



Montana's Sunrise City

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

Public Works Committee Meeting 6/30/26

June 30, 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=89822629962>

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

1. Call to Order

Chairperson DiFonzo called the meeting to order.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

All present stated the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Roll Call

Committee Members Present:

City Officials/ Staff Present:

Committee Members Present: DiFonzo, Christensen, Larson

City Officials/ Staff Present: Mayor Norby, PWD Hintz, Solid Waste Superintendent Meissel, Interim Clerk/Treasurer Lange, Interim CAO Chamberlin

4. Correction or Approval of Minutes

- a. May 20th, 2026 Public Works Committee Meeting Minutes

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.

None.

6. Monthly Reports

PWD Hintz briefly updated the Committee on several ongoing Public Works projects and seasonal activities. Discussion included continued progress on summer maintenance projects, scheduling of upcoming construction activities, and coordination of department personnel to complete planned work throughout the community. Members acknowledged the significant workload currently being managed by Public Works staff and expressed appreciation for the department's continued efforts to complete projects while maintaining daily operations.

7. New Business

a. Mosquito Control

The Committee continued discussion regarding mosquito and vector control services following concerns previously expressed by members of the public. Interim CAO Chamberlin explained staff had researched available treatment options and associated costs and determined implementation of a comprehensive mosquito control program during the current season would not be practical due to budget limitations, staffing considerations, and the timing of the season. Discussion occurred regarding the effectiveness of various treatment methods, including larviciding versus adult mosquito spraying, and the ongoing need to evaluate long-term options should the Committee wish to pursue a community-wide program in the future.

Committee members discussed the importance of balancing public health concerns with fiscal responsibility and acknowledged additional information would be beneficial before making any long-term policy recommendations.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed the matter should be revisited after additional research has been completed. Motion was made to table this until the August meeting.

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

b. FY 2026-2027 Proposed Budget Expenditures

Interim CAO Chamberlin opened discussion on the proposed FY2026–2027 Public Works budget by explaining the City's annual budget review process. She noted the Public Works Committee is responsible for reviewing Public Works operating budgets and making recommendations to the Budget and Finance Committee. She emphasized the proposed budget remains preliminary and is subject to change as year-end expenditures are finalized, taxable valuations are received, and additional information becomes available. The Committee's recommendation would provide guidance to the Budget and Finance Committee prior to its comprehensive review of the City's overall budget.

PWD Hintz reviewed the proposed Water Fund budget and outlined several anticipated capital and maintenance projects for the upcoming fiscal year. Discussion included continued improvements to the Water Department facilities, replacement of aging infrastructure, well site improvements, security enhancements, and ongoing equipment replacement planning. Planned projects included improvements to Well No. 11, replacement of perimeter fencing to meet

current security standards, continued ArcGIS implementation, electrical system inspections, treatment plant improvements, and continued replacement of water meters as needed. Equipment planning also included completion of the crane truck project, continued planning for a shared water flush truck, and replacement of aging equipment utilized by multiple Public Works divisions.

Interim CAO Chamberlin provided an overview of the Water Fund's financial position, noting the budget maintains current operational service levels while continuing long-term capital planning. Discussion focused on balancing infrastructure needs with maintaining healthy cash reserves for future improvements.

The Committee also discussed the Phase IV Water System Improvements project. Staff explained funding for the replacement of the downtown water tower is already included through the existing project budget and does not require duplicate budgeting within the Water Fund. As a result, the proposed budget removes that project from the department's capital request while continuing to account for the project through its existing funding source.

Following review of projected revenues, operating expenditures, debt obligations, and planned capital improvements, staff advised **no water rate increase is recommended for FY2026–2027**. Members agreed the Water Fund remains financially stable and capable of supporting anticipated operations and planned improvements without increasing utility rates this fiscal year.

PWD Hintz reviewed the proposed Sewer Fund budget, highlighting anticipated maintenance projects, equipment needs, and continued investment in the City's wastewater collection and treatment systems. Discussion included equipment replacement planning, facility maintenance, and continued preparation for future infrastructure improvements.

Interim CAO Chamberlin explained one of the most significant proposed budget changes involves the future establishment of a separate Storm Sewer Utility Fund. She explained that historically many stormwater-related expenditures have been accounted for within the Sewer Fund, making it difficult to accurately evaluate the financial performance of the sanitary sewer system independently from stormwater infrastructure. Separating the two functions into individual funds will provide greater financial transparency, improve long-term capital planning, and better identify future funding needs associated with stormwater infrastructure.

Committee members discussed the importance of understanding actual stormwater costs before considering future funding mechanisms. Staff emphasized that creation of the Storm Sewer Utility Fund does not include implementation of a stormwater utility fee at this time, but rather establishes the accounting structure necessary for future evaluation and planning.

Based upon current revenues, anticipated expenditures, and available cash reserves, staff recommended no sewer rate increase for FY2026–2027, explaining that maintaining current rates while completing the Storm Sewer Utility transition will provide better information for future financial planning and potential rate evaluations.

PWD Hintz reviewed the proposed Streets budget, outlining anticipated maintenance activities, equipment replacement, and ongoing street improvement projects planned for the upcoming

fiscal year. Discussion focused on balancing routine maintenance with long-term pavement preservation while continuing implementation of the City's Capital Improvement Plan.

Interim CAO Chamberlin reviewed the Street Maintenance Fund and discussed whether an increase to the existing street maintenance assessment should be considered. She explained that although long-term funding needs remain significant, staff does **not** recommend increasing the assessment for FY2026–2027. She noted the City currently maintains healthy cash balances within the Street Maintenance Fund and Gas Tax Fund, several large projects remain underway, and additional planning tools—including the City's pavement assessment program and GIS implementation—should be completed before recommending future rate adjustments.

Discussion also occurred regarding recent legislative changes affecting gas tax distributions. Interim CAO Chamberlin explained previous grant funding has now been incorporated into regular gas tax distributions, resulting in substantially higher available cash balances. Combined with delays in completing several planned projects during the current fiscal year, staff believes sufficient funding exists to continue planned street improvements without increasing assessments at this time.

Committee members also discussed the importance of continued operational planning. Interim CAO Chamberlin reported the City intends to internally post the newly created Public Works Operations Manager/Foreman position, explaining the position is expected to improve day-to-day project planning, scheduling, and coordination throughout the department. Members agreed the additional planning capacity should assist in developing more accurate future budgets and more efficiently prioritizing infrastructure projects.

PWD Hintz reviewed the proposed Bike Path Fund budget and provided updates on planned trail improvements and grant-funded projects. Discussion focused on the continued development of the City's pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, including preparation for future phases of the Holly Street trail extension. Staff noted the budget reflects anticipated engineering, grant administration, and project planning associated with the City's previously awarded grant funding while maintaining adequate reserves for required matching funds and future maintenance obligations. Committee members expressed support for continuing to leverage grant opportunities to expand the City's trail system while minimizing impacts to local taxpayers.

The Committee reviewed the proposed Curb and Gutter Fund budget. PWD Hintz explained expenditures continue to be prioritized based upon street reconstruction projects and infrastructure needs throughout the community. Discussion occurred regarding the importance of coordinating curb and gutter replacement with planned utility improvements and future street reconstruction projects in order to maximize available funding and minimize duplicate construction costs. Staff noted the proposed budget continues current funding levels while allowing flexibility to address priority projects as they arise, with the anticipation of pursuing funding mechanisms for the city and property owners for the much needed replacement of curb and gutter costs.

PWD Hintz reviewed the proposed Solid Waste Fund budget, outlining anticipated operational expenditures, equipment replacement planning, and landfill operations for the upcoming fiscal

year. Discussion centered on maintaining reliable collection services while planning for the replacement of aging equipment.

Interim CAO Chamberlin explained the budget continues funding toward long-term equipment replacement, including future refuse truck purchases, recognizing the significant cost of replacement vehicles and the importance of maintaining adequate reserves to avoid substantial borrowing in future years. Staff noted that equipment replacement planning remains a priority as vehicle costs continue to increase.

Committee members discussed recent operational improvements within the Solid Waste Division and recognized the department's continued efforts to improve efficiency while maintaining service levels. Staff also reviewed projected revenues and expenditures, noting the Solid Waste Fund remains financially stable and no rate changes are proposed for FY2026-2027.

PWD Hintz reviewed the Sweeping Fund budget and discussed ongoing street sweeping operations. Staff explained the budget primarily supports seasonal maintenance activities, equipment operation, and routine replacement of consumable materials necessary to maintain city streets. Members discussed the importance of continuing preventative maintenance activities that improve roadway appearance while extending pavement life through regular debris removal. The Committee supported maintaining current funding levels for the upcoming fiscal year.

The proposed Snow Removal budget was reviewed. PWD Hintz explained annual expenditures continue to fluctuate based upon winter weather conditions, making reserve funding important for years with above-average snowfall. Staff noted the proposed budget maintains adequate operating capacity while continuing to provide for equipment maintenance and replacement planning. Committee members discussed the unpredictable nature of snow removal operations and agreed maintaining sufficient reserves is essential to ensuring the City can respond effectively during severe winter events.

PWD Hintz and Interim CAO Chamberlin reviewed the Swimming Pool budget, discussing anticipated maintenance projects, operational expenses, and future capital needs. Staff explained the City's Capital Improvement Plan Fund continues to save for long-term facility improvements necessary to maintain safe and reliable operations while extending the useful life of existing infrastructure.

Discussion occurred regarding future maintenance priorities and the importance of continuing incremental improvements rather than delaying projects until major repairs become necessary. Committee members agreed continued investment in preventative maintenance remains the most cost-effective approach for the facility.

The Committee reviewed the proposed Street Lighting Fund budget. Staff discussed anticipated operating expenditures, utility costs, and maintenance associated with the City's street lighting system. Discussion also included future lighting needs associated with new residential development, including Sunrise Village, and continued coordination with planned infrastructure improvements throughout the community.

Committee members also discussed emergency vehicle signal preemption improvements and the long-term benefits of incorporating additional traffic safety enhancements into future transportation projects as opportunities arise.

PWD Hintz presented the proposed Parks budget, highlighting anticipated maintenance activities, equipment replacement, and capital improvement projects throughout the City's park system. Discussion focused on balancing routine maintenance needs with continued investment in long-term park improvements.

Interim CAO Chamberlin reviewed several significant projects anticipated during the upcoming fiscal year. Discussion included the budgeting for a Parks Master Plan, irrigation improvements at Veterans Park, planning associated with the future Water Tower Park relocation, playground improvements, and ongoing maintenance of existing recreational facilities. Staff explained these projects continue the City's long-term strategy of improving park infrastructure while maximizing grant opportunities and minimizing impacts to the General Fund.

Committee members also discussed improvements at the baseball complex, including additional safety netting and other facility enhancements requested by user groups. Members agreed these improvements would enhance public safety while improving the overall experience for participants and spectators.

Discussion further centered on maintaining adequate Capital Improvement Plan funding for future park projects. Interim CAO Chamberlin explained that while several planned expenditures will temporarily reduce available balances, continued annual funding remains essential to maintaining the City's park infrastructure and avoiding larger deferred maintenance costs in future years.

Following review of all Public Works operating funds, committee members expressed support for the overall budget philosophy presented by staff. Members noted the proposed budget continues emphasizing long-term financial planning, responsible equipment replacement, infrastructure investment, and maintaining current service levels while avoiding unnecessary rate increases.

Motion was made and seconded to recommend approval of the proposed FY2026-2027 Public Works budget to the Budget and Finance Committee. Following brief discussion regarding the Committee's support for the proposed capital planning approach and long-term financial strategy, the motion carried unanimously.

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

c. Streets Assessment

PWD Hintz presented the results of the City's recently completed street assessment and Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping project. He explained the assessment provides the City with a comprehensive inventory of roadway conditions throughout the community using the Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) system. The assessment establishes a baseline for future maintenance planning by assigning roadway condition ratings and identifying areas where preventative maintenance or reconstruction will provide the greatest long-term benefit.

Discussion occurred regarding the value of incorporating the assessment into the City's Capital Improvement Plan and annual budget development process. PWD Hintz explained the information will allow staff to make more data-driven decisions when prioritizing street maintenance projects and allocating available funding. Rather than relying solely on visual observations or resident requests, future recommendations can be supported by objective roadway condition data.

Committee members discussed how the GIS platform will improve project planning by allowing staff to map pavement conditions alongside underground utilities, previous infrastructure improvements, and planned capital projects. Members noted this will assist in coordinating future utility replacements with street reconstruction projects while minimizing unnecessary duplication of work.

Additional discussion focused on the City's long-term philosophy of preserving streets before they require complete reconstruction. Staff explained that applying preventative maintenance at the appropriate time significantly extends pavement life and reduces long-term replacement costs. Members agreed the assessment provides an important planning tool that will assist future Councils in making informed infrastructure investment decisions while maximizing the effectiveness of available funding.

The Committee expressed appreciation to PWD Hintz and Public Works staff for completing the assessment and noted the information will serve as a valuable resource for future budgeting and capital planning efforts.

8. Unfinished Business

a. Chamber Sewer (Table Until August Meeting)

Interim CAO Chamberlin provided an update regarding the Chamber of Commerce sewer connection request previously referred to the Committee. She explained the applicant requested additional time to obtain information from Olson Plumbing regarding the proposed connection and associated project costs before the Committee considered the request further.

Committee members agreed the additional information would allow staff to provide a more complete recommendation and ensure any future decision is based upon all available information.

Following discussion, motion was made and seconded to table consideration of the Chamber of Commerce sewer connection request until the August Public Works Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

9. Comments and Questions from the Committee

10. Adjournment

at 7:16pm.

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.