



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

July 15, 2026, at 5:30 PM

Council Chambers at City Hall - 1123 W. Lake St. Sandpoint, Idaho

Call to Order

Mayor Grimm called the regular meeting of the Sandpoint City Council to order at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 15, 2026, in Council chambers at City Hall, 1123 W. Lake St., Sandpoint, Idaho.

Roll Call

PRESENT

Mayor Jeremy Grimm
Councilor Deb Ruehle
Councilor Joel Aispuro
Councilor Kyle Schreiber
Councilor Pam Duquette
Councilor Joe Tate
Councilor Joshua Torrez

As required by the City's adopted Code of Ethics and Civility, as the presiding officer, Mayor Grimm identified law enforcement personnel serving as sergeant-at-arms for the meeting: Police Chief Corey Coon.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Grimm led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements and Reports

Mayor Grimm made some initial brief remarks and provided instructions for members of the public who wished to speak during opportunities for public comment/testimony during the meeting.

1. Presentation: Idaho Department of Lands Watershed/Baldy Site Discussion

Taylor Bradish, Idaho Department of Lands, presented a proposal to explore a permanent easement exchange and cooperative road agreement for the City watershed and Section 36. The proposal would improve road access, wildfire response, and maintenance while maintaining existing watershed protections. By consensus, Council directed staff to continue discussions with IDL and return with a proposed agreement for Council consideration.

Council members reported on the recent meetings and activities of the City's citizen advisory boards on which they serve as Council liaison.

At the request and invitation of the Mayor, Department directors provided updates and reports on activities in their respective departments.

Councilor Ruehle announced that the public hearing on tonight's agenda is limited to proposed code amendments implementing the previously adopted Parking Management Plan. She stated the plan itself was not under reconsideration and that any request to revisit it would need to be brought forward by a Council member for a future agenda.

Councilor Duquette requested moving Item 12, regarding data centers, before public comment to clarify the intent of the item. She stated the purpose was to explore prohibiting large-scale data centers in the City's industrial zoning code, not to support their development.

Motion made by Councilor Duquette, Seconded by Councilor Schreiber.

Voting Yea: Councilor Schreiber, Councilor Tate, Councilor Duquette, Councilor Aispuro, Councilor Ruehle, Councilor Torrez

12. Council Direction: Discussion and Council Direction on Data Centers in City of Sandpoint

Councilor Duquette requested staff research code amendments to prohibit large-scale data centers, including defining the type and scale of facilities addressed. Council discussed the need to distinguish large-scale AI data centers from smaller data uses.

By roll call vote, Council directed staff to develop proposed code amendments regarding large-scale data centers and return the item for future Council consideration. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Councilor Ruehle, Seconded by Councilor Duquette.

Voting Yea: Councilor Aispuro, Councilor Tate, Councilor Torrez, Councilor Schreiber, Councilor Duquette, Councilor Ruehle

Public Comment

Mayor Grimm recited the rules and procedure for public comment during the meeting and offered an opportunity for members of the public to speak on topics included on the agenda or other general matters relevant to the business of the City of Sandpoint. Information only; no Council action.

Consent Calendar – action item

Mayor Grimm noted for the record the amount of bills for payment approval, and the Consent Calendar was approved by a unanimous vote of Council.

Motion made by Councilor Schreiber, Seconded by Councilor Aispuro.

Voting Yea: Councilor Tate, Councilor Torrez, Councilor Duquette, Councilor Ruehle, Councilor Aispuro, Councilor Schreiber

2. The minutes from Council's July 1, 2026, special meeting were approved as presented.
3. The bills presented were approved for payment in the amount of \$784,611.65
4. The Mayor's appointment of Nicholas Belfry for a term of three years, July 2026 through June 2029, to the Sustainability Committee was confirmed.

Public Hearing

5. Hearing/Decision: Skyway Estates PS26-0001

Associate Planner Eric Brubaker presented Polar Belt LLC's request for preliminary plat approval to subdivide 4.5 acres at 2708 N. Boyer Avenue into 26 single-family residential lots. Staff determined the proposal complies with the Comprehensive Plan, RS zoning, and subdivision standards and recommended approval with conditions.

The applicant's representative, Matthew Afana, stated the project meets City requirements, including traffic, utility, sidewalk, and future connectivity standards.

Each Council member confirmed no ex parte contact or conflict of interest as pertained to this application.

The Mayor opened the public hearing for **Skyway Estates Preliminary Plat (PS26-0001)**.

No one signed up to speak in support or as neutral. One person signed up in opposition but declined to testify. The applicant waived rebuttal, and the public hearing was closed.

Council entered deliberations. Councilor Schreiber raised concerns regarding future roadway connectivity, sidewalk completion, and potential safety impacts. Staff and legal counsel advised the application meets code requirements and that Council's decision must be based on the hearing record.

Councilor Ruehle moved to approve the preliminary plat with staff conditions, seconded by Councilor Aispuro. Councilor Schreiber moved to amend the motion to continue deliberations to August 19, 2026, meeting.

Motion made by Councilor Schreiber, Seconded by Councilor Tate.

Voting Yea: Councilor Tate, Councilor Torrez, Councilor Schreiber, Councilor Aispuro, Councilor Duquette

Voting Nay: Councilor Ruehle

The amendment passed 5-1, with Councilor Ruehle dissenting.

6. Hearing/Decision: Ridley Village Court PS25-0003 & PPUD25-0001

Associate Planner Eric Brubaker presented the request for approval of the Ridley Village Court Final Planned Unit Development (PUD) and Preliminary Subdivision for 56 townhomes on a 4.1-acre site. Staff reported the project complies with City standards and prior conditions and recommended approval.

Applicant representatives, Aaron Qualls with SCJ Alliance and Kirk Rector with Affinity Real Estate Management reviewed project updates, including open space, pathways, traffic calming, setbacks, and parking. Council members asked questions regarding parking, HOA maintenance, and street widths.

The applicant concluded the presentation and remained available for questions.

Each Council member confirmed no ex parte contact or conflict of interest as pertained to this application.

The public hearing was opened. Mayor Grimm reviewed public decorum rules and explained testimony procedures, including that only in-person attendees could testify due to the quasi-judicial nature of the hearing.

No testimony was received in support of the project.

Neutral testimony was provided by city residents Curt Hagan and Phil Dommies, who expressed concerns regarding the location of the common area, setbacks, buffering between attached homes and existing single-family homes, traffic impacts, and future Highway 2 improvements. Executive Director Donna Griffin of Selkirks-Pend Oreille Transit (SPOT Bus) commented on transit access, safety, and coordination as development occurs.

Opposition testimony was provided by city resident Eileen Tschernenko, who raised concerns about reduced setbacks, impacts to existing residents, traffic, safety, and the relocation of the common area from Madison Street.

Mr. Qualls and Mr. Rector provided rebuttal, clarifying that the project consists of attached single-family homes, not multifamily housing. He explained that the common area location was changed based on Council direction, that safety features were incorporated into the design, and that traffic and impact fee studies had been completed. The applicant confirmed the project would contribute toward required improvements and that residents would not be responsible for the Highway 2 cost share.

Council members asked clarifying questions regarding impact fees, mailbox locations, and projected home prices. The applicant stated homes are expected to sell in the \$500,000–\$600,000 range and will be individually owned fee-simple homes.

The public hearing was closed.

Council Deliberation and Action – Ridley Village Court Development

Council confirmed that no Village off-site cyclist improvements were included in the project.

Staff reviewed the project history and confirmed the final PUD and preliminary plat met previously approved conditions.

Council discussed the common area location, neighborhood concerns, and project compliance.

Councilor Ruehle moved to approve the PUD final development plan with conditions, seconded by Councilmember Aispuro.

Motion made by Councilor Ruehle, Seconded by Councilor Aispuro.

Voting Yea: Councilor Aispuro, Councilor Torrez, Councilor Ruehle, Councilor Duquette, Councilor Tate, Councilor Schreiber

Councilor Ruehle moved to approve the preliminary plat based on staff findings and code compliance, seconded by Councilor Aispuro.

Motion made by Councilor Ruehle, Seconded by Councilor Aispuro.

Voting Yea: Councilor Duquette, Councilor Schreiber, Councilor Aispuro, Councilor Tate, Councilor Torrez, Councilor Ruehle

Both motions passed unanimously.

Mayor Grimm called for a brief recess at 8:19 p.m., with the meeting reconvening at 8:29 p.m.

7. Public Hearing: Amendments to Title 6, Parking Regulations to Implement the City's Parking Management Program

Community Planning and Development Director Jason Welker presented the ordinance, acknowledged implementation issues, accepted responsibility for communication and rollout problems, and stated the amendment updates the code to match the existing parking program. The changes replace references to "non-metered" parking with "regulated parking" and remove outdated references to free 24-hour parking lots.

The Mayor stated the parking program had been developed over the past year and that the ordinance updates the code to reflect the adopted program.

Legal counsel confirmed the parking program was legally adopted and that the amendment does not create, change, or cancel the program. It only aligns the municipal code with the existing parking regulations.

Councilors asked staff many questions and discussed the proposed amendments.

The Mayor opened the public hearing and reviewed the City's public meeting decorum requirements, including expectations for respectful conduct, no disruptions, and the one-minute public comment limit.

Public testimony was received from residents, business owners, and community members regarding the Title 6 parking ordinance amendment and Parking Management Program.

Mayor Grimm recessed the meeting during public testimony at 9:06 p.m., reconvening at 9:07 p.m.

With no additional speakers, the Mayor closed the public hearing at 9:14 p.m.

8. Proposed Ordinance: Amending Title 6 Parking Regulations to Implement the City's Parking Management Program

Council deliberated the proposed parking management code amendments.

After further discussion, Councilor Schreiber made a motion to table the ordinance and direct staff to return to the next meeting on August 5th, 2026, with a code amendment applying only to

city parking lots and to bring back the parking management plan for further discussion. Councilor Aispuro seconded the motion.

Motion made by Councilor Schreiber, Seconded by Councilor Aispuro.

Voting Yea: Councilor Duquette, Councilor Aispuro, Councilor Schreiber, Councilor Torrez, Councilor Tate

Voting Nay: Councilor Ruehle

The motion passed 5-1, with Councilor Ruehle dissenting.

Old/Unfinished Business

9. Tentative Approval of Proposed FY2027 Revenues and Expenditures, and Declaration of Intent to Use Forgone Levying Authority

Mayor Grimm introduced this item and yielded the floor to Finance Director Sarah Lynds who reviewed the budget schedule and stated that the Council had previously held budget workshops on June 17 and July 1 covering department operating and capital budgets. She explained that approval of the maximum budget amount was needed to allow publication of the public hearing notice for the August 19 meeting.

Motion to tentatively approve the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 revenues and expenditures, as presented, and declare intent to use forgone levying authority.

Motion made by Councilor Schreiber, Seconded by Councilor Ruehle.

Voting Yea: Councilor Torrez, Councilor Schreiber, Councilor Aispuro, Councilor Tate, Councilor Ruehle, Councilor Duquette.

New Business

10. Request for Approval: Festival at Sandpoint Pesticide Application

Council considered the Festival of Sandpoint request for approval of pesticide application at War Memorial Field. Councilors discussed concerns regarding environmental impacts, including effects on aquatic life, bees, and pollinators.

Festival at Sandpoint Director of Operations and Programs Veronica Knowlton addressed Council questions and stated the Festival would consider alternative pest control options.

Following discussion, Council voted to deny the pesticide application request.

Motion made by Councilor Duquette, Seconded by Councilor Schreiber.

Voting Yea: Councilor Duquette, Councilor Ruehle, Councilor Schreiber, Councilor Torrez, Councilor Tate, Councilor Aispuro.

11. Council Discussion: Analysis and Discussion on the LOT Survey

Council tabled discussion of the Local Option Tax until the next regularly scheduled council meeting on August 5th, due to the length of the meeting. Mayor Grimm asked Council to review the provided information before the next meeting. The deadline to submit a Local Option Tax proposal to the county for voter consideration is August 28, 2026.

Motion made by Councilor Schreiber, Seconded by Councilor Aispuro.

Voting Yea: Councilor Ruehle, Councilor Duquette, Councilor Torrez, Councilor Tate, Councilor Aispuro, Councilor Schreiber.

Executive Session

13. Motion to Convene in Executive Session pursuant to Idaho Code § 74-206(1)(c) to acquire an interest in real property not owned by a public agency, Idaho Code § 74-206(1)(f) to communicate with legal counsel for the public agency to discuss the legal ramifications of and

legal options for pending litigation, or controversies not yet being litigated but imminently likely to be litigated.

Motion made by Councilor Schreiber, Seconded by Councilor Duquette.

Voting Yea: Councilor Tate, Councilor Torrez, Councilor Duquette, Councilor Ruehle, Councilor Aispuro, Councilor Schreiber

14. With an affirmative vote of Council, an executive session was held pursuant to Idaho Code §§ 74-206(1)(c) and (f), as noted above.

Reconvene and Adjourn

Following conclusion of the executive session, the regular meeting was reconvened and then immediately adjourned at 11:08 p.m.

I can confirm that the foregoing minutes, prepared by the City Clerk, were approved by City Council during their regular meeting held _____, 2026.

Jeremy Grimm, Mayor

Attest: Meri Jane Bohn, City Clerk