

Town of Garfield
TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
September 11th, 2024 – 7:00 PM
405 W California St.

ROLL CALL: Mayor Pfaff, Council Members: Craig Mitzimberg, Jason Bankus, Roni Mundell, Connie Schaut, and Andrea Mills. Staff: Clerk/Treasurer: Cody Lord Public Works: Monty Rojas Absent:

REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING: Regular Meeting was opened at 7:00 pm.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS: Hailey and Dakota Taylor

Hailey said she was here to see what the update is since they haven't heard from anyone yet. Mayor Pfaff said she he last talked with Dakota, there has been work done by contractors that has totaled approximately \$23,400. There will be some additional bills coming and then some cost for afterhours for Monty and supplies the town used from its inventory to make the repairs.

Dakota said he heard the culvert is getting extended and wondered why. Mayor Pfaff explained the dig site undermines the culvert and railroad, and this is not acceptable to the railroad. To remedy the issue, excavation and an extended culvert will be needed. The railroad side of the culvert fix is not determined by the town, it is the railroad that determines how the repair should be made. Roni Mundell asked if this is possibly the railroad taking advantage of the bad situation and Mayor Pfaff said if the unauthorized dig didn't happen, then they wouldn't have needed to be involved. Connie Schaut said they could call the railroad if they have questions about the repairs that must now be made.

Dakota said he would like to see the other drainage issue fixed that runs southeast from the corner of D ST. Mayor Pfaff said they will be addressing the damage at hand, and then they will look at any other issues. Hailey thanked the council and mayor for providing them with information, so they know how things are progressing. There was some discussion about the amount of penalty that could come from a situation like this, where a resident digs un-authorized and hits town utilities. Marshal Handley said that utilities can elect to penalize up to three times that damages that are assessed.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Connie Schaut **MOVED** to approve the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting, August 28th, 2024. Andrea Mills **seconded the motion, and the motion was carried unanimously.**

POLICE REPORT:

Marshal Handley is present for the meeting and said there have been 4 calls to service, one was a domestic violence call. There are also a couple of code related issues that he has been working on. There was also some activity at the school and the DARE program will be starting next week. Marshal Hadley said later this month he will be attending a meeting in Olympia dealing with the 811 call before you dig service to discuss a violation for digging without approval and seeking a penalty for not following procedures.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT:

Water Everything is operating as normal. The DOH chlorination report was submitted on time with no issues.

Sewer Everything is operating as normal. The DMR was submitted on time with no issues. Plugs have been purchased and picked up to conduct the smoke testing. The plant is looking better, and progress is being made.

Garbage The garbage truck has had mechanical issues the last two weeks; one week there were electrical problems and the next week the breaks went out. The electrical harness had to be rewired. The metal recycling is filled, and the company called to have them pick it up.

Street/Park Everything is operating as normal.

Mayor Pfaff said he chatted with one of the 811 gals about the type of locator that the town needs to purchase to properly locate water and sewer utilities. It was discussed that the old grounding rod type of system is no longer needed. The town needs to purchase a new utility locating wand since the old one is not affective at locating with any great accuracy.

Andrea Mills asked about the irrigation bid for the park and Monty said they will begin that work in the early spring. Andrea questioned if the grass was dry in certain patches because of the faulty watering system? Monty said the system in those areas is not working correctly and they have had to shut the water off in the faulty zones. Craig Mitzimberg said it is probably a good time to shut off the RV park sprinkler system since the water is starting to run off more and pool on Spokane ST.

OLD BUSINESS:

The letter from the mayor and council has been sent to the printers and will be ready to mail out in the first part of next week. Residents of Garfield will have 30 days to rectify any issues in that letter and if not taken care of, Marshal Handley will be notified to address the issues.

Mayor Pfaff said the Methodist Church is in fact in the floodplain, so they will need to figure out what that entails. The site location talked about at the north end of town for a new fire station is not in the floodplain. The site beside or by the recycle center is also in the floodplain and not a suitable option. Roni said the fire department has expressed that they will be at the next town hall meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Verizon Wireless has expressed they would like to put a cell tower on south hill next to the water tank and will seek a 45-year lease with the town to locate the tower there. Andrea Mills said she would be opposed to the idea. Marshal Handley said that Colfax has two of them and the town may look at also collecting a fee for any other third parties that may be locating utilities on the same tower. Mayor Pfaff said right now all they need to discuss is the preliminary location for the tower and the monetary return for allowing the tower to be placed on town property. He asked the council if they would like to proceed. Connie Schaut said she was also opposed to the tower and asked if it could be tabled so more time could be spent researching before a decision is made. Mayor Pfaff said they will table it until the next meeting.

Mayor Pfaff provided the council with an update from JUB Engineering on the sewer plant and Facility Plan and reminded the council that interviews will begin for the clerk/treasurer position on Friday. He said he would like to start thinking about purchasing another grader. The cheapest one he has located is \$8,500 but most are between \$17,000 and \$21,000. Connie asked if they should purchase a garbage truck first. Mayor Pfaff said the garbage truck will likely be in use for another year, but the budget is such that they can manage both. This would allow the town not to have to rely on Whitman County to come and grade the dirt roads. Roni thought looking around is a wise idea and if one makes good financial sense, then make the purchase. Hopefully some of the guys in town that have run them in the past can assist the public works department in getting trained.

- Ordinance 495-N is a budget amendment that is needed for the 2024 budget. Fund 401 (Utility Fund) needs to be increased by \$101,000 to cover the JUB Engineering partially grant funded and partially loan funded I&I work and Facility Plan. Fund 410 will need to be increased by \$11,000 to cover some of the expenses that have occurred due to the unauthorized dig and damage done to the city sewer and water pipes and culvert. These funds should be recouped with the homeowner insurance claim that the town is initiating. Connie Schaut **MOVED** to adopt Ordinance 495-N, amending the 2024 operating budget. Andrea Mill **seconded the motion, and the motion was carried unanimously.**

Mayor Pfaff said if there were any other outstanding questions regarding the Taylor unauthorized dig, get them out so everyone is fully informed. Roni said she is still unclear why this is being charged to his homeowners' insurance. She thinks just because the town has the right to charge 3 times the damages, that they shouldn't do that to someone that made an honest mistake. Mayor Pfaff explained because he dug and hit a town utility, or any utility, it becomes a situation that the state handles in Olympia. If they want to fight it, they must go to Olympia to do that. Also, the railroad manages their own property, so once it was determined a portion of the excavation was on railroad land, then they have the authority to handle how they wish.

Mayor Pfaff said the town is waiting for the work to be completed and the final bills to come in and at that time, council can discuss what, if any fine they would like to assess the situation. Roni said she is willing to help in the discussions with the homeowners and says they will be moving next week. Mayor Pfaff said they will be presented with a final bill, and it will be evident where those numbers are derived from.

FINANCIAL: Approval of Checks

Jason Bankus **MOVED** to approve payment of bills. Craig Mitzimberg **seconded the motion, and the motion was carried unanimously.**

Payroll: Checks 16292-16296 PLUS AWC, EFTPS, DRS

Total =\$14,042.79

Claims: Checks 16297-16319

Total =\$53,170.41

Total Claims and Payroll: \$67,213.20

ADJOURN:

Connie Schaut **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. Andrea Mills **seconded the motion, and the motion was carried unanimously.** The council meeting was adjourned at 7:39 pm.


Jarrod Pfaff – Mayor

ATTEST:


Cody Lord – Clerk/Treasurer