



Montana's Sunrise City

115 2nd Street S.E., Sidney, Montana - 406-433-2809

City Council Regular Meeting 7/6/26

July 06, 2026 6:30 PM

City Council meetings are held in a hybrid format, allowing both in-person and Zoom participation. Councilmembers will attend in person unless remote attendance is necessary. Consistent with the Montana Constitution's Right of Participation and Right to Know, the City is committed to open and accessible meetings. Public participation via Zoom or phone is available using the information below:

Zoom Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/7130805898?pwd=tJpmtgBdGbsjBXS0EAU50ANb4u7h3l.1&omn=83249261038>

Call: 1-346-248-7799 **Meeting ID:** 713 080 5898 **Passcode:** 4332809

1. Call to Order

Mayor Norby called the Regular Meeting of the Sidney City Council to order at 6:30pm and welcomed those in attendance.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was stated by all present.

3. Aldermen Present

Christensen, Buxbaum, Larson, Kauffman, Rasmussen, and DiFonzo.

4. Correction or Approval of Minutes

a. June 15th, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion was made to approve the June 15, 2026, Regular City Council Meeting Minutes.

Motion made by Alderwoman Christensen, Seconded by Alderwoman Rasmussen.

Voting Yea: Alderman Kauffman, Alderwoman Rasmussen, Alderman DiFonzo, Alderwoman Buxbaum, Alderwoman Christensen, Alderwoman Larson

5. Public Comment/ Visitors

Your opportunity for the public to address the Council on items not included on the agenda, no action will be taken during this time.

Visitors: Ellen Israel (SBA), Alyssa Shockman (Flag Football), Jordan Mayer (Interstate Engineering), Amira Huntsberry (SBA)

Representatives from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) addressed the Council regarding disaster assistance available following the December 17–18, 2025 disaster declaration. They explained that businesses, nonprofit organizations, and faith-based organizations that experienced financial impacts from the disaster may be eligible for Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL). These low-interest loans are intended to assist with working capital expenses such as payroll, rent, utilities, and other regular operating costs.

The representatives noted that businesses may qualify for loans up to \$2 million with repayment terms of up to 30 years. They also highlighted that no payments or interest accrue during the first year and that there is no prepayment penalty. Businesses have until March 1 to apply for assistance. Mayor Norby thanked the representatives for visiting Sidney and providing information to local businesses.

6. Public Hearing

None.

7. Public Hearing

None.

8. Mayor Norby

Mayor Norby welcomed everyone to the first Council meeting of July and hoped everyone had enjoyed a safe Fourth of July weekend. He commented on the successful community events over the holiday, particularly the veterans' memorial pillar dedication, which was well attended and well received. He noted that the memorial has become a valuable addition to the community and thanked everyone involved in making the project a success.

9. City Council Comments

Alderman Kauffman complimented the Fourth of July program and speakers, noting the excellent attendance and community participation.

Alderwoman Rasmussen commented on the completed veterans' memorial pillars and complimented everyone involved with the project.

Alderman DiFonzo expressed his appreciation to all individuals and organizations involved in constructing the veterans' memorial, stating the project has greatly enhanced the atmosphere of the park.

10. Committee Meeting Work

Budget and Finance – Chairman Christensen – DiFonzo, Buxbaum, Skinner

Public Works – Chairman DiFonzo – Larson, Christensen, Harris

Public Safety – Chairman Buxbaum – Rasmussen, Kauffman, Creek

a. Budget and Finance: Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy

Alderwoman Christensen reported the committee reviewed the City's revised Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy and recommended adoption.

Motion was made to approve the Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy.

Motion made by Alderwoman Christensen, Seconded by Alderwoman Buxbaum.

Voting Yea: Alderman Kauffman, Alderwoman Rasmussen, Alderman DiFonzo, Alderwoman Buxbaum, Alderwoman Christensen, Alderwoman Larson

b. Public Safety Committee: Update and Report

Alderwoman Buxbaum reported that the committee reviewed preliminary Public Safety budget requests and continued discussion regarding proposed ordinances addressing soliciting and alcohol permits in City parks. Both ordinances remain under development and will return to Council for future consideration.

c. Public Works Committee: Update and Report

Alderman DiFonzo reported that the Public Works Committee held an extensive meeting focused primarily on the preliminary FY2026-2027 Public Works budget. The committee reviewed anticipated operating expenses, capital projects, and long-term planning initiatives.

Following discussion, the committee reached a preliminary consensus that it would not recommend water, sewer, or garbage rate increases as part of the upcoming budget. The committee also reviewed the proposed creation of a dedicated Stormwater Utility Fund to better separate stormwater expenses from sanitary sewer operations and improve long-term financial planning.

Additional discussion included upcoming infrastructure projects, including water system improvements, street maintenance, park improvements, equipment replacement, and Capital Improvement Plan projects. Staff also presented the City's new street assessment and GIS pavement management system, which will improve project prioritization and long-range planning.

The committee also discussed the Chamber sewer connection request, which was tabled until additional information is received, and continued discussion regarding mosquito control services. No recommendation was made to include mosquito control funding in the upcoming budget.

No additional committee recommendations required Council action.

11. Chief Administrative Officer Update/ Report

a. Local Government Review Final Report

Interim Chief Administrative Officer Chamberlin reported that the Local Government Review Board met to discuss revisions to its tentative report. The Board voted to remove the proposed change to the City's ward representation from the ballot. The only remaining ballot question will ask voters whether the City should adopt Self-Governing Powers. The Board also included a recommendation encouraging future consideration of an at-large voting system while maintaining residency requirements within wards should Self-Governing Powers be adopted. The Final Report is expected to be completed later in the week, with final approval anticipated at the Board's July 27 meeting before being submitted for the November General Election.

Chamberlin also reported that staff recently completed a comprehensive review of the City's insured property and equipment with MMIA. As a result of updated property valuations, annual property insurance premiums increased from approximately \$74,000 to \$130,000. Liability insurance premiums increased by only approximately \$600.

With Council's approval of the Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy, the City's updated Employee Handbook is now complete and will be distributed to employees for acknowledgment. An update was also provided regarding the newly created Public Works Operations Manager position. The position has been posted internally through July 15. Qualified internal applicants will be considered before the position is advertised externally. She also clarified after some public confusion that the Cemetery's are not managed by the City of Sidney, rather a board that is under the appointment of the County and therefore any rule enforcement or changes are not the result of City action.

12. Department Head Comments/ Reports

Providing an update on behalf of Chief Kraft, Chief Administrative Officer Chamberlin reported that Fourth of July activities concluded with no major incidents. One vandalism incident involving graffiti on a curb near the VFW was reported and has since been addressed by Public Works. Council members also discussed recent reports of vehicle break-ins circulating on social media, and Chamberlin stated she would share those concerns with Chief Kraft.

Interim Clerk/Treasurer Lange reported that staff continues working through fiscal year-end claims processing and revenue reconciliation. She noted that the large claims list presented for approval reflects year-end financial activity. She also reported that operations at the City pool have been busy and are continuing to run smoothly.

Public Works Director Hintz reported that pile driving for the new water tower foundation began that morning and is expected to continue throughout the week. He also reported that paving on Warren Avenue has been completed and that graffiti removal is scheduled. Staff will continue providing public updates regarding construction schedules and any changes to anticipated work hours.

13. Unfinished Business

None.

14. New Business

a. Flag Football-Sponsorship Signs at Flag Football

Alyssa Shockman of Sidney Flag Football requested permission to display temporary sponsor banners on the chain-link fencing at Moose Park during the football season. The banners would recognize local business sponsors and would be attached using zip ties and removed at the conclusion of the season.

Motion was made to approve the hanging of temporary sponsorship banners.

Motion made by Alderwoman Rasmussen, Seconded by Alderman DiFonzo.

Voting Yea: Alderman Kauffman, Alderwoman Rasmussen, Alderman DiFonzo, Alderwoman Buxbaum, Alderwoman Christensen, Alderwoman Larson

b. Interstate Engineering Amendment 1 to TO 10-Increase \$25,000

Council considered Amendment No. 1 to Task Order No. 10 with Interstate Engineering, increasing the authorized amount to \$25,000 to continue operational support services for the Water Department. PWD Hintz reported that the assistance has provided significant benefit during recent months.

Motion was made to approve the Amendment.

Motion made by Alderman DiFonzo, Seconded by Alderwoman Rasmussen.

Voting Yea: Alderman Kauffman, Alderwoman Rasmussen, Alderman DiFonzo, Alderwoman Buxbaum, Alderwoman Christensen, Alderwoman Larson

c. Interstate Engineering Amendment 1 to TO 9-Setting fee's and schedule for Water PER

Council considered approval of the fee schedule and project schedule associated with Task Order No. 9 for the Water Preliminary Engineering Report following receipt of grant funding.

Jordan Mayer from Interstate Engineering also discussed the anticipated pile driving schedule and efforts to keep residents informed through City communication channels as construction progresses.

Motion was made to approve the fee schedule.

Motion made by Alderwoman Rasmussen, Seconded by Alderwoman Christensen.

Voting Yea: Alderman Kauffman, Alderwoman Rasmussen, Alderman DiFonzo, Alderwoman Buxbaum, Alderwoman Christensen, Alderwoman Larson

15. Consent Agenda

Interim Clerk/Treasurer Lange presented the Consent Agenda, including claims totaling \$1,031,466.54, County Building Permits, City Building Permits, and interim claims for BNB Builders and the United States Postal Service. She further explained that the unusually large claims amount primarily reflected scheduled annual debt payments.

Motion was made to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Motion made by Alderman Kauffman, Seconded by Alderwoman Rasmussen.

Voting Yea: Alderman Kauffman, Alderwoman Rasmussen, Alderman DiFonzo, Alderwoman Buxbaum, Alderwoman Christensen, Alderwoman Larson

a. Claims to be approved: \$1,031,466.54

Intermediary Claims: B&B Builders for \$34,758.00 and USPS for \$1,145.20

b. Building Permits to be approved:

County: RC2026-44, RC2026-45, RC2026-46, RC2026-47

City: 2026-63, 2026-64, 2026-65, 2027-1

16. Adjournment

The City Council Meeting was adjourned at 6:55pm.

Meeting Guidelines

- We ask that all participants be respectful and courteous.
- Please direct comments to the Council as a whole.
- When speaking, please state your name for the record.
- Be mindful of others by keeping comments concise and avoiding repetition.
- The presiding officer may guide speaking time to help the meeting run smoothly.
- Disruptive behavior may result in removal from the meeting.