



Local Government Review Board 3-5-26

Agenda

March 05, 2026 at 5:30 PM

1. Call to Order

2. New Business

[a.](#) January 8th, 2026 Meeting Minutes

[b.](#) Public Hearing on the Change of Form of Government-Mayor/Council vs City Manager/Council

[c.](#) Survey #1 Results

3. Old Business

a. Recommendation on Change of Form of Government

b. Discussion on Council Composition:

Council size / membership — how many council members there are (currently 6)

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

Ward apportionment — how many members represent each ward (currently 2 represent 3 wards)

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

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

Rotation of Election -- e.g., every 2 years 3 council members are elected, 1 from each ward (current)

4. Questions/ Comments from Public

5. Questions/ Comments from Board
6. Adjournment



Local Government Review Board
Minutes
January 08, 2026 at 5:30 PM

1. Call to Order

Mrs. Sergent called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

Board Present: Sergent, Mayer, Whiteman

Others Present: Mayor Norby, Clerk/Treasurer Chamberlin, Amanda Seigfreid, Gary Schoepp, Karen Schoepp, Dennis Moore, Jamie Larson, Ivy Cross,

2. New Business

a. Approval of Minutes: October 9th, 2025

Motion was made to approve.

Motion made by Whiteman, Seconded by Mayer.

Voting Yea: Sergent, Whiteman, Mayer

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

Mrs. Sergent stated they are looking to moving their meetings to bi-monthly to ensure they have time to cover all the topics available.

Motion was made to approve moving the LGRB meetings to bi-monthly instead of quarterly.

Motion made by Mayer, Seconded by Whiteman.

Voting Yea: Sergent, Whiteman, Mayer

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

Mrs. Sergent stated Clerk/Treasurer Chamberlin has provided survey questions she would like approval to run in the public until March 1st, with the results ready for the March

meeting. She stated members of the public did assist with these survey questions and thanked them for this.

Motion was made to approve.

Motion made by Whiteman, Seconded by Mayer.

Voting Yea: Sergeant, Whiteman, Mayer

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

Mrs. Sergeant stated Ivy Cross will be presenting to the Kiwanis Club and the Lions Club and one LGRB member will need to be present to listen to public feedback on topics. Wade will attend the Kiwanis meeting and Jordan will attend the Lions meeting. Clerk/Treasurer Chamberlin will also be present to assist.

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

Mrs. Sergent stated they are now looking for public input on the topics to investigate and discuss with several items that require voter approval being listed on this agenda item. She stated the responses here, from the survey and the public outreach will form the upcoming agenda discussion and public hearing topics. She asked if any of these items would like to be discussed by the members of the public present or if they have any questions on them. Items discussed included:

Ward size and number and if more wards would be beneficial. Representation in the wards and if a hybrid system of some council being elected in the wards and some being at large could be reviewed and to use historical election data. Term limits being decided by election but term lengths being reviewed as 4 years may not be the most beneficial. Possibly 3, 4, or 6 year terms would be best, but the rotation for election would need to reviewed also.

All present agreed that the City should stay nonpartisan and that city officials should stay appointed to keep the department heads hired based on qualifications instead of elected. All present also agreed that the City should stay with general governing powers.

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

Mrs. Sergent stated these are listed items that would not require voter approval for recommendation to the City Council but could be discussed and investigated by the review board and asked if any of these items intrigue the members of the public present or if they have any questions on them. Items discussed included:

With the recommendation of the Council hiring a manager/administrator, the Mayor can also hire an assistant but any of the items here are only recommendations and do not have to be done.

If the manager/administrator position is hired without the change of form of government they would be hired and under the supervision of the Mayor, with the Mayor remaining the head of the executive branch. The job description, duties of the manager/administrator would be set by code by the City Council and Mayor. If needed, they could be removed from their position the same way as the current department heads, by both Mayor and Council.

If the form of government changed to the City Manager-Council form of government, the manager would be hired and be under the direction of the City Council. If there is a Mayor can be decided and if there was what their figure head duties would be would be set by city code by the Council. If needed, the manager would be removed from duty by the Council. In this form the Council would be both legislative and executive branches of the government, versus the current form where the Mayor is the executive.

It was discussed with the long range planning, having a manager/administrator might be beneficial to execute the plans the City has recently funded. The manager/administrator could take on some of the duties of the department heads or new duties such as HR or succession planning, but ultimately that would be decided through the job description. The budget implications of adding this position was also discussed, with possible efficiencies being found to help offset in either scenarios, but likely an increase in budget would happen.

Transparency measures was discussed and current technologies used and the availableness of the elected officials are appreciated although there is always room for improvement, but a review and recommendation is not necessary.

Recommending the creation of new or bringing back advisory boards, such as the Park and Recreation Board was also discussed, with all present agreeing there is ample opportunity for involvement and volunteering without the obligation of being an elected official.

When asked, there is no current specific interlocal agreements needing review, it was just a listed item provided by the Local Government Services for all in this process.

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

Mrs. Sergent stated they will be holding an official public hearing at their March 5th meeting, calling for public input on the change of form of government and if it should remain the same, Mayor-Council, or be changed to City Manager-Council. She stated once official public testimony is given the Local Government Review Board will discuss and make their final recommendation on the topic.

Mr. Mayer asked if the plan is to have a recommendation at that meeting, and Mrs. Sergent stated the decision to recommend or not to change the form of government will be at the March meeting. Ms. Seigfreid asked if it will go to the voters either way and Mrs. Sergent stated no. Mr. Moore stated the change of form of government would go to vote and Mrs. Sergent stated the Council would decide on the hiring. Clerk/Treasurer Chamberlin stated it would go on the ballot if they recommend to make the change, if they do not recommend to make the change it will not go on the ballot.

4. Questions/ Comments from Public

Nothing.

5. Questions/ Comments from Board

Nothing.

6. Adjournment

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

at 6:25pm

March 5th, 2026

Local Government Review Board
115 2nd St SE
Sidney, MT 59270

Subject: Public Hearing on Change of Form of Government

Dear Public and Local Government Review Board,

This public hearing is being held as part of the Local Government Review process required under Montana law. The purpose is to receive public comment on the potential change of form of government.

Currently, the City operates under the **Mayor-Council form of government**, where the Mayor serves as the chief executive officer and the City Council serves as the legislative body responsible for adopting policy, ordinances, and the budget.

During the review process, the Board has also discussed other structures allowed under Montana law. One option is the **Council-Manager form of government**, where the Council hires a professional manager who is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the City while the Council focuses on policy and legislative decisions.

Another concept that has been discussed is maintaining the **Mayor-Council structure while recommending the administration explores the potential hiring of a City Administrator**. In this model, the Mayor would remain the chief executive officer and all his powers and duties, but a professional administrator could assist with coordinating daily operations and implementing policy under the Mayor's direction. To assist in answering questions previously posed about this model, the Budget and Finance Committee of the City Council have prepared two documents that are available to assist in better understanding what the City Administrator position could look like.

No decision has been made by the LGRB at this time. The purpose of tonight's hearing is simply to receive public comment and input regarding these potential governance structures as part of the review process.

Respectfully submitted,



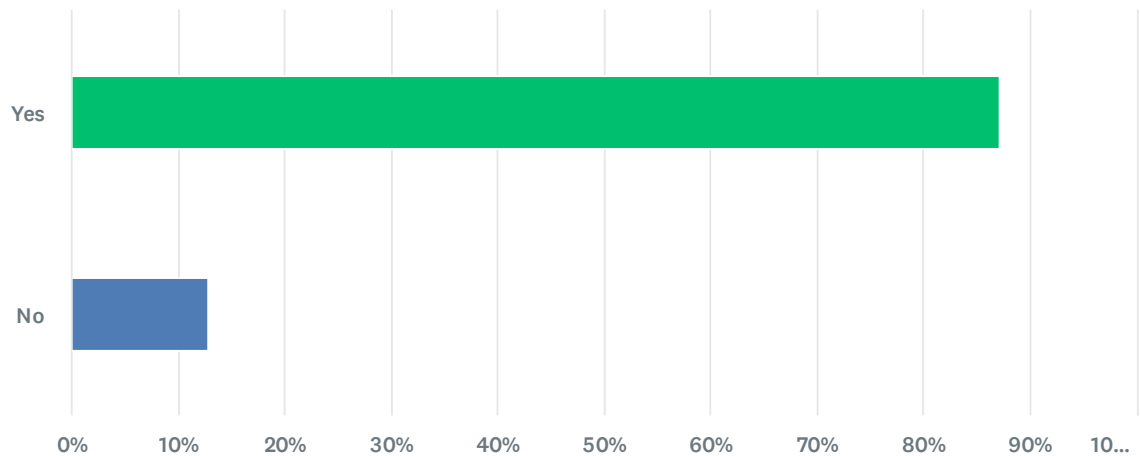
Jessica Chamberlin
Clerk/Treasurer and LGRB Assistant

Q1 Please share your email if you'd like updates.

Answered: 22 Skipped: 56

Q2 Do you reside in the City of Sidney?

Answered: 78 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
Yes	87.18%	68
No	12.82%	10
Total		78

Q3 Were you aware that Sidney is in the process of reviewing its City Government and assessing what changes could be made?

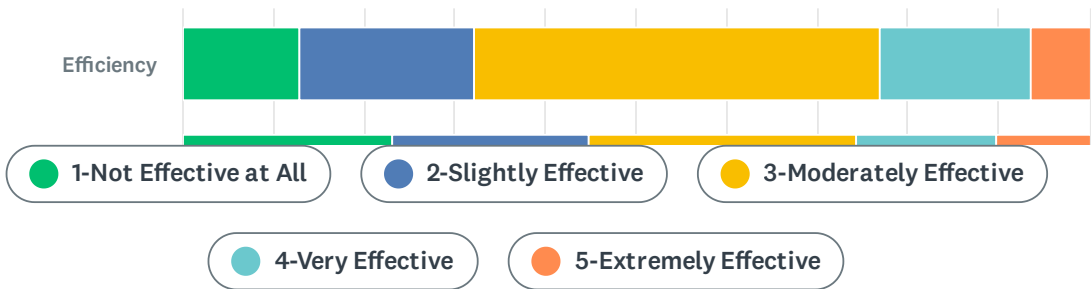
Answered: 78 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
Yes	71.79%	56
No	28.21%	22
Total		78

Q4 In your opinion, on a scale of 1-5, how is the current Government doing on the following:

Answered: 78 Skipped: 0

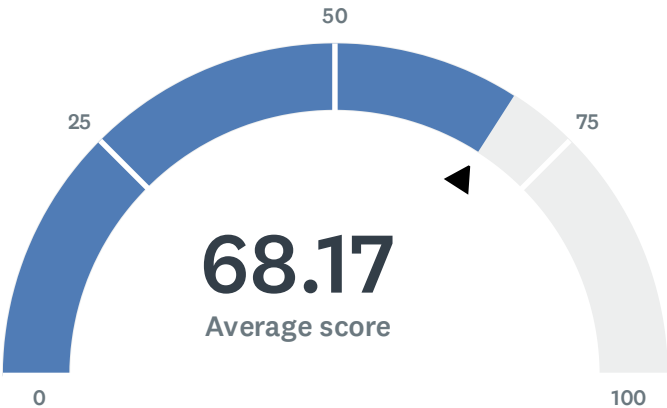


	 1-Not Effective at All	 2-Slightly Effective	 3-Moderately Effective	 4-Very Effective	 5-Extremely Effective	Total
Efficiency	12.82% 10	19.23% 15	44.87% 35	16.67% 13	6.41% 5	78
Accountability	23.08% 18	21.79% 17	29.49% 23	15.38% 12	10.26% 8	78
Representation	19.48% 15	19.48% 15	36.36% 28	16.88% 13	7.79% 6	77
Transparency	21.79% 17	23.08% 18	33.33% 26	8.97% 7	12.82% 10	78
Fairness	19.23% 15	20.51% 16	32.05% 25	20.51% 16	7.69% 6	78

	1-Not Effective at All	2-Slightly Effective	3-Moderately Effective	4-Very Effective	5-Extremely Effective	Total
Responsiveness	12.82% 10	16.67% 13	43.59% 34	17.95% 14	8.97% 7	78
Long-term planning	21.79% 17	28.21% 22	26.92% 21	17.95% 14	5.13% 4	78
Stability	12.82% 10	21.79% 17	32.05% 25	25.64% 20	7.69% 6	78
Collaboration	21.79% 17	21.79% 17	33.33% 26	15.38% 12	7.69% 6	78
						701

Q5 Sidney uses a Mayor-Council system. The Mayor manages the daily city operations, while the City Council passes ordinances, adopts budgets and sets policy through 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?

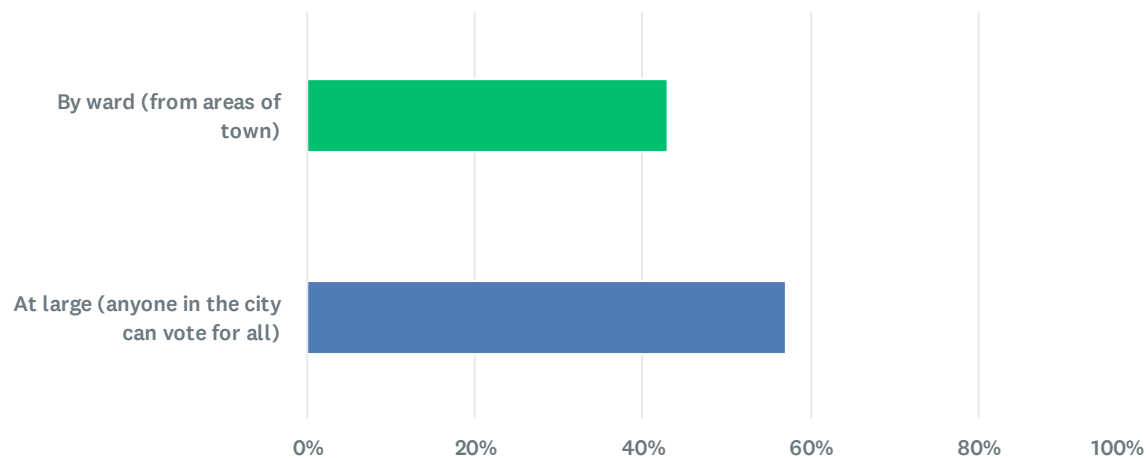
Answered: 78 Skipped: 0



Basic statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation

Q6 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.

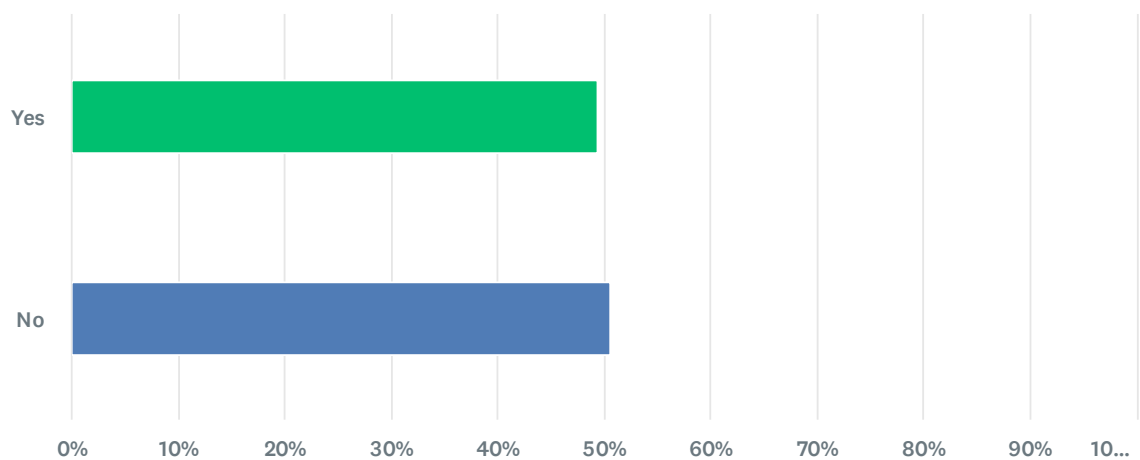
Answered: 77 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
 By ward (from areas of town)	42.86%	33
 At large (anyone in the city can vote for all)	57.14%	44
Total		77

Q7 Do you think Sidney’s current system gives enough checks and balances between the Mayor, City Council, and city staff?

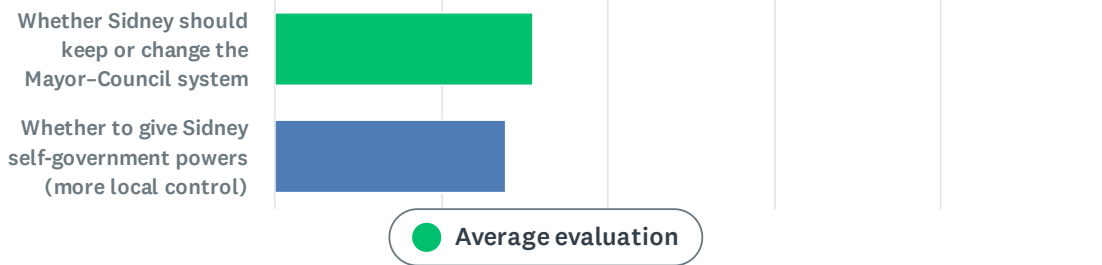
Answered: 77 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
Yes	49.35%	38
No	50.65%	39
Total		77

Q8 The Review Board will look at different parts of city government. Please rank what’s most important to you for them to study:

Answered: 78 Skipped: 0



	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	Weighted ...
Whether Sidney should keep or change the Mayor-Council system	24.36% 19	24.36% 19	12.82% 10	6.41% 5	20.51% 16	11.54% 9	78	3.09
Whether to give Sidney self-government powers (more local control)	28.21% 22	17.95% 14	21.79% 17	19.23% 15	6.41% 5	6.41% 5	78	2.77
Whether to adopt a city “charter” (like a local constitution)	7.69% 6	11.54% 9	19.23% 15	23.08% 18	25.64% 20	12.82% 10	78	3.86
How City Council seats are structured (by ward or at-large, number of members)	10.26% 8	20.51% 16	15.38% 12	28.21% 22	12.82% 10	12.82% 10	78	3.51
How elections are run (party affiliation, term limits, etc.)	6.41% 5	10.26% 8	15.38% 12	14.10% 11	28.21% 22	25.64% 20	78	4.24

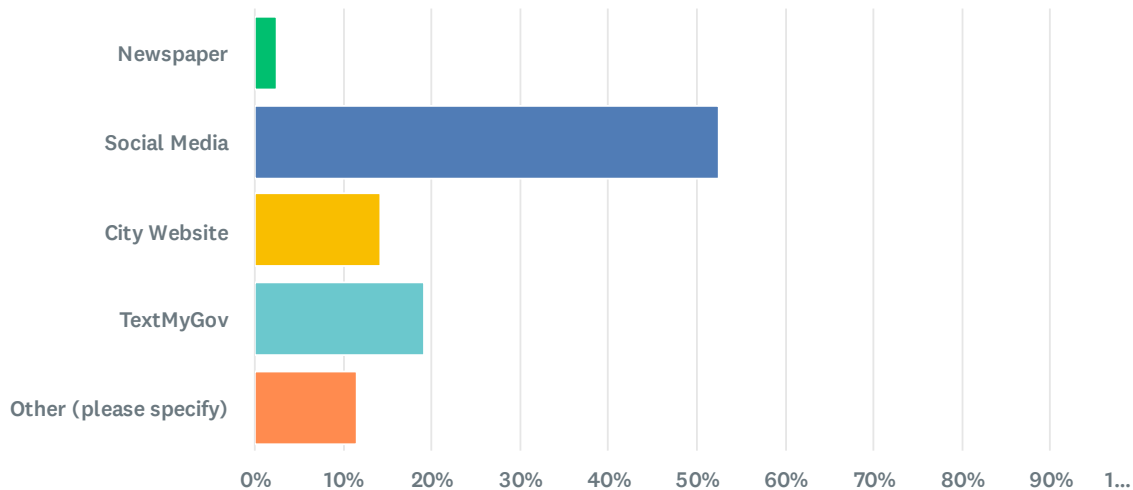
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3.50

							Total	Weighted ...
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
How the city is managed (for example, hiring a City Manager,	23.08% 18	15.38% 12	15.38% 12	8.97% 7	6.41% 5	30.77% 24	78	3.53

Q9 If changes to Sidney's government are proposed, how would you prefer to get updates and share your opinion?

Answered: 78 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
 Newspaper	2.56%	2
 Social Media	52.56%	41
 City Website	14.10%	11
 TextMyGov	19.23%	15
 Other (please specify) Show responses	11.54%	9
Total		78