



City of Sidney, MT
City Council Regular Meeting 2-3-2025
February 03, 2025 6:30 PM
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. Call to Order

Mayor Norby called the regular meeting of the Sidney City Council to order at 6:30pm.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was stated by all present.

3. Aldermen Present

Godfrey, Koffler, Rasmussen, DiFonzo, Christensen (Via Zoom). Absent: Stevenson

4. January 21st, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

a. City Council Regular Meeting 1-21-2025

Motion was made to approve.

Motion made by Alderwoman Rasmussen, Seconded by Alderman Koffler.

Voting Yea: Alderman Koffler, Alderwoman Rasmussen, Alderman DiFonzo, Alderwoman Godfrey, Alderwoman Christensen

b. Street and Alley Committee Meeting 1-15-25

Motion was made to approve.

Motion made by Alderman DiFonzo, Seconded by Alderwoman Rasmussen.

Voting Yea: Alderman Koffler, Alderwoman Rasmussen, Alderman DiFonzo, Alderwoman Godfrey,

Alderwoman Christensen

5. **Visitors**

a. **Visitors:**

Jamie Larson, Jacky Gonzalez, Jordan Mayer (Interstate Engineering), Joe Kauffman, Kim Kauffman, Jody Wells (Roundup), and Sidney High School Students: Lilah Entz, Piper Cooper, Myah Hughes.

Via Zoom: Jake Holley (Sidney Herald) and Jared Troutd

6. **Public Hearing**

Nothing.

7. **Mayor Norby**

a. **Update:**

None.

8. **Committee Meeting Work**

Nothing.

9. **Alderman Requests and Committee Reports**

Budget and Finance – Chairman Christensen – DiFonzo, Koffler. **Police and Fire**– Chairman DiFonzo – Rasmussen, Stevenson. **Parks and Recreation** – Chairman Christensen – Stevenson, Rasmussen. **Water and Sewer** – Chairman Godfrey – Christensen, DiFonzo. **Street and Alley** – Chairman Rasmussen – DiFonzo, Koffler. **Sanitation**– Chairman Stevenson – Koffler, Godfrey. **City Buildings & Street Lighting** – Chairman Koffler – Godfrey, Christensen

Alderwoman Rasmussen announced the REDC Social is upcoming and more information will be provided as the date approaches.

10. **Unfinished Business**

Nothing.

11. **New Business**

a. **Ward #1 Questions and Interview: Jared Troutd**

The City Council asked the following questions of Mr. Troutd:

1. Please provide general information about you and your background.

Jared Troudt stated he was raised in Sidney and graduated from Sidney High School. He has lived in Williston and Casper for short amounts of time. He is currently employed at OneOK as a measurement technician. He also serves on the LGBTQ committee and Northern Community Investments committee through OneOk, is the current Treasurer for the Richland County Food Bank, and member of the Sidney Area Chamber of Commerce Board.

2. Have you ever had municipal, board and/or public service experience?

Mr. Troudt answered yes, he does have experience as stated above as well as being the past vice president of the North Dakota student association.

3. Why do you feel you are qualified to be appointed to the Ward 1 position?

Mr. Troudt stated that he would listen to the community and fight for the communities wants and needs. He is employed in **by** a great community in OneOk and feels supported in his endeavors.

4. Do you feel you can complete the remaining 3 years of this term, including running for the official elected office in the November 2025 Municipal Election?

Mr. Troudt answered yes, he has no plans to move from Sidney. If there were any future scheduling conflicts with work and council or committee meetings he would participate remotely via Zoom.

5. Are you aware of any inherent conflicts of interest from your personal, professional or volunteering responsibilities?

Mr. Troudt stated no conflicts come to mind.

6. What do you feel one of the City of Sidney's long term goals should be?

Mr. Troudt stated that he sees long term goals of increasing businesses and community support as well as creating more events for citizens to attend. He would like to see more community support and involvement to improve the community feel.

Alderman DiFonzo asked the follow-up question of if there is any group that Mr. Troudt is involved in receives funding form the City of Sidney. Mr. Troudt answered yes, the Richland County Food Bank and Sidney Area Chamber of Commerce receive donations from the City of Sidney.

b. Ward #1 Questions and Interview: Jacqueline Gonzalez

The City Council asked the following questions of Ms. Gonzales:

1. Please provide general information about you and your background.

Jacqueline Gonzalez responded that she has resided in Sidney for the past 10 years. She is currently attending Williston State College online to obtain her accounting and business management degree as well as working as a CSR at Stockman Bank. She previously worked at the

Boys and Girls Club. Ms. Gonzalez stated she sees this potential council position as what she can do for the city not what the city can do for her.

2. Have you ever had municipal, board and/or public service experience?

Ms. Gonzalez stated she has no previous experience but does volunteer at events around town and has attended many city council meetings.

3. Why do you feel you are qualified to be appointed to the Ward 1 position?

Ms. Gonzalez stated she has attended a lot of city council meetings and has watched the council members manage their rolls and looks up to them as being the best.

4. Do you feel you can complete the remaining 3 years of this term, including running for the official elected office in the November 2025 Municipal Election?

Ms. Gonzalez responded yes, she attended one semester of college in Willison and has moved back to Sidney where she will continue her classes online. She shared that nothing compares to living in Sidney and the Sidney community is where she wants to serve.

5. Are you aware of any inherent conflicts of interest from your personal, professional or volunteering responsibilities?

Ms. Gonzalez stated that she doesn't foresee any conflicts and if they were to come up the council would be her priority.

6. What do you feel one of the City of Sidney's long term goals should be?

Ms. Gonzalez stated that she sees the long term goal of the city is to continue working with other organizations like the county and Chamber of Commerce for community events and continuing that effort.

Alderman DiFonzo asked the further question to Ms. Gonzalez on if she would miss the college experience. She responded that one semester in Williston was enough of an experience and continuing her classes online is a good fit for her.

Alderman DiFonzo asked if Ms. Gonzalez is still affiliated with the Boys and Girls Club. Ms. Gonzalez answered yes, she continues to volunteer there and is applying for Montana Youth of the Year.

c. Ward #1 Questions and Interview: Jamie Larson

The City Council asked the following questions of Ms. Larson:

1. Please provide general information about you and your background.

Jamie Larson stated she is a class of 1999 Sidney High School graduate. She left Sidney for four or five years to receive her associates degree in Billings. She stated she moved back to Sidney to raise her daughter in a small community and school system. When she moved back to Sidney she was working in the insurance industry, making the change to Fair Manager for Richland County for 16 years. In 2014 she began moonlighting at Seitz Insurance on nights and weekends. She decided to make insurance her full time career in 2021 and became a licensed agent and account manager certified counselor for Seitz Insurance.

2. Have you ever had municipal, board and/or public service experience?

Ms. Larson replied yes, 16 years as the Richland County Fair Manager.

3. Why do you feel you are qualified to be appointed to the Ward 1 position?

Mr. Larson said she thought about her "why" and why she moved back to Sidney many years ago. She stated that she looks at the kids in Sidney and what we can provide to get them to come back. She stated the Chamber of Commerce grant to revitalize downtown and the 22nd Avenue bike/walking path project are major draws to the community. She said projects like those, giving back to the community, and working with the city council motivate her to want this council position.

4. Do you feel you can complete the remaining 3 years of this term, including running for the official elected office in the November 2025 Municipal Election?

Ms. Larson responded yes, she feels she can complete the term of office.

5. Are you aware of any inherent conflicts of interest from your personal, professional or volunteering responsibilities?

Ms. Larson responded no, there are no inherent conflicts.

6. What do you feel one of the City of Sidney's long term goals should be?

Ms. Larson stated the long term goals should be revitalizing downtown, the 22nd Avenue path extension, and park improvements. She stated she would like to see added retail businesses to attract the youth to come back and support the community as well as create more job opportunities.

Alderman DiFonzo asked Ms. Larson if the boards she currently serves, Sidney Area Chamber of Commerce and Boys and Girls Club, would cause any conflict if elected to the city council. Ms. Larson responded no, she can see no conflict and can separate her rolls when there is a need to.

d. Ward #1 Questions and Interview: Joe Kauffman

The City Council asked the following questions of Mr. Kauffman:

1. Please provide general information about you and your background.

Joe Kauffman stated he and his family moved to Sidney in 2010 from the Flathead Valley. When they moved to Sidney the intention was to stay for a few years but they settled into the community.

2. Have you ever had municipal, board and/or public service experience?

Mr. Kauffman stated he is the Secretary/Treasurer for the Montana Association of Registered Land Surveyors for the past 20 years and served as president for one one-year term in 2006.

3. Why do you feel you are qualified to be appointed to the Ward 1 position?

Mr. Kauffman stated that his profession of land surveyor has made him knowledgeable in state statues and codes, which could be an asset for reading and understanding city codes and laws.

4. Do you feel you can complete the remaining 3 years of this term, including running for the official elected office in the November 2025 Municipal Election?

Mr. Kauffman responded yes, he feels he can complete the term.

5. Are you aware of any inherent conflicts of interest from your personal, professional or volunteering responsibilities?

Mr. Kauffman stated as a licensed surveyor, when he submits application for city review for plat amendments, he will recuse himself to avoid conflict.

6. What do you feel one of the City of Sidney's long term goals should be?

Mr. Kauffman stated that public safety, infrastructure, sidewalks, roads, and walkways are long term goals to focus on as they age and the demand on them continues.

12. City Planner

a. Report on Annexation

City Planner Sanderson presented an annexation summary for council review. City Planner Sanderson will be available for any further questions at a committee meeting if the Council would like.

13. City Attorney

a. Update:

City Attorney Kalil (via Zoom) stated city court is going well. There are issues with public defenders on having enough staff but they are hopeful this will be addressed at the legislature this year.

14. Chief of Police

a. Update:

Chief Kraft stated he traveled to Helena to attend the legislation reception and visit with legislators about upcoming law enforcement bills. He stated it was a productive trip.

15. Public Works Director

a. Phoenix Capital Oil Lease (tabled 1-21-25)

Alderwoman Rasmussen made a motion to untable the Phoenix Capital Oil Lease, seconded by Alderman Koffler, with no further discussion or questions and will all present voting aye, the motion passes.

PWD Hintz presented the counter offer letter from Phoenix Energy to lease the mineral interest. With the help of Gordon Torgerson the royalty was negotiated from 17% to 18.75%. The term was unchanged, staying at 5 year primary term. The option was unchanged, staying at 3 year option to extend at 100% original bonus. Mr. Torgerson is satisfied with the fair offer and recommended accepting if the City would like to pursue leasing this land.

Motion was made to approve.

Motion made by Alderman DiFonzo, Seconded by Alderwoman Christensen.

Voting Yea: Alderman Koffler, Alderwoman Rasmussen, Alderman DiFonzo, Alderwoman Godfrey, Alderwoman Christensen

b. 2024 Road Improvement Project Pay Application #3 for \$486,531.75 (city cost of Richland County Project)

PWD Hintz presented the 2024 road improvement project breakdown of cost. Bid price is \$544,395.35 with a total price due to Richland County of \$486,531.75. PWD Hintz stated the project was chip sealing the overlaid streets from the prior year. He stated that not all of the work originally bid was done and is satisfied with the streets done.

Motion was made to approve paying Richland County \$486,531.75.

Motion made by Alderwoman Rasmussen, Seconded by Alderman Koffler.

Voting Yea: Alderman Koffler, Alderwoman Rasmussen, Alderman DiFonzo, Alderwoman Godfrey, Alderwoman Christensen

c. RRGL Planning Grant for Water Per Awarded for \$40,000.00

PWD Hintz stated the City of Sidney was awarded the Montana RRGL Planning Grant of \$40,000 for the Sidney Water System Improvements PER. Interstate Engineering applied for the grant at the city's request.

d. Notice of Award for Schedules 1 and 2 for North Park Elevated Water Tower Replacement

PWD Hintz presented the closing bids for Phase 1 of the Water Tower Replacement. PWD Hintz stated that bids came in higher than he had hoped. BEK Consulting bid \$1,732,517.00. The bid was

awarded to Western Municipal with a bid of \$1,351,524.00. Western Municipal did previous sewer project on Holly and is a good contractor.

Jordan Mayer (Interstate Engineering) stated DEQ and SRF stated it is not uncommon to have increased bids and that the bid isn't as high as other communities have seen. He stated that the total project cost per foot is satisfactory.

Jordan Mayer stated that recommendation of Interstate Engineering and City Staff is to approve the bid to Western Municipal, subject to funding agency approval and concurrence of ARPA funding. Motion was made to approve Western Municipal bid.

Motion made by Alderman Koffler, Seconded by Alderman DiFonzo.

Voting Yea: Alderman Koffler, Alderwoman Rasmussen, Alderman DiFonzo, Alderwoman Godfrey, Alderwoman Christensen

e. Update:

PWD Hintz stated that the city public works is preparing for the snow predicted to fall in the next two or three days. One of the snow blades is down at this time but a backup plan is in place. PWD Hintz stated that staff have been busy with snow and ice removal and cleaning/organizing the shop and workspace in the down time.

Alderman DiFonzo asked if there were route or areas that are a priority when doing snow/ice removal. PWD Hintz responded that the truck route, intersections, storm drain system so when snow melts it has a place to drain. Alderman DiFonzo asked PWD Hintz to look at school areas. PWD Hintz said he would have them cleared.

16. Fire Marshal/Building Inspector

a. Zoning Code Update for Prohibited Fencing Material

Fire Marshal/Building Inspector Rasmussen presented an update for prohibited fencing material for zoning code 11.18.28.

Clerk/Treasurer Chamberlin updated the council on the question previously inquired by Alderman DiFonzo on harsher zoning regulations on propane tanks. Clerk/Treasurer Chamberlin spoke with City Planner Sanderson whose research shows that the regulation on propane tanks is set by the international fire codes, not at a state level for land use or zoning, and it would be difficult to show an extreme safety reason or hardship with a local code that is stricter than the international code of 50 foot set back.

Motion was made to sent to Street and Alley Committee.

17. City Clerk/Treasurer

a. Denning, Downey & Associates, P.C. Auditor Contract for Federal Audit

Clerk/Treasurer Chamberlin presented the letter from Kalil Law Firm noticing the federal audit to be conducted for fiscal year ending June 30,2024.

Motion was made to approve the Federal Audit.

Motion made by Alderman DiFonzo, Seconded by Alderwoman Rasmussen.

Voting Yea: Alderman Koffler, Alderwoman Rasmussen, Alderman DiFonzo, Alderwoman Godfrey, Alderwoman Christensen

b. Update

Clerk/Treasurer Chamberlin stated that President Trump attempted to place a freeze on all federal grants and loans. The city has close to \$15 million in federal grants and loans and was concerned on how the freeze could impact upcoming projects. The Supreme Court has paused President Trump from freezing the federal grants and since then Trump has rescinded. Clerk/Treasure Chamberlin stated that everything is well and moving forward at this time.

18. Consent Agenda

Motion was made to approve the claims and building permits.

Motion made by Alderwoman Rasmussen, Seconded by Alderman Koffler.

Voting Yea: Alderman Koffler, Alderwoman Rasmussen, Alderman DiFonzo, Alderwoman Godfrey, Alderwoman Christensen

a. Claims to be approved: \$153,509.97

Intermediary Claims to be approved (included in total): \$96,955.42

#43533	USPS	\$ 1,057.92
#43536	INTERSTATE ENGINEERING	\$ 95,897.50

b. Building Permits to be approved: 2025-045

19. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:13.