

DRAFT - Missoula City Council Budget and Finance Committee Minutes

May 21, 2025

9:00 AM

Council Chambers (in person) or TEAMS (virtually)

Attend in person: City Council Chambers, 140 W Pine, Missoula MT

Members present: Amber Sherrill, Stacie Anderson, Mirtha Becerra, Bob Campbell, Daniel Carlino, Kristen Jordan, Eric Melson, Mike Nugent, Sandra Vasecka

Members absent: Sierra Farmer, Gwen Jones, Jennifer Savage

1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

1.1 Roll Call

1.2 Approval of the Minutes

1.2.1 Minutes from May 14, 2025

The minutes were approved as submitted. No quorum present, but expected.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public present for comment.

3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

3.1 Budget Presentations

- Budget 101 - Leigh Griffing, Finance Director (9:00 AM - 9:15 AM)
- Program Inventory - Eric Hallstrom, Chief Operations Officer (9:15 AM - 9:30 AM)
- Municipal Court Update (9:30 AM - 10:15 AM)
- **TECH BREAK (10:15 AM -10:45 AM)**
- Missoula Public Health (11:05 AM -11:50 AM)

Leigh Griffing, Director of Finance, presents on budget processes for FY2026. She describes the budget process for the fiscal year, noting the phases of the budget from department planning, to mid-year updates, and preparation for the next fiscal year. She also details how the budget approval process works. Leigh then discusses the fund accounting, detailing the types of funds that impact the budget.

Eric Hallstrom, Chief Operating Officer, presents on program inventories for the next fiscal year. He explains why this has been implemented in the last two years and informs council about what the inventories contain. He details how council can access program inventories and use them in this budget season.

Amber Sherrill asks about how the budget process has been refined and for examples. Eric Hallstrom responds that how departments allocate staff to programs or activities which may have contributed to inaccurate counts of full-time employees. See recording for specific details.

Kristen Jordan thanks Eric Hallstrom for the work to create a better process for budgetary decisions.

Stacie Anderson asks about the work staff does during budget work, including how many staff members are trained and involved in budget work. Eric Hallstrom responds that this year will be an improvement on last year. He advises there are a lot of staff that works on budget throughout the city departments.

Kari Dady, Municipal Court Administrator, presents. She notes how the judges of Municipal Court have worked within the budget without new requests during their terms. She provides an overview of the separation of powers in the City of Missoula. She notes that the court is a court of record and open to the public. She also details the ways in which the court functions outside the purview of City Council and the Mayor. She also advises that the appeal process to a higher court is the way to resolve issues with the court.

Ryan Sudbury advises that the cases presented discussing the separation of powers may need further discussion as there are other cases out there regarding funding. He would like to have a further conversation in the future if there are changes to the budget.

Kari responds that there are some areas about courts of limited jurisdiction that do not have case law. She welcomes a conversation regarding these topics.

Kari then discusses current programs in Municipal Court, including the Pre-trial Assistance to Support Success (PASS) Program, Traffic Court, Shelter Court, and Resource Access Day. She discusses the performance rates of prior contracts. She explains how the PASS Program was developed. She notes how the court is allowed to make decisions about monitoring and detainment. She provides statistics on the cost of detainment in a detention facility, as well as statistics on how detainment has impact the local jail under the current judges.

Kari provides an overview of how the PASS program works, detailing the tier levels for defendants. She also details how Traffic Court, Shelter Court, and Resource Access Day work. See recording for specific details.

Mike Nugent asks if council or the mayor has interfered in any staffing for the court under these judges. Kari responds that this has not happened. Mike also asks if victims of crimes can file appeals if they feel their rights have been ignored. Kari responds that there are appeal processes available for victims, see recording for specific details. Mike also asks if that is more likely that victims would just speak to elected representatives instead of filing documentation, due to unawareness. Kari notes that if conversations aren't held on the record, they can't verify the facts. She notes that misinformation about the court is happening and notes the formal procedures so that the facts can be recorded. Mike also asks if the court believes residents should not complain to elected representatives about the court's behavior or procedures. Kari responds that they can talk to elected officials, but wants to stress the importance of following formal procedures instead.

Amber Sherrill notes the productive raising of concerns, as Council Chambers is a place where the community raises the concerns.

Bob Campbell notes that he had requested information about a defendant via email through Council President Sherrill. He notes the response regarding the record searches. Kari Dady responds that a public access portal to the court database exists and that private requests from the legislative branch still need to use the record search process. Bob also asks if information were to be noted during council, a colleague would also need to use the record search process. Kari notes that in the absence of a court administrator that communication with the court was difficult, but urges council to use the public portal and official record search process.

Mirtha Becerra asks about the cost to detain individuals and how it was detailed as ineffective in conjunction with the court's programs. She requests a comparison of the cost of the programs against detention processes. Kari responds that the court does not break down its budget, but that they repurposed former contracts instead of requesting new funds. She does not have statistics about how money is spent on these programs. Mirtha responds that she would still like that information in the same design as other departments, so council may provide that information to constituents.

Kristen Jordan asks about the national attention regarding the court's programs. Kari responds that funding was found by reclassifying roles within the court that they did not believe were furthering the mission. Kristen also asks if the court is required to use the Public Safety Assessment in assigning the tiers for PASS. Kari does not have this information right now, but notes that the support in PASS is meant to be pre-trial support. Kari elaborates that if the Supreme Court requires it, then the court is implementing it, but they are using other metrics to determine when they can safely release people. Kristen also asks about how they budget for a criminal justice system when it is difficult to predict. Kari responds that it is challenging; the court has no control over citations coming into the court. She believes this is a collective conversation between police, attorneys, and the court.

Stacie Anderson asks about how much of the budget is funded by taxpayer dollars versus fees or fines. She asks this because as Council is the fiduciary body of taxpayer funds, they would like that information for constituents. Kari responds that most of the budget for the court comes from the general fund. The court does not find that fines or surcharges are paid and accumulate for some individuals. The court determined that ongoing fees are a barrier to stability. Stacie responds that fines may be a method to garner compliance. Kari responds that is case by case. Stacie also notes that she has had constituents reach out about concerns as victims of crimes. She wants to know how the public can find support when they do not feel heard in their cases. Kari reiterates the use of the appeal process, and then notes limited policing and limited jail space. She notes that all courts deal with re-offending. She mentions that a high punitive approach has not produced results, and the court has not yet found the perfect solution. She believes connection would be a step in solving recidivism. Stacie notes that she would like to find a way to help community members engage when they have concerns about the court, and the council is concerned as the fiduciary body of the taxpayers.

Council recesses at 10:16 AM.

Council reconvenes at 10:51 AM.

Jeanna Miller, Chief Health Officer for Missoula Public Health (MPH), presents at 11:19 AM. She begins with an overview of the department, noting their vision, mission and strategic pillars. She provides an overview of the structure of MPH and notes they are the first health department in the state to become accredited.

Jeanna discusses the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), developed for 2025-2030. She talks about how the CHIP was developed with stakeholder input and the results, including priority areas with goals and objectives. See recording and attached presentation for specific details.

Jeanna provides an overview of the MPH budget. She notes that the budget is different than other city departments as MPH is a City & County agency and has a Health Board. She discusses the state of federal grants for MPH. See recording for specific details.

Jeanna discusses the discrete funds in the budget, specifically mentioning the health fund and the animal services fund, which are the two most impactful to the City. The water quality fund, junk vehicle fund, and the substance abuse prevention (SAP) fund receive funding outside of the City of Missoula's budget. She also discusses the Interlocal Agreement with the City and County that was last revised in 2021. The City covers 60% of MPH's budget that is not covered by fees, grants, or donations. This agreement will need reconciliation in the next fiscal year request. See recording for specific data.

Kristen Jordan asks a question about vaccine price increases. Jeanna responds that this is attributed to the privatization of the Covid-19 vaccine. Kristen also asks about the social determinants of health and how the results of those studies could be incorporated into capital improvement projects. Jeanna will carry on a conversation at a later time about these topics and offers to present to council more often to provide updates on MPH initiatives. She notes that MPH has a study happening on vaccine research in the county. See recording for specific details.

Mike Nugent notes that he is a part of the Health Board where they have discusses coming to the Public Health Committee more often to discuss initiatives from the health department. He also notes that the Health Department is taking part in more meetings with the City.

3.2 FY26 Council Budget Amendment Rule

(10:45 AM -11:00 AM)

Claire Trimble, City Clerk, presents on the item. She discusses the item and the benefits of it, including the ability to give everyone involved adequate time to review budget amendments. She then provides an overview of the budget schedule for FY2026. This change has occurred in the past and was well received. This temporary council rule would allow council to consider amendments brought in a timely manner, with late amendments requiring a vote to reopen the budget process.

Bob Campbell inquires if only one day for amendment deliberations is sufficient. Amber Sherrill responds that there will be an extra day, with the hope that councilors will submit amendments prior to August 4.

Sandra Vasecka inquires about a hypothetical about amendments to amendments submitted on the 4th, asking if those would be subject to the 2/3 majority rule. Claire

Trimble responds that no, any changes to amendments would be part of a conversation about a timely submitted amendment.

Stacie Anderson makes the motion.

Dale Bickell asks if the calendar is adopted, but a change is required, if the rule will then need amended. Claire Trimble affirms, the rule will need amended.

Stacie Anderson requests an amendment that if the calendar is changed, a simple majority is required instead of a 2/3 vote.

After discussion, a friendly amendment is adopted to reopen the floor after the amendment deadline with a simple majority rather than a 2/3 vote. See recording for specific details.

Moved by: Stacie Anderson

Adopt a temporary rule requiring that budget amendments be submitted in writing to the Clerk and Finance Director no later than 5pm on Monday, August 4, 2025, and a vote to open the floor after will require a simple majority.

AYES: (9): Amber Sherrill, Stacie Anderson, Mirtha Becerra, Bob Campbell, Daniel Carlino, Kristen Jordan, Eric Melson, Mike Nugent, and Sandra Vasecka

ABSENT: (3): Sierra Farmer, Gwen Jones, and Jennifer Savage

Vote results: Approved (9 to 0)

3.3 Resolution Relating to \$1,182,000 Sewer System Revenue Bond Series 2025A

(11:00 AM - 11:05 AM)

Leigh Griffing, Finance Director, presents on the item. She advises this item was approved in the FY2025 budget, with financial implications in debt service added to the budget for FY2026-2045.

Sandra Vasecka asks Leigh to clarify what a budget amendment is for constituents. Leigh Griffing explains that City Council adopts a preliminary budget in August, and state law allows for the ability to change that budget throughout the fiscal year for items that may not have been considered in the original adoption. This may include additional expenses, and the legal way of addressing these is through a budget amendment.

Moved by: Bob Campbell

Adopt the Resolution relating to \$1,182,000 Sewer System Revenue Bond (DNRC Water Pollution Control State Revolving Loan Program), Series 2025A

AYES: (9): Amber Sherrill, Stacie Anderson, Mirtha Becerra, Bob Campbell, Daniel Carlino, Kristen Jordan, Eric Melson, Mike Nugent, and Sandra Vasecka

ABSENT: (3): Sierra Farmer, Gwen Jones, and Jennifer Savage

Vote results: Approved (9 to 0)

4. ADJOURNMENT

Council adjourns at 11:55 AM.