



April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026

RE: Interim City Administrator Position

Fellow Council Members,

Creating the City Administrator position has been a long process, involving input from numerous sources, including the Local Government Review process, the Review Board, public survey feedback, employee satisfaction survey results, and the recommendation and support from Mayor Norby, who sees the day-to-day operational need for this position. In the Local Review process it was decided that a formal change of government to a Manager-Council form of government is not what is best for our community, but there is a need for professional management, day to day oversight and for human resources. With seeing this need, the City took on the task of creating a position under the current form of government to bridge this gap.

In understanding the intricacies of creating a new position, it is also important to recognize that, to get it right, we need to live in and work within the position for a period of time. This is why we are recommending this be an interim position for one year, with a working job description that is subject to change as the role evolves.

The Budget and Finance Committee wanted to follow a fair and legally sound hiring process for the interim position, while also recognizing its temporary nature. MMIA, the City's employment practices insurance carrier, provided guidance supporting an internal posting to ensure a competitive process.

Keeping this recommendation in mind, the Budget and Finance Committee and Mayor Norby chose to move forward with a hiring process for both the interim and future permanent City Administrator positions. The interim position was posted internally for qualified candidates, with the understanding that if no qualified applicants are received, it would be opened externally. A qualified candidate applied and was interviewed on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026 and to ensure clarity and accountability, detailed terms were discussed and recommended be established for the interim position, including:

- A one-year term, with the option to extend if needed
- Quarterly performance reviews
- Required tracking of work completed
- Ongoing review of the job description

The following outlines key information needed to understand the recommendation to

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appoint the Interim City Administrator effective April 15.

By starting April 15, the Interim City Administrator will lead development of the FY26–27 budget and be actively involved during one of the busiest times of the year for city administration, including employee reviews, recruiting and hiring of new positions, long range planning, project funding and start and financial policy setting and implementation. In addition to these, this year is exceptional with the implementation of the growth policy, downtown master plan and the Montana Tourism Development Grant the City has received.

In all decisions, financial responsibility must be considered. The Budget and Finance Committee evaluated broader organizational changes, including staffing adjustments, salary structures, and long-term liabilities. Moving all supervisor positions to salary and evaluation of their wages for such is a large part of this decision, setting salary ranges of supervisors to be between \$36 and \$40/hour, assistant department to be \$43-\$45/hour and per policy set previously all Department Heads will be at the same salary of \$48/hour. The City Administrator position, overseeing all and looking at salaries for comparable positions in the State of Montana will be around \$55/hour. But, because we are currently talking about interim positions that could be decided will go away at the end of the interim term, the Budget and Finance Committee understands that we cannot increase the base wages to something that is not sustainable in that scenario, so we are recommending the following:

- Interim City Administrator: \$48/hour base with stipend
- Interim Clerk/Treasurer: \$40/hour base with stipend

This structure allows flexibility while maintaining financial responsibility.

Mayor Norby has clearly expressed support for this position for years, and through this process, that need has been validated.

This is an opportunity to implement the position, evaluate its effectiveness, and make informed decisions moving forward. The proposed Interim City Administrator, Jessica Chamberlin, has agreed to be available for any questions Council members may have and if needed the appointment can be tabled and the start date postponed.

Thank you,

Tami Christensen  
Sidney City Council President