



## **Montana's Sunrise City**

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

**Public Works Committee Meeting 5/20/26**

**May 20, 2026 5:30 PM**

Committee 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=85394053551>

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

### **1. Call to Order**

Alderman DiFonzo called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

### **2. Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was stated by all present.

### **3. Roll Call**

Committee Members Present:

City Officials/ Staff Present:

DiFonzo, Christensen, Larson, Harris

Mayor Norby, PWD Hintz, Superintendent Meissel, Interim CAO Chamberlin

### **4. Correction or Approval of Minutes**

#### **a. April 15th, 2026 Public Works Committee Meeting Minutes**

Motion was made and seconded to approve the April 15, 2026 Public Works Committee Meeting Minutes.

Motion made by Christensen, Seconded by Larson.

Voting Yea: Christensen, DiFonzo, Larson

### **5. Public Comment/ Visitors**

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

Visitors Present: Shannon Wicks, Ray Johnson, Megan Garza

## **6. Monthly Reports**

### **a. April 2026 Public Works Report**

Public Works Director Hintz referenced the April Public Works Report and invited questions from the Committee. Discussion occurred regarding the increase in garbage tonnage compared to prior years. PWD Hintz noted garbage tonnage had increased by approximately 100 tons over the prior year and stated the department continues to see substantial increases in overall garbage volume throughout the community.

Additional discussion occurred regarding pothole patching throughout the City. Committee members and attendees discussed concerns regarding temporary winter patch repairs and questioned why some repairs appear incomplete or temporary. Staff explained the City utilizes winter patch material and bag mix during colder months as a temporary repair measure until more permanent spray patching and asphalt repairs can be completed during warmer weather. Staff also discussed the cost and shelf-life limitations of winter patch materials and the different materials are better used for different sized holes.

Discussion also occurred regarding parking visibility and safety concerns at the intersection of Fifth Street and Main Street due to vehicles parking too close to the corner and obstructing sight lines. Staff discussed existing parking restrictions, curb painting practices, and limitations associated with enforcement and parking layouts downtown. Committee members discussed concerns involving angle parking, street sweeping, snow removal, and visibility around intersections.

Committee members and staff further discussed the role of the Parking Commission and the process for requesting additional no parking zones or curb painting. Staff indicated a Parking Commission meeting would be scheduled to review the request and additional parking-related concerns.

## **7. New Business**

## **8. Unfinished Business**

### **a. Sidney Chamber-Sewer Line**

Representatives of the Sidney Chamber of Commerce and neighboring businesses continued discussion regarding recurring sewer line issues affecting the Chamber building and surrounding properties near Lincoln Avenue and Central Avenue.

Representatives reported they recently received an estimate of approximately \$20,000 for sewer line replacement costs, not including possible sidewalk replacement, electrical work, plumbing work, or lift station upgrades. Additional concerns were discussed regarding repeated maintenance expenses and the age and design of the existing sewer infrastructure.

PWD Hintz explained the area's sewer system relies heavily on private force mains and lift stations due to elevation and grade limitations in the area. Staff discussed the shallow depth of existing sewer mains and explained extending the City sewer main farther south toward the Chamber would create grade and freezing concerns because the existing line would become too shallow.

Lengthy discussion followed regarding how the current sewer system functions in the area, including private lift stations servicing nearby businesses and apartment complexes, the location of manholes and force mains, and the relationship between private sewer infrastructure and the City's public sewer system. Staff explained several nearby businesses share interconnected private sewer systems that ultimately discharge into the City's sewer main.

Representatives from neighboring businesses discussed previous sewer backups, grease buildup issues, jetting operations performed by the City, and ongoing maintenance concerns. Staff noted reduced water flow and low usage within some vacant or lightly-used buildings may contribute to buildup and recurring sewer issues.

The Chamber asked whether the City would consider allowing installation of a private holding tank or similar alternative system to reduce reliance on the existing force main system. Staff explained traditional septic systems would not be feasible due to drain field requirements and property limitations, but discussion continued regarding the possibility of a holding tank or cistern-type system.

Interim CAO Chamberlin stated City code currently prohibits septic systems where sewer service is available, but legal review would be conducted to determine whether variances or alternative options may be available. Staff agreed to further review the issue and continue working with affected property owners and contractors regarding possible solutions.

Additional discussion occurred regarding the possibility of future roadway or infrastructure improvements near Lincoln Avenue and Highway 16 that could potentially assist with long-term sewer improvements in the area. PWD Hintz indicated coordination with MDT on major roadway reconstruction projects would likely be difficult and long-term in nature.

Staff agreed to continue discussions with contractors and affected property owners and report back to the Committee at the June meeting.

#### b. Garbage Code Update

PWD Hintz and Superintendent Meissel presented a proposed garbage code update intended to better define and categorize commercial garbage rates throughout the City. Staff explained the current code lacks clear definitions for many business types, creating inconsistency and confusion when assigning garbage classifications and rates.

Discussion focused on establishing clearer classifications for businesses such as fuel stations, convenience stores, bars, garages, apartment complexes, hotels, storage facilities, and retail businesses. Staff explained the proposed draft attempts to more accurately align garbage assessments with the amount and frequency of garbage generated by different business types.

Committee members discussed challenges associated with shared alley dumpsters, apartment complexes, multiple rollout containers, and varying pickup frequencies throughout the City. Additional discussion occurred regarding whether additional multipliers should be used for businesses requiring multiple containers or multiple weekly pickups.

Staff explained garbage collection operations have become increasingly expensive due to maintenance costs, staffing demands, equipment wear, and increased garbage volume. Public Works staff noted the rear-load garbage truck has recently experienced significant maintenance expenses and operational downtime.

Committee consensus supported simplifying the proposed structure as much as practical while still allowing flexibility to reevaluate rates and classifications in the future if needed.

Motion was made and seconded to recommend approval of the proposed garbage fee schedule and business classification updates as presented.

Motion made by DiFonzo, Seconded by Larson.  
Voting Yea: Christensen, DiFonzo, Larson

#### c. Water Code Update

Interim CAO Chamberlin requested the Water Code Update be tabled due to current staffing priorities within the Water Department and because many meter-related operational changes have already been implemented for the current year. She explained staff intends to revisit the code updates in the spring.

Motion was made and seconded to table the Water Code Update.

Motion made by Christensen, Seconded by Larson.  
Voting Yea: Christensen, DiFonzo, Larson

### 9. Comments and Questions from the Committee

Mr. Harris requested an update regarding the previously discussed street condition assessment. PWD Hintz reported the City completed a block-by-block street assessment utilizing Paserware ratings to categorize street conditions throughout the community. He explained streets were rated on a numerical scale based on pavement condition and stated several lower-rated streets are already scheduled for rehabilitation work this construction season.

Additional discussion occurred regarding whether the City may be eligible for reimbursement from MDT for sweeping and maintenance performed along State highways within City limits. PWD Hintz stated he has contacted MDT and is continuing to research potential agreements or reimbursement opportunities utilized by other Montana communities.

Committee members also requested an update regarding grease interceptor and enzyme discussions previously brought before the Committee. Interim CAO Chamberlin explained staff has been gathering business information and intends to continue outreach and enforcement discussions with affected businesses as staffing availability allows.

Discussion also occurred regarding the City's prior comprehensive review of tax roll assessments to ensure properties were appropriately being assessed for services such as garbage, street lighting, sweeping, and street maintenance. Staff confirmed a full property-by-property review was completed previously and resulted in corrections to numerous improperly assessed or omitted properties.

## 10. Adjournment

at 6:42p.m.

### 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.