



City of Sidney, MT
Public Safety Committee Meeting
July 28, 2026 4:30 PM
115 2nd Street SE | Sidney, MT 59270

1. Call to Order

The Public Safety Committee Meeting was called to order by Chair Buxbaum at 4:30pm.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was stated by all present.

3. Roll Call

Committee Members Present:

City Officials/ Staff Present:

Aldерwoman Buxbaum, Alderman Kauffman (via zoom), Aldерwoman Rasmussen, Mrs. Creek, Kale Rasmussen, Mayor Norby, Interim CAO Chamberlin, and Interim Clerk/Treasurer Lange

4. Correction or Approval of Minutes

a. June 23rd, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Motion was made by Aldерwoman Rasmussen to approve the June 23, 2026 meeting minutes, and seconded by Alderman Kauffman. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Public Comment/ Visitors

Your opportunity for the public to address the Council on items not included on the agenda, no action will be taken during this time.

Committee members complimented the recent completion of the pedestrian bridge guardrail installation, noting the improvement to both safety and appearance. Additional concern was expressed regarding ongoing traffic safety at a nearby intersection where another pedestrian had recently been observed in a potentially hazardous situation.

Interim CAO Chamberlin advised that the City has scheduled a meeting with representatives from the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), including its safety coordinator, to review the intersection. MDT will analyze several years of crash history, conduct an onsite review, and meet with City staff on August 4 to discuss findings and potential safety improvements. Committee members were invited to participate in the meeting if available.

6. Monthly Reports

- a. June 2026 Police Department Report
The monthly Police Department Report was provided for review. Committee members had no additional comments or questions regarding police operations.
- b. June 2026 Fire Run Report
The monthly Fire Department run report was presented. No discussion or action was taken.
- c. July 2026 Compliance Report
The monthly Compliance Report was provided for review. Committee members noted recent nuisance committee activity but had no additional comments or questions regarding compliance operations.

7. New Business

- a. Draft Emergency Operations Plan
Interim CAO Chamberlin presented a draft Emergency Operations Plan for the City of Sidney for the Committee's initial review. She explained that although the City continues to coordinate emergency response efforts with Richland County, it had recently been determined that Sidney should maintain its own emergency operations plan as an incorporated municipality.

The proposed plan mirrors Richland County's Emergency Operations Plan to maintain consistency in emergency response while meeting municipal operational and insurance requirements. Interim CAO Chamberlin noted that municipalities are required maintain city-specific emergency response policies and procedures.

Committee members discussed the annual review process for emergency operations plans and whether future reviews could coincide with Richland County's Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) schedule. Staff indicated they are researching

whether those reviews can be coordinated while still satisfying the City's independent requirements.

Committee members requested a summary identifying the differences between the City's proposed plan and Richland County's plan to assist with future review and discussion.

No action was taken. Staff will continue reviewing the document, obtain additional input from emergency management personnel, and return the draft to the Committee for further consideration at a future meeting.

8. Unfinished Business

a. Solicitors License Code Update

Interim CAO Chamberlin presented proposed revisions to the City's Solicitor's License ordinance following discussion at the previous committee meeting. The proposed amendments establish a single \$50 background check fee for all applicants, eliminating the previous distinction between Richland County residents and non-residents. Staff explained that all applicants now receive the same comprehensive background investigation regardless of residency, making the previous fee structure unnecessary.

The Committee also reviewed the ordinance's exemptions. Staff explained that nonprofit organizations, churches, schools, youth fundraising activities, farmers markets, special events, local businesses, and similar activities would continue to be exempt from the licensing requirements, addressing concerns previously raised regarding volunteers and community organizations.

Additional amendments establish objective disqualification standards by automatically denying licenses to applicants currently registered as violent or sexual offenders or actively serving probation, parole, or pre-release supervision. Staff explained these revisions provide greater consistency while still allowing the Police Department to evaluate other criminal histories on a case-by-case basis. The proposed revisions also authorize the Interim CAO to revoke a solicitors license, in addition to the Chief of Police, when circumstances require immediate administrative action.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Alderwoman Rasmussen to approve the proposed ordinance amendments, which is subject to final legal review by City Attorney Kalil and seconded by Alderman Kauffman. The motion carried unanimously.

b. Alcohol in Public Places Rewrite

Interim CAO Chamberlin presented a complete rewrite of the City's Alcohol in Public Places ordinance. She explained the existing ordinance no longer reflects current City practices or modern alcohol regulations and therefore required comprehensive revision.

The proposed ordinance creates two separate approval processes. Private gatherings, such as family events or small park gatherings, would continue through a simplified administrative application reviewed by the Chief of Police or Interim CAO. Commercial events or events open to the public would instead be processed through the recently adopted Special Events and Street Closure Policy, requiring City Council approval and submission of detailed event information, including site maps, security plans, alcohol management plans, and proof of required insurance and licensing. The rewrite also modernizes definitions, permits all lawful alcoholic beverages rather than only beer, and prohibits glass containers at approved public events.

Committee members discussed the proposed \$100 non-refundable permit fee for commercial events serving alcohol. Staff explained the fee helps offset the additional administrative review required while recognizing the City continues to contribute significant staff time and resources toward community events through park preparation, barricade placement, traffic control, and post-event cleanup. Members acknowledged those operational costs often exceed the permit fee but agreed the amount provides an appropriate starting point that can be reevaluated as community events continue to grow. Staff also confirmed that commercial events serving alcohol would be required to provide proof of liability insurance and any applicable state alcohol licensing before approval.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Alderwoman Rasmussen to recommend approval of the rewritten Alcohol in Public Places ordinance, which is subject to final legal review by City Attorney Kalil and seconded by Alderman Kauffman. The motion carried unanimously.

9. Comments and Questions from the Committee

Interim CAO Chamberlin informed the Committee that data centers are expected to become an increasingly important topic within the community. Although these facilities are generally located outside city limits, she noted they often create questions regarding infrastructure, emergency response, public services, and future community planning. Brandon Roth will assist in providing educational information to the Committee and is expected to participate in a future meeting. Staff also plans to tour existing Bitcoin data center facilities in the area to better understand their operations before presenting additional information to the Committee.

Committee members discussed current limitations under Montana law regarding county authority over data center development, the relationship between growth policies and extraterritorial planning, and anticipated legislative proposals addressing data centers and alternative energy development. Discussion also included the current tax treatment of data centers and the limited financial benefit local governments may presently receive from these facilities.

The Committee agreed additional education will be beneficial before considering any future policy recommendations. Data centers will be included as a discussion item on the August Public Safety Committee agenda.

10. Adjournment

The Public Safety Meeting was adjourned at 4:57pm.

[MIN_SIGNATURES]