



City of Sidney, MT
Water and Sewer Committee Meeting 11-16-23
November 16, 2023 8:30 AM
115 2nd Street SE | Sidney, MT 59270

The City Council meetings are open to the public attending in person, with masks encouraged when social distancing cannot be accomplished. If the public does not wish to participate in person, they are also invited to participate via a Zoom meeting. You can participate via phone:

Meeting ID: 713 080 5898 Passcode: 4332809

Call: 1-346-248-7799

1. New Business

a. 200,000 Gallon Water Tank Lining Project

[b. BDS Proposal](#)

Billing Document Specialist (BSD)

Currently the city uses BDS for online credit card payments for water/sewer accounts. The customer has a choice of one time payment or setting up a date of their choice for automatic monthly payments. BDS charges the customer 3.5% processing fee.

That website is outdated and an upgrade needs to be scheduled. BDS let us know of other services they offer that could be valuable options for the city.

First, the new website upgrade is much more user friendly for the customer AND has new features for the city to assist the customer with any website questions, resets, changes, etc.

Second, they offer a FREE service of IVR telephone payment services. That is a dedicated telephone number for a touch activated customer service. Customers can call to check balances or make credit card payments. BDS charges 3.5% processing fee PLUS \$1.50 transaction fee to the customer.

Third, they offer an Over the Counter card reader and payment system. This would replace the city's current machine and contract with Merchant Services. The system would be able to process all over the counter payments, including non water/sewer payments, such as dog licenses, pool passes, and building permits.

Merchant Services charge 1.45% (city paid) and that will be the same charge BDS would have. The card reader is \$260 value and included for free. BDS will charge a \$25 monthly maintenance fee. Currently Merchant Services does not charge a monthly maintenance fee.

BDS also provides a web based page to post payments. For example, a building permit fee with a called in credit card payment. The payment will be coded to building permits on the dropdown list and separated out on the monthly billing statement for easy reconciliation.

Currently BDS is processing around \$30,000/monthly in online payments for the city. The customer pays 3.5% processing fee, roughly \$1050/month.

The city is currently processing around \$25,500/monthly in over the counter and telephone water/sewer payments through Merchant Services. The city pays the processing fee of 1.45%, roughly \$375/month.

The city also takes non water/sewer credit card payments for dog licenses, building permits, swim passes, solicitor licenses, etc. Those are also through Merchant Services and the city pays the processing fee of 1.45%. \$1000-6000/monthly charges with fees of \$14.50-87.00.

A few decisions need to be made on how to proceed.

1. The city keeps Merchant Services for over the counter and telephone payments and continues to pay the service fee of 1.45%.
The city updates the BDS online customer website and continues to have the customer pay the 3.5% fee.

BDS does not have the option of charging fees to some transactions (online) but the city paying the other portion of fees (over the counter and telephone). BDS can only charge all fees to either the customer or all fees to the city.

2. The city switches from Merchant Services to BDS for over the counter and telephone payments and all transaction fees are charged to the customer for online, over the counter, and telephone payments. This is a 3.5% charge to the customer.

Estimated monthly \$30,000 online with \$1050/monthly fee to the customer.

Estimated monthly \$25,500 over the counter and telephone with \$ 892.50/monthly fee to the customer.

3. The city switches from Merchant Services to BDS for over the counter and telephone payments and all transaction fees are charge to the city for online, over the counter, and telephone payments. This is a 1.45% charge to the city.

Estimated monthly \$30,000 online with \$435/monthly fee to the city.

Estimated monthly \$25,500 over the counter and telephone with \$369.75/monthly fee to the city.