

Town of Garfield
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
February 11, 2009

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Jarrod Pfaff called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Jarrod Pfaff, Andrew Flodin, John Kuehner, Tim Southern and Rob Watkins. Staff - Public Works Superintendent Dave Ulrick, Police Officer Joe Merry, Clerk/Treasurer Annie Pillers. Absent: Larry Hunt. Public: Brian Conklin, Cher Curtis, and Jana Mathia-Whitman County Gazette.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Andrew Flodin **MOVED** the minutes of January 28, 2009, be approved as written. Tim Southern seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC WORKS: Dave Ulrick reported

1. Winter Items – The crew had been busy with winter work - clean up, putting things back together, etc.

2. Training: Both Dave and Perry each need 2 continuing education (CEU) hours this year for training for recertification. Usually one training hour equates to 1/10 of a CEU hour earned. Normally the crew tries to spread the training hours out over a year, but last year they had little time for training classes. The mayor said it would be okay to do the training in a block if needed.

3. Street Lights: Dave met with the school about 2 lights on their property and left the paperwork with them. One light is in the parking lot along the sidewalk near the gym and the other is at the bottom of the gravel road by the pool. Up to now the town has been paying for these, but it appears they are on school property.

4. Town Meeting Attendance: Dave was asked to attend all the council meetings from now on, rather than rotate with the Public Works Assistant.

POLICE DEPARTMENT:

Police Officer Joe Merry provided council with the bi-monthly activity time log and the January 2009 activity report. Since the beginning of the year, the department has been busy issuing concealed pistol licenses. Joe anticipates the department will be able to report on some on-going cases within about 30 days. Most activity lately has been with loose dogs, junk vehicles and noise complaints. There was only 1 theft report in the last 6 to 7 weeks, which proved unfounded. Joe addressed the idea of a Humane Society contract. He noted, in Palouse they have an annual contract with the Humane Society which costs them roughly \$1,000 a year. When a dog is picked up it can be taken to the Humane Society, reducing the town's liability and boarding costs. Currently the town does not have an adequate area during the cold winter months for housing a dog. Joe thought perhaps Garfield's price would be one-half the price of Palouse. The other option would be to have a per dog fee to take animals to the Humane Society. Joe confirmed once the snow burms are cleared the extra police car could be parked again for speed control. It was confirmed the new police car that Palouse purchased was now in service and that the town did not pay any costs towards the purchase of the vehicle.

OLD BUSINESS:

Avista Street Light Turn Off: Mayor Pfaff updated the council on his recent meeting with Avista Utilities. Right now they are not letting the town turn the lights off according to Schedule 42. There is nowhere that provides for turning off and on lights. The option is either the lights stay on or the town buys the poles. Currently it costs approximately \$13.50 a month for each light. Avista wants to charge \$6 to leave them on the pole as they need a return for capital assets. They are willing to defer for a year, the payment, allowing the town to pay January 1, 2010. The mayor said he had contacted the Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) and according to Schedule 42 they cannot charge a maintenance fee. He said if the town buys the lights, the town goes under

Schedule 44's rate and the light bill would be cut in half and they would still have to come and change lights, etc. However, Schedule 44 still does not allow for an off and on option. Avista is governed by the UTC. He said the town is now waiting on the UTC. Avista is meeting with them on Thursday, February 12th. It was noted even if the lights were turned off, there are wires attached so the poles will still stay. The mayor said if UTC required the \$6 a month fee, it would be dumb to pay for the lights to be turned off. Brian Conklin asked about a timer system for general town shut off (minus the school and park) at some hour like 1 am. The mayor explained there is no provision for this in the tariff.

John Kuehner said after looking at the budget, he thought maybe the town could afford to run the street lights for one year. He suggested sending out a newsletter about the levy and if it failed again, the lights would have to be turned off. He said with the utility tax, it looked like the town could make it. Tim Southern said he felt the levy should be for special things, not street lights, etc. He wanted to look at re-writing things so the town wasn't dependent upon the levy, but since the town is dependent upon the levy now, the lights would have to get turned off. John Kuehner noted in 2010, Current Expense will have the library monies.

Cher Curtis talked about the street levy that would be on the April ballot and that the council would like to have it passed, but then deciding as a council to turn off the street lights. She talked about the council stepping forward and asking the community to back them up with the levy, but in the meantime trying to get by this year as is with the lights and holding on. She suggested holding a community meeting, talking with people, doing a newsletter – finding ways to communicate directly with the community. There was discussion about using part of the utility tax for the Street Fund or part of Current Expense for the Street Fund. Tim Southern said by ordinance the utility tax is for Current Expense. The mayor noted money from other funds like Water and Sewer can't go towards the Street Fund. He said until the Current Expense Fund was solvent, he would not want to transfer any monies to Streets. He noted Current Expense has been losing \$25,000 a year. This fund currently pays for the police department, fire department, clerk, etc.

Brian Conklin said there were likely two reasons the levy failed this year, folks did not have the money and the sidewalk project. There was a lack of communication with the public about the sidewalk project and people thought the town was paying for most of the costs. He recommended the council consider keeping the lights on until they know whether the levy passes or not. If it does not pass, then the lights would have to be turned off. He felt once the town had said they were turning the lights off, and then didn't, there would be a credibility problem. Brian suggested council consider more than just a newsletter, and also doing emails, knocking on doors, etc. Joe Merry complimented the council on how well they did informing the public when they held the police contract community meeting. He supported the idea of holding a community meeting.

Council agreed to table the issue of turning off the street lights until they knew whether Avista would be allowed to charge a \$6 a month fee while the lights were out. Council further talked about funding options and agreed further consideration would be needed after the election.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Resolution 2009-05 Town/Rural Fire District Operational Agreement: Mayor Pfaff explained, as part of the Public Safety Feasibility Study, the town needed to put in writing the current arrangement with the rural fire district. In the proposed agreement, everything remains the same. Tim Southern **MOVED** to adopt Resolution No. 2009-05 authorizing the Mayor to execute an interlocal agreement with Whitman County Rural Fire Protection District #3 for a fire station. Rob Watkins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Resolution 2009-06 April 28, 2009 ballot measure request for the 2010 Street Levy: Following up from the last meeting, council was presented with Resolution 2009-06 putting the 2010 Street

Levy on the April 28th ballot. Andrew Flodin **MOVED** to adopt Resolution 2009-06 setting the April 28, 2009 ballot measure request for the 2010 Street levy. John Kuehner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Ordinance No. 368N – Allowing for metal skirting for mobile homes in mobile home parks:

Mayor Pfaff noted when zoning was redone, it didn't consider mobile homes in mobile home parks. Stephen Bishop noted by definition, a mobile home in a mobile home park, is mobile, and therefore metal skirting appropriate. The Mayor noted, outside of mobile home parks, metal skirt is not allowed. Tim Southern **MOVED** to adopt Ordinance No. 368N authorizing metal skirting for mobile or manufactured homes installed in mobile home parks. Andrew Flodin seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF CHECKS/4th QUARTER FINANCIALS/ADJUSTMENT REGISTER:

Annie Pillers reviewed the 4th Quarter Financial Statements with the council. She noted City Assistance in Current Expense had a shortfall of \$5,600 with receipts of \$18,361. She said for 2009 this figure would likely be only \$14,500. She reported the Current Expense Fund did not need any portion of a transfer from the Current Expense Reserve Fund, therefore the year-end was higher. She further reported the Street Fund ending balance was higher than budgeted because the final 5% retainage of \$12,167 for the sidewalk project was not paid until 2009, awaiting final state-required release documents. Additionally, there was not an additional increase for street work as anticipated. However, because the \$12,167 wasn't paid until 2009, a budget amendment would be needed. She noted the Water Fund had a higher ending balance than anticipated. This was due to revenues \$13,000 over budgeted projections, while expenditures in Sewer were under by \$5,800, in Garbage were under by \$5,200, and in Capital Expenditures were under budget by \$14,200. The main savings in capital expenditures was the water line extension project not being completed.

Brian Conklin asked destination-based sales tax and the projected impact it might have on revenues. The Mayor noted in 2008 the town did not see any real difference. Annie Pillers reported the increase was approximately \$74.

Annie Pillers went over the Adjustment Register, noting she had met with Larry Hunt earlier in the day and he had reviewed the transactions and approved the register. The adjustments were for year-end 2008 and included correcting double posting of interest earned, reallocation of a payment to Bill's Clean Air, reallocation of concealed pistol license fees to proper BARS lines, reallocation of expenditure and receipt of Cemetery fund expenses, and adjustment in a utility bill for a meter misread. She further noted that Larry Hunt would be meeting with her next week to complete the detailed review of the 4th quarter financial activity, bank reconciliations, reports, etc.

Andrew Flodin **MOVED** to approve the following bills presented to council for payment, and accept the adjustment register and the 4th Quarter 2008 financial reports presented. John Kuehner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Check Register #8914-#8919. Claims: \$0, Payroll: \$5,083.71. TOTAL: \$5,083.71

Check Register #8920-#8932. Claims: \$10,535.34, Payroll: \$0 TOTAL: \$10,535.34

ADJOURNMENT: Tim Southern **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m. Rob Watkins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Jarrod Pfaff, Mayor

ATTEST: _____
Annie Pillers, Clerk/Treasurer