

## **County Government Review Underway**

by Jennifer McCully

Every 10 years, Residents of counties and municipalities across Montana are given the opportunity to hold a Local Government Review. In the primary election last June, Lincoln County voters opted for just that, and five Study Commissioners were subsequently elected to office. On behalf of the Lincoln County Government Study Commission, I want to inform you of our progress and ask for your participation to make the Review a successful one.

But first, a little background. The reviews are unique to Montana and enshrined in the State Constitution. Their purpose is to evaluate the local government's Form (i.e. organizational structure), Powers (i.e. what it can and cannot do), and Plan (terms of office, partisan vs. non partisan, etc...) to ensure it is responsive to community needs. In the event of shortcomings, a Study Commission can produce a ballot measure with recommended changes for voters to approve.

The County Study Commission has met four times since the November election. Members have so far appointed officers, created and approved governing bylaws, established a working budget and drafted a study timeline. Most important of these accomplishments is the timeline, because it provides a window to collect feedback from the county at large and share any findings in return.

In light of this, the Study Commission is seeking your input concerning how our county government is performing. What's working? What's not? What changes to Form, Powers, and Plan can be made to make it better? In the coming weeks, we will be holding a number of public hearings and distributing surveys across the county to gather your ideas. Feedback is critical to an effective review and your input can help facilitate a more responsive county government.

Meeting locations, agendas, minutes and contact information for the Study Commission can be found on the Lincoln County web page and posted at the courthouse. We meet on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, and the public is always welcome to attend either in person or remotely. We look forward to hearing from you!

*Jennifer McCully is the Lincoln County Study Commission Chair*