



City of Sidney, MT
Public Works Committee Meeting 3-18-26
March 18, 2026 5:30 PM
115 2nd Street SE | Sidney, MT 59270

Committee meetings are open to the public attending in person. If the public does not wish to participate in person, they are also invited to participate via a Zoom meeting or via phone:

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

1. **Call to Order**

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was stated by all present.

3. **Committee Members Present**

DiFonzo, Larson, Christensen and Harris

Others Present:

Mayor Norby, PWD Hintz, Clerk/Treasurer Chamberlin, Superintendent Meissel

4. **Correction or Approval of Minutes**

a. January 28th, 2026 Public Works Committee Meeting Minutes

Motion was made to approve.

Motion made by Larson, Seconded by Christensen.

Voting Yea: Christensen, DiFonzo, Larson

b. February 18th, 2026 Public Works Committee Meeting Minutes

Motion was made to approve.

Motion made by Christensen, Seconded by Larson.

Voting Yea: Christensen, DiFonzo, Larson

5. **Visitors**

Ivy Cross

6. Monthly Reports

a. EnterTextHere

PWD Hintz provided the February monthly report, mentioning a quiet month with a focus on shop remodeling and sanding due to ice and snow. He noted an increase in garbage quantities, surpassing 2014 levels, and attributes it to various sources like apartment complexes, grocery stores, and restaurants. Mr. Harris inquired about the increase in garbage and whether it is due to specific businesses or general trends and Superintendent Meissel stated major contributors to the increased garbage, including apartment complexes, grocery stores, and busy restaurants. Other discussion items included the pickup of garbage and debris in the alleys by City staff due to high winds and littering and the rear loader garbage truck being back in service, it being in its 4th year of an 8 year life span.

7. New Business

a. Street Maintenance Assessments

PWD Hintz stated Superintendent Haverkamp is working on a street assessment and is creating a map that will show different colors for the grades of the streets which will help with long term planning and will be put in the GIS System.

Clerk/Treasurer Chamberlin provided a financial summary of the last 5 years for the streets and the rates, per the conversation at the previous meeting, noting to shift all expenses to the street maintenance fund would increase the rate about \$38/year to \$213.88. She quantified this with some of the CIP costs should be shifted to the gas tax portion, but that will depend on the specifics as the gas tax can only pay for 10% of equipment costs, supplies and construction as long as it not paying a contractor.

Mr. Harris asked about the process of filling potholes this time of year, and PWD Hintz explains the use of temporary fillers that can be used for under the spray patch and the challenges of maintaining streets to citizen satisfaction. Mr. Harris and Alderman DiFonzo agreed with need for a comprehensive street assessment and the potential for increasing property tax rates to cover maintenance costs.

Clerk/Treasurer Chamberlin stated the rate assessment document will be utilized in the budget process and no action is required.

b. Sewer Code Discussion-dumping of grease by commercial properties

Alderman DiFonzo raised concerns about businesses dumping grease into the sewer, leading to increased costs for the city in enzyme usage that have to be given to the businesses. Clerk/Treasurer Chamberlin stated the current plan to address the issue is to compile a list of all commercial properties with kitchens for PWD Hintz and Superintendent Jurgens to make direct contact to teach them about the necessity of not only having a grease trap but also the routine cleaning and if not properly managed could result in them incur them the costs of the enzymes, shipping and staff time and they will follow up with a letter re-explaining everything. PWD Hintz stated if the grease is not treated it can cause a backup even in the main

and is something they need to address and get records of who has grease traps and who doesn't. Mr. Harris and Alderman DiFonzo agreed and stated if the situation is not rectified, updating the code for fines will be looked into.

c. Water Code Discussion-Lawn Meters and Replacement Meters

Alderwoman Larson stated after the Public Works tours they had questions as to the procedures for meters and charges and PWD Hintz explained that there are routine and habitual properties with issues like frozen lines and meters that take a lot of city staff time to respond and troubleshoot and there are no charges for these except if they need a new meter, then they have to pay for the replacement. Clerk/Treasurer Chamberlin stated there is also seasonal water meter accounts where the water department install the meters in the spring and remove them in the fall. Currently the procedure for these is the property owners call when they are ready for either install or removal and the only charge is the \$30 connection fee, which is the same fee that other seasonal accounts get charged where the meter is not removed. Clerk/Treasurer Chamberlin stated to streamline the process a designated timeframe should be established for the install and removal and a fee for staff time should be added and the code should be amended. She stated she would like the opportunity for staff to review the water code and return with a recommendation for an update that reflects these issues.

8. Unfinished Business

a. Public Works CIP Account Goals and Policies

Clerk/Treasurer presented the Public Works CIP account goals and policies and highlighted the changes made. She stated she would like to eventually add a projects section to the accounts to show what falls in the goals, but planning such as the Parks Master Plan, need to be done first. She also asked that this policy be approved as a work in progress policy, meaning it will be updated even more frequently than the policy calls for, which is yearly.

Motion was made to recommend approval of the Public Works portion of the Capital Reserve Funding Policy as a work in progress policy.

Motion made by Christensen, Seconded by Larson.

Voting Yea: Christensen, DiFonzo, Larson

b. Garbage Assessment Code Review/Update

PWD Hintz presented a draft of what he and Superintendent Meissel have drafted for the update to the garbage rate codes, stating they will be continuing to work on it. Superintendent Meissel stated the current code is difficult to understand because of the large number of categories, so they might be looking at reducing those. Clerk/Treasurer Chamberlin asked if multipliers would be added to the code so that properties appropriately pay for the service they receive and he stated they would. Mr. Harris asked if the garbage increase was due to issues with garbage services in the county, if there are ways to have them pay, such as penalties. Alderman DiFonzo stated there is, but they have to be caught in the act, which is extremely difficult to do. Mr. Harris suggested having garbage drop locations for county residents and billing Richland County for it.

Clerk/Treasurer Chamberlin stated logistically the code update must be approved and in place by August 31st for the upcoming tax season, so the latest the changes can be discussed is at the May Public Safety Committee Meeting for recommendation and first reading of the Ordinance at the first meeting in June.

9. Comments and Questions from the Committee

Mr. Harris inquired into the Downtown Master Plan and coordination with property owners, incentivizing them to follow the plan through financial grants for improvements such as facade or sidewalk grants. Clerk/Treasurer Chamberlin stated the Master Plan will hopefully help the city receive grants for doing these things, and agreed with the benefits of incentivizing property owners to invest in downtown improvements and the potential for long-term financial stability.

10. Adjournment

at 6:44pm.