ii)
- (3) (f) (ii)
- (3) (g) (ii)
- (3) (h) (i)
- (3) (j) (iii)
- (3) (k) (ii)
- (3) (l) (ii)
- (3) (m)
- (4) (a)

47A-3-203. Commission executive form.

(1) The commission executive form (which may be called the "council-executive," the "council-mayor," or the commission-mayor" form) consists of an elected commission (which may be referred to as the "council") and one elected executive (who may be referred to as the "mayor") who is elected at large.

- (2) The executive shall:
  - (a) enforce laws, ordinances, and resolutions;
  - (b) perform duties required of him by law, ordinance, or resolution;
  - (c) administer affairs of the local government;
  - (d) carry out policies established by the commission;
  - (e) recommend measures to the commission;
  - (f) report to the commission on the affairs and financial condition of the local government;

- (g) execute bonds, notes, contracts, and written obligations of the commission, subject to the approval of the commission;
- (h) report to the commission as the commission may require;
- (i) attend commission meetings and may take part in discussions;
- (j) execute the budget adopted by the commission;
- (k) appoint, with the consent of the commission, all members of boards; except, the executive may appoint without the consent of the commission temporary advisory committees established by the executive.

(3) The plan of government shall further define the structural characteristics of the form by including the items listed below:

- (a) The executive may appoint one or more administrative assistants to assist in the supervision and operation of the local government. Such administrative assistants shall be answerable solely to the executive.
- (b) The executive may appoint, with the consent of a majority of the commission, all department heads. The executive may remove department heads and may appoint and remove all other department employees.
- (c) The executive may veto ordinances and resolutions subject to override by a two-thirds vote of the commission.
- (d) The executive may prepare the budget in consultation with the commission and department heads.
- (e) The executive may exercise control and supervision of all departments and boards to the degree authorized by ordinance of the commission.
- (f) A financial officer (who may be called the "treasurer") shall be appointed.
- (g) The commission shall be elected by districts in which candidates must reside and which are apportioned by population.
- (h) Local government elections shall be conducted on a partisan basis as provided in this title.
- (i) The commission shall have a chairman who shall be elected by the members of the commission from their own number for a term established by ordinance.

(j) The presiding officer of the commission shall be the executive who shall decide all tie votes of the commission, but shall have no other vote. The chairman of the commission shall preside if the executive is absent.

(k) Commission members shall be elected for overlapping terms of office.

(l) The size of the commission shall be 4 members, 2 to be elected from each of 2 districts, and community councils to advise commissioners may be authorized by ordinance.

(m) The term of office of elected officials shall be four (4) years.

(4) The plan of government shall authorize general government powers.

We, the Study Commissioners of The Town of Bridger do hereby certify that this is the existing form of Government as established in Section 47A-3-203: Revised Codes of Montana, 1947.

In testimony whereof, we set our hands.

Done at Bridger, Montana, this 17<sup>th</sup> day of June, 1976.

Joseph E. Mudd  
Harold Wright  
Shos. A. Ryan