

Town of Garfield
TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FINAL
Town Hall – September 24th, 2014

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Ray McCown called the meeting to order at 6:57 PM

ROLL CALL: Mayor Ray McCown, Mark Young, Daymon Marple, Tim Southern, David Jones and Sharon Schnebly. Staff: Public Works Assistant Brad Hasenoehrl and Clerk/Treasurer Cody Lord. Absent:

GUESTS: Cher Curtis, Cathie May, Marcus Munn

Marcus Munn is here to give us some ideas about internet for the office and putting up some cameras at the park, recycling shed and the compost site. Marcus spoke with the Mayor awhile back about the security cameras. He has put together a proposal with the latest technology that is out there. What Marcus would like to suggest is putting secure wireless here on the town hall building and all info would come back to this office. The cameras would be high definition and will give you the resolution similar to taking pictures with a high definition camera. It would allow us to be able to make out faces and possibly license plates at each facility. The Network IP would allow us to expand the system infinitely.

Marcus explains if you started having an issue in a certain area of town you could reposition those cameras to the necessary area. Mark Young asks will the cameras need an electrical source. The bid says there will need to be power within 60 feet of the camera and it shouldn't be too terribly difficult to accomplish this. The camera doesn't have to be right where the power is. Marcus talks about also installing internet services for the town. Marcus is willing to install high speed internet and provide the town with a router and service free of charge since the town was helpful in getting his equipment on the water tower. He could provide the hardware and connection for that. Tim Southern said we would like to switch to Cascade Computing rather than continuing on with the same service provider and that it just comes down to money. Marcus again says that he is very thankful for being able to use the town water tower to house his equipment and he will provide us with those services free of charge. Tim Southern **MOVED** to switch the internet service from our current provider to Cascade Computing. Mark Young seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Mark asked are we currently in any contract with our internet service provider? Mayor McCown confirmed we are not in a contract for their services; however we do pay the electricity that powers their equipment at the water tower in exchange for internet services. Tim Southern believes we pay the electric bill up at the un-used water tower just to have power at the tower in case there is anything that requires electrical service. We don't use enough to pay charges. Mayor McCown sees very little use for having power at this facility and thinks it should be disconnected. Sharon Schnebly says we can't rely on borrowed power so she thinks leaving the service active would be best. Tim explains the power used up there is less than charges for the minimal service charge and that the town should just leave the box live in case we need it in the future.

Marcus explains to the council there are three different proposals included in the packet and show the differing qualities and features of the systems that could be installed for the town. Tim mentions that we have some cameras set up at the park now. Marcus confirms there are 3 cameras there and they are low resolution maybe like 640x480. The systems he is proposing are about a 1,000 times higher resolution.

Kevin Pickron also here from the community to talk about how his assessed property values have recently tripled. Kevin explains property values are increasing and not decreasing making special mileages harder to vote for. Rentals are going to be more and more difficult to fill due to the cost to keep them maintained. Kevin explains he had to start calculating out if he could afford the levy amounts. All the costs are starting to add up. Kevin says the county has given him a new property value, and he feels it shouldn't have tripled. Tim explains to Kevin that the school district, cemetery and parks and recreation levies are not controlled by the town. The council has looked at several options to maintain the amount asked for on the street levy he tells Kevin if you can find a better way to maintain our street on the current budget, the council is open to suggestions.

Kevin said the County Assessor told him that Garfield has the highest taxes in Whitman County. Kevin asked the Assessor, what can be done to bring his assessed value into line, and was told he could contest the value of his property if he wishes. Tim explains to Kevin he needs to take a look at all the levies that are proposed and choose which are important to him to support. Kevin would like to know what happened to changes that were supposed to take place for the lights around town and bringing those costs into line. Tim said the council was able to balance the budget given that the proposed street levy passed, if it didn't pass then the town services would need to be cut or re-evaluated. The street levy pays for the street patching, snow plowing, cleaning of the streets and lights. In the past we had to ask the community, if they didn't want to pass the street levy then the council would need to cut services or get creative on how to continue to make the services work, for instance the council asked community members if they wanted to sponsor keeping a street light on and no one volunteered to pay for that service. No one likes the idea of shutting off the lights. Tim explains he would be happy to go through the budget and look at it with Kevin or anyone that was interested in the numbers. Tim feels that \$57,000, the cost to keep those services active, is cutting it to close and thinks it should be reevaluated in the near future.

Kevin explains that the town also passed the city tax on telephone and electricity usage. Tim says that is right and that is how the town balanced our budget. Tim explains the town had a public meeting about, the town even had a group come in and complete a rate study to justify the numbers. The town didn't want to have to come back to the community in 5 years and tell them that another rate increase was needed. Tim explains the town automatically puts money into reserves for unforeseen issues. Mayor McCown said the street levy doesn't fix streets and Tim confirms stating that it maintains them.

Tim goes on to say that the budget has changed a lot in the past years, the liquor money is not coming in as much now and city assistance from the state has continued to drop. The town got about \$22,000 a year in city assistance when he first started on council and this last year the town got around \$10,000. The only funds that pay for themselves are the water, sewer and garbage funds. Kevin questions Tim about the purchase of the garbage truck and where the money came from to repair the truck. Tim explains the garbage truck came mainly out of the utilities reserve fund, our old garbage truck was about dead and continued to cost us money to repair each month. The town bought a used garbage truck and had a bid of another \$5,000 to have a Curratto Can retro fitted to work on the truck. Tim said the town absolutely needed a new garbage truck as the old truck was done.

Kevin feels maybe it is time that the town starts educating the public about all the collected taxes. He suggests posting some literature at the post office so that they can become more educated on the matter. Cher Curtis said there is a letter that comes out once a year possibly the details could be put in there. Cher also said the town is going to get higher rates again this year. Tim confirms the water, sewer and garbage rates will go up again this year to keep up with costs.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Daymon Marple **MOVED** to approve the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting September 10th, 2014. Sharon Schnebly seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT: Chief Jerry Neumann present.

Chief Neumann said he came over earlier in the week and handed out the Town of Garfield police responses and the quarterly report. The handouts are distributed amongst the council. Chief Neumann explains he has been approached with questions about the policing services regarding the Town of Garfield. Chief Neumann asks Mayor McCown if he has talked with anyone about attending the police academy. Chief Neumann said if the current patrol is not providing a service then they need to talk about it. Mayor McCown clarifies the council had a closed meeting last meeting to discuss the concerned citizen letter. Officer Merry was asked to come in to the council meeting; when he wasn't present we decided to read the letter privately in an executive meeting to deal with it. Chief Neumann asked was this the letter that he also received in Palouse. Mayor McCown said yes and then they discussed the Palouse contract.

It was a discussion that happened in executive session it should have not been made public.

Chief Neumann is confused why Officer Merry was invited to executive session. Mark Young clarifies Officer Merry was not invited into the executive session; he was invited to come into the regular council meeting and listen to the letter details however he wasn't in attendance so the council decided to address the matter in executive session. The council was going to read the letter at open meeting but because of the contents it was decided executive session was more appropriate. Tim thinks the material shouldn't have been dealt with during executive session, if it is a contract they shouldn't been talking about it in executive session. Mayor McCown said the contract concerns a public employee making it an issue allowable to discuss at executive session. Mayor McCown makes it known all contract negotiation will be conducted with the Mayor of Palouse. Chief Neumann says I have been a part of every portion of this contract. Mayor McCown said if you would like to know more you should talk with Mayor Echanove, if the town plans to change the details of the contract they will and will do so with the Palouse Mayor's involvement. Chief Neumann states he believes the service is above and beyond and is evident with the list he provided showing the man hours spent in Garfield. Mayor McCown would like to table this subject for the time being until more information can be collected and discussed.

Mayor McCown said he followed and unlicensed truck that probably hasn't been licensed in more than 7 years part way to Palouse. The truck used to belong to a Garfield resident who has recently sold it to another resident. Mayor McCown said he had to follow the truck driving at about 15 miles an hour. He asked that the police follow up on this.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT: Brad Hasenoehrl

Water

- The water system is operating normally.
- There is a leak at Palmer's; they are waiting on the Port of Whitman to come Friday so they can begin digging on the leak.

Sewer

- The sewer plant is getting better and better each day.
- There is a new bagging system, once they have a chance to see how it works they will let the council know.

Garbage

- The exhaust pipe on the garbage truck has separated so it is a little louder than usual.
- Otherwise all systems running fine in the garbage department.

Parks and Streets

- Keeping up on regular items at the park.
- The street patching should be done soon. Tim asked why have we not jumped on patching, why is it so late this year. Mayor McCown explained mostly because Robby has been working on dumpsters. Tim thinks we should be working on the streets or else the levy will not pass in the future. Tim is concerned they will stop batching asphalt for the year and we will have to wait until next year. He believes the guys should have been on it in August. Daymon Marple reminded the council Robby and Brad were unable to get asphalt because they were sending it outside of Moscow and we didn't fit into the schedule. Mark would like to know if the availability is still there to be able to get it done this year. Brad says yes, they should be able to start on it next week. Mayor McCown is also disappointed in how long it has taken to get it done, the last report he had it was to be done in the end of August and here we are almost into October. The patches have been cut and dug out but no patch has been put in. Tim asks Brad, have you been ordered to clean up around the recycling center instead of doing streets and how long has this taken. Mayor McCown responded it has been about 3 or 4 days spent there in the last 7 months. Brad reminds the council they have their normal day to day stuff as well as various other projects including the sewer plant that have taken priority and Robby has been out almost 2 weeks for vacation this month. Brad reassures the council it will be completed soon.

OLD BUSINESS:**NEW BUSINESS:**

- Letter from the Dept. of Ecology

Everyone has been given the letter from the Department of Ecology. Tim said he read through it and it didn't look that bad to him. He feels we have tried to accommodate a lot of the requests made in the letter and that it looks like more clerical work than anything else. Brad confirms it will be more paperwork for him and Robby to complete. David Tysz will also need to have a plan of action going forward with the plant. Brad says the bio-cell has only been operational for 3 months and it could take up to 6 to get it up and running in a totally normal state.

Brad explains what their current routine is with the plant. They go out there every morning, check the water, checking screens, and make sure the plant is operating correctly. Future study time should be about an hour a day. This time doesn't account for the other daily things that have to be done. There are things that need to be done daily, weekly and quarterly. If we do everything on the list then we would need to be out there 3 to 4 hours a day. Brad explains they are faulting every month on their chlorine simply because there is no testing facility close enough to monitor their numbers and they are not licensed to fulfill the test until they have been licensed. They will have to get accredited for Chlorine and DO. As long as they are not accredited for it they will get docked on it.

They also have to meet the sample requirements and their equipment is not what they will need to get it done. Mark asks when they were here earlier that month, what was their recommendation. Brad explains our 5 year permit is up, and on the next contract they want us on it. Mark says that is not as critical, we have to start looking at what is crucial and what has to be done. Brad explains we have been keeping an open door policy with them; most of the big concerns are taken care of now, we just need to follow the rest of their recommendations. Mayor McCown says that David Tysz needs to be here soon to work on the agreement with us. The DOE also wants us to show that he is not working with someone else, that he is committed to being our contract operator. Tim says as long as he tells DOE he is no longer working with Evergreen Rural Water then there shouldn't be an issue. Tim explains from what he read the DOE just wants more paperwork trail.

Daymon questions the request; provide a copy of the town's pretreatment ordinance. Mayor McCown says that was brought about from the butcher shop and other industrial users who dump into the plant. Stephen Bishop's office has a copy of the letter and should be working to get the pretreatment ordinance in order. Brad also explains they want a plan with dates and timeline showing when Robby and Brad will test to become licensed operators of the plant and take over the facility operations. Mark says one thing he might suggest to the Mayor, he would like to see at each council meeting a record of concern and what has been accomplished. Show the DOE that we are serious about getting this done. David needs to draw up a plan to get us into compliance and each meeting have an update so we know exactly where we are at.

FINANCIAL:

Approval of Checks: Daymon Marple **Moved** to approve the following bills presented to council for payment. Sharon Schnebly seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Check Register # 11559-11562 Plus EFTPS
Check Register # 11557-11558

Payroll: \$6,137.51
Claims: \$85.15

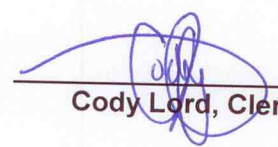
(Wrong Addresses, replace voided checks # 11543 & 11547)
Check Register #11563 PLUS DOR EFT

Claims: \$1,338.14 Total: \$7,560.80

ADJOURNMENT: Daymon Marple **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 PM. Mark Young seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.



Ray McCown, Mayor

ATTEST: 

Cody Lord, Clerk/Treasurer