



Local Government Review Board

Agenda

January 08, 2026 at 5:30 PM

1. Call to Order

2. New Business

a. Approval of Minutes: October 9th, 2025

b. Meeting Bi-Monthly (January, March, May, July, September, November - Plus April Training) still First Thursday of Month

c. Survey Approval: questions and run through March 5th meeting

d. Public Outreach-Kiwanis Club 2-5-26 and Lions Club 2-9-26

e. Review Recommendation Topics that Require Voter Approval:

Council Composition:

Council size / membership — how many council members there are

Representation structure — how those members are elected (by ward, at-large, or hybrid)

Ward apportionment — how many members represent each ward or district

Electoral system — e.g., ward-based, at-large, or mixed at-large/ward

Elected at Large — e.g., ward-based representation, at-large voting

Election System Parameters:

Term Length — how long each elected term lasts (e.g., four years)

Term Limits — whether members are limited in how many terms they may serve

Staggered Terms — whether only some seats are up for election at a time

## Partisan vs. Nonpartisan Elections

*Partisan*: candidates run with party labels

*Nonpartisan*: party labels do not appear on the ballot

Elect instead of Appoint Officials

Adopt Self-Government Powers

Adopt a Charter

## f. Review Recommendation Topics that DON'T Require Voter Approval:

**Administrative & Organizational Structure:**

Hire a City Manager or Administrator

Create or Amend Administrative Ordinances

Formalize Interlocal Agreements

Conduct Efficiency or Operational Studies

**Governance Policies & Operating Procedures:**

Update Council Procedures and Rules

Adopt or Update Personnel Policies

**Planning, Transparency & Public Engagement:**

Implement Financial Transparency Measures

Create Long-Term Strategic Plan

Establish Advisory Committees or Citizen Panels

Strengthen Citizen Communication Tools

## 3. Old Business

a. Call for Public Hearing to Hear Public Comment on the Change of Form of Government:  
Mayor/Council vs City Manager/Council-March 5th, 2026 at 5:30pm

## 4. Questions/ Comments from Public

## 5. Questions/ Comments from Board

6. Adjournment

Next Meeting: Tentatively March 5th, 2026 at 5:30pm



Local Government Review Board 10-9-25

Minutes

October 09, 2025 at 5:30 PM

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Sergent called the regular meeting of the Local Government Review Board to order.

Present was:

LGRB: Sergent, Whiteman

Others: James Falcon (Sidney Herald), Gary Schoepp, Karen Schoepp, Dayton Cherney, Richard Hobbs, Jared Troutdt, Duanne Mitchell, Joe Kauffman, Violet Tharp,

**2. New Business**

**a. July 10, 2025 Minutes**

Motion was made to approve.

Motion made by Whiteman, Seconded by Sergent.

Voting Yea: Sergent, Whiteman

**3. Old Business**

**a. Forms of Government Discussion: Mayor/Council versus City Manager/Council**

Clerk/Treasurer Chamberlin presented a slideshow on understanding the forms of government.

Key items discussed included adding a city manager would not change things, concerns about wage and increase in budget (Lewistown paying \$109,000/year), favoring the strong-mayor form of government, total increase to budget for additional position could cost \$200,000 split among 8 departments, the council would still approve the budget as they do now if there was a manager form.

Constituents also discussed the merit of the review being passed and the call for change, with some feeling because it was voted in people want change and others disagreeing and the process could be enough.

It was further discussed that this is not the final discussion on this topic, nor is this the only topic that will be reviewed and the public will be involved in the process.

#### **b. Engaging the Public**

Clerk/Treasurer Chamberlin presented the LGRB with a proposed Public Engagement Plan (PEP). The PEP included an outline for the remainder of the review process, by quarter, showing opportunities for public engagement outside of the planned meetings. Such engagement included surveys, pop-ups at different events, speaking at civic group meetings, a scenario night, educational materials, and additional less formal meetings with the LGRB.

#### **4. Questions/ Comments from Public**

Clerk/Treasurer Chamberlin read a letter from Alderwoman Godfrey into the record, asking for the review board to consider a hybrid of the two forms of government, keeping the actual form the Mayor-Council but recommending the City Council they create a position and hire a City Manager.

It was indicated that the public was not aware that adding a city manager in addition to mayor was a possibility and the different ways that having a manager could look for the City of Sidney was explained, from changing the form, changing the powers and form or just adding the position with no formal change.

#### **5. Questions/ Comments from Board**

Nothing.

#### **6. Adjournment**

Next meeting January 8th, 2026.

Adjourned at 6:38pm.

## 1. Your Contact Info

Please share your email if you'd like updates.

**Answer:** Comment box

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## 2. Do you reside in the City of Sidney?

**Answer:** Yes / No

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## 3. Awareness

Were you aware that Sidney is in the process of reviewing its City Government and assessing what changes could be made?

**Answer:** Yes / No

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## 4. What Matters Most to You

In your opinion, on a scale of 1-5, how is the current Government doing on the following:

**Answer:** scale for each

- Efficiency
- Accountability
- Representation
- Transparency
- Fairness
- Responsiveness
- Long-term planning
- Stability
- Collaboration

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## 5. Understanding Roles and Decision-Making in Sidney's City Government

Sidney uses a Mayor–Council system. The Mayor manages daily city operations, while the City Council passes ordinances, adopts budgets, and sets policy through public decision-making processes.

How well do you feel you understand both the roles of the Mayor and City Council and how city decisions are made?

**Answer:** Sliding scale

*Not at all → Slightly → Moderately → Well → Very well*

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## 6. How Council Members Are Elected

Sidney currently uses a ward-based City Council system. The city is divided into three geographic wards, and each ward elects two City Council members. Only voters who live in a ward vote for the council members representing that ward.

Some cities instead elect all City Council members at-large, meaning all voters citywide vote for every council seat, regardless of where a candidate lives within the city.

This question asks for your opinion on how Sidney City Council members should be elected in the future. Please consider whether you believe council members should continue to represent specific areas of the city (wards) or represent the city as a whole through citywide elections.

**Answer:**

- By ward (from areas of town)
- At large (anyone in the city can vote for all)

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## 7. Oversight

Do you think Sidney's current system gives enough checks and balances between the Mayor, City Council, and city staff?

**Answer:** Yes / No

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## 8. What Should Be Reviewed

The Review Board will look at different parts of city government. Please rank what's most important to you for them to study:

**Answer (Rank these):**

- Whether Sidney should keep or change the Mayor–Council system
- Whether to give Sidney self-government powers (more local control)
- Whether to adopt a city “charter” (like a local constitution)
- How City Council seats are structured (by ward or at-large, number of members)
- How elections are run (party affiliation, term limits, etc.)
- How the city is managed (for example, hiring a City Manager, creating new departments)

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## 9. Staying Involved

If changes to Sidney's government are proposed, how would you prefer to get updates and share your opinion?

**Answer:**

- Newspaper
- Social media
- City website
- TextMyGov
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_