

Town of Garfield
TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
February 11, 2026 – 7:00 P.M.
405 W California St.

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Cody Lord

ROLL CALL: Council Members: Roni Mundell, Connie Schaut, and Andrea Mills.
Jason Bankus absent.

Temp. Staff: Clerk: Barbara Dial-Flomer **Public Works:** Walt Fealy

Guest: Neal Leon, Michael Slavish, Jody Opheim, Sarah Anderson, Olivia Brackett, Robbie Reidinger, and Larry Triggs

REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M.

Andrea Mills requested April 22nd and October 14th off for excused absences from town council meetings. No objections were heard.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:

Olivia Brackett with the **Garfield Palouse Athletic Club** is present to ask about having a **5k fun run** and provided council with a map showing the route of the run. It would be during **Mayday and on Saturday May 16th from 8 am to 10 am**. They would also be **hosting a pancake feed** at the school for the participants.

Roni Mundell **MOVED** to approve the GarPal Athletic Club to host a **5k color run** in Garfield on **May 16th**. Andrea Mills **seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously**.

Larry Triggs was present to discuss the setback issue that he has at his property on 3rd and Jefferson streets. Larry **built a carport** on the non-streeted side of his property that **encroaches on the 5-foot required set back** from the property line. His neighbor has **agreed to sell him 15 feet of his lot** to allow him more space from the set back and not require him to tear his structure down. Unfortunately, Larry **built before having the building permit** pulled and a pre-inspection to make sure the setbacks were correct and his neighbor wasn't aware of the setback requirements at the time of offering him to build so close to the property boundary.

Mayor Lord said he believed a sale between the two residents on the 15 feet would work if the county recognized the boundary line adjustment and property sale. This could act as a permanent option to accommodate the encroachment. Larry will work with his escrow and the county to make sure the legal description is changed and a sale registered reflecting the property exchange.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Andrea Mills **MOVED** to approve the minutes for the Regular Town Council Meeting on January 28, 2026. Connie Schaut **seconded the motion, and the motion was carried unanimously.**

POLICE REPORT:

The Whitman County Sheriff's Office has now started patrolling Garfield, so citizens will notice an increased presence in town. We are waiting for Sheriff Myers to send over a bid for the spike strips, taser, and rifle that the agency will purchase. The vehicle is being worked on and when completed, likely an intra-agency sale will take place between Garfield and Colfax.

FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT:

Andrea Mills reported that the fire department had gotten their new truck and have a \$12,000 grant to get new lights and front nozzle. They expect the truck to be in service by June or July of 2026.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT:

Walt Fealy was present at the meeting.

WATER/SEWER

There is a new **water leak at 607 W Main St.** Currently there are 3 leaks that needs repaired in town when the public works can get caught up on higher priority items. The sewer plant is still down two pumps and waiting to find out if they are repairable or need replacing.

PARK/GARBAGE/STREET

The recycle center is starting to be cleaned out and currently two bays are properly organized. **Shon Clark** has been **assisting with the garbage route** while Walt works towards completing his **CDL training.** Mayor Lord also let the town council know that the daily rate for Shon to substitute on the garbage route is **\$300 per week,** for a total of **\$900 for the three weeks** he will be helping.

OLD BUSINESS:

COUNCIL POLICY AND PROCEDURE RESOLUTION:

Mayor Lord asked the council if they had all had a chance to review it and each of the members had. **Connie Schaut** asked about the **mayor pro-tem being a year commitment even though state RCW says a new member must be designated every 6 months.** She also wondered how a special meeting could be published if ever needed. The process of posting the meeting could involve posting at town hall, post office, bank and if needed and timely, the newspaper or radio station. Council members will receive an email regarding the meeting and possibly the "Text My Gov" service could be used to promote it. **There were no revisions to the policy as written.**

Connie Schaut **MOVED** to approve the **Council Policy and Procedure Resolution** as written. Andrea Mills **seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.**

SEWER AND WATER REPLACEMENT PUMP UPDATE:

Mayor Lord reported that the **Well #4 pump** is being built in Moses Lake at this time. It will likely be ready next week, **after a crane is sourced to pull Well #4 out**, the replacement will take place. They are still having some difficulty with finding the main water line that **ties into the 4" inch main line**. Jesse Parkins and Walt dug on the line but keep running into concrete diversions and there is no clear indication where the line is located. **No official map has been located** to identify where that line is. Jesse suggested the town hiring a high-pressure water and vac truck for the removal of the material in the lot and to expose the pipes. Digging is too dangerous since there are lines crossing and running in all directions. Neal Leon suggested calling Motley or Roach and seeing if they have a vac truck available. **Our highest priority is getting this completed in the next week, so that KME is ready to extract and set the pump and motor in Well #4.**

IT SUPPORT UPDATE:

Mayor Lord reported that **IT services with VC3 were cancelled** and Josh Gamez **sent a contract for his services for IT work going forward. This contract and insurance limits were sent to AWC for review and approved** as suitable for our needs. Josh's rate will be **\$125 per hour** and he will **provide setup of 2FA, email routing and uniformity for town hall, antivirus, backup and storage for town business and set up of a Verizon mini tower for better cell phone reception and computer login.**

Andrea Mills **MOVED** to approve the contract furnished by Josh Gamez for IT services. Connie Schaut **seconded the motion, and the motion was carried unanimously.**

CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER:

Mayor Lord explained now that town no longer has an in-house police department, the town will need to address how to handle code enforcement going forward. **AWC/RMSA has suggested the town contract this service instead of having a designated employee position.** Council was asked if they had a preference and they agreed that contracted services would be best for this responsibility. Mayor Lord said **Joe Handley had provided a letter of interest** in providing contracted services for **code enforcement for \$1,000 a month.** Council said they would like to research if there are additional options and open it up to see what was available. Cody and DonNell will figure out the best way to advertise the town need and see if any other interested parties come forward.

UPDATE ON STRUCTURE BUILT OVER THE ALLEY:

Mayor Lord reported that he and Jacob, the town building inspector have gone over to the property at 3rd Street and Jefferson and have looked at the structure that is encroaching into the easement. **The mayor also explained to the property owners that if or when they sell their property, they will have to include a disclosure in their real estate documents stating that they have built into the alley and that the town has authority to access the alley if ever needed.** To accommodate the building inspector the property owner needs to complete an affidavit that the building was built to code and the final construction of the walls were completed before the building inspector could inspect the work completed. This removes the liability from the building inspector.

EMPIRE DISPOSAL DRAFT CONTRACT:

Robbie Reidinger from the Garfield Meat Shop was in attendance to discuss how the change to using Empire Disposal would affect his business. Because Robbie has a compacted garbage rate, he will end up paying **\$1,500 more a month** than his current **\$340 monthly bill**. Robbie understands that the rate has been exceptional for a while but is concerned that this is a drastic expense for him to absorb. Robbie and Aaron from Empire have been in contact with each other and working through some alternative options.

There is a chance that he could self-haul to Barr-Tech, or Washtucna. Robbie is also exploring if there is a composting option that may be available. The mayor and council stated they are concerned about the rise in rates but that the town is in a spot where it must act. A **new USED truck** will be needed soon and to finance a **\$120,000 truck for 5 years** will result in an **annual cost of \$30,000** which will need to be absorbed by the current customers. In addition to this, the department is not making enough money to make it sustainable, so a rate adjustment is direly needed for the dumpsters in town, which are currently billing about half of what they should be.

Council will need to take a **hard look** at the **revenue versus expenditure** and see if the department is **maintainable** with the cost of a **new USED truck** factored in. Ronnie Mundell said she would likely lean in favor of supporting the Empire Disposal contract since it wouldn't require a rate increase for the bulk of the town's customers. Mayor Lord said if they weren't ready to decide, they could take another couple of weeks to do a bit more research, however, by the next meeting they would need to be ready to act one way or another.

Roni Mundell **MOVED** to table the decision of continuing garbage service or moving to Empire Disposal servicing the account, until the next council meeting. Andrea Mills **seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.**

GEN DIAL CONSULTANT CONTRACT FOR CAO/ GMP:

Mayor Lord said the **town is required to update the Critical Area Ordinance and Growth Management Plan** and has sourced **SCJ Alliance** to complete the plan with the **appropriated \$20,000 grant**. By **June 12, 2026**, the first part of the project needs to be completed and submitted to Department of Commerce. The **second half of the project will be due by June of 2027**. This is a plan that must be **updated every 10 years** and is important because it provides compliance to be able to seek future grant funding from DOC.

Andrea Mills **MOVED** to approve the mayor to **sign the contract with SCJ Alliance** to complete the updates to the **Critical Area Ordinance**. Connie Schaut **seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously**.

NEW BUSINESS:

LETTERS OF INTEREST FOR COUNCIL POSITION 1:

Mayor Lord said there are **3 candidates** for open council position #1. **Jody Opheim, Neal Leon, and Michael Slavish** have submitted their letters of intent for the position. Each candidate was asked the same questions and council will evaluate the candidates in an executive session and vote in open forum at the end of the meeting.

FACILITY PLAN and I&I MEETING JUB/ DOE:

Mayor Lord said that **Walt, DonNell, and councilmember Connie Schaut** attended a meeting with **JUB and DOE** to discuss the finalization of the **Facility Plan**. **JUB did a nice job** of representing the town and **encouraging DOE** to provide more input in the **current unmet needs of the plan** and address the **issues pertaining to the permit** that has been **pending for nearly a decade**.

There was some agreement on what could be altered or supporting language provided on the **DOE side so that JUB could fulfil the obligations** of the plan while making suggestions that are suitable for the community and to **meet DOE standards**, even though some of these standards are **not currently clearly defined**.

JUB suggested the town **start looking at land acquisition** so that the design portion of the process can kick off soon. JUB will be tapping into the **emergency management fee of \$10,000 to finalize the facility plan**. Also, JUB will be coming to take the **flow meters** and look through the manufacturing specs to **retrain the public works department on how to install and retrieve information** from the flow meters to make sure the right process is being used. This is an attempt to make sure we have exhausted their potential before moving onto purchasing or renting another option that DOE has suggested. The **meters** will be returned to the system **to watch flows coming in from both trunks of the sewer service** and

just before the main influent well which will validate the flow passing through the Weir meter measuring total flows.

AWC/RMSA MEMBERSHIP STANDARDS:

Mayor Lord explained the **2026 Member Standards** are to detail the **minimum requirements the town needs to maintain** in order to **fulfill the insurance recommendations** and be **responsible for lower deductibles if an insurance claim is necessary**. Mayor Lord asked council if they had time to review it and if there were any questions.

Connie Schaut **MOVED** to approve the mayor to sign the acknowledgement that council was aware of the member standards for insurance coverage. Andrea Mills **seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.**

FINANCIAL:

Approval of Checks

Roni Mundell **MOVED** to approve payment of the bills. Andrea Mills **seconded the motion, and the motion was carried unanimously.**

Payroll:

Checks: 17051-17057, AWC, DRS, EFTPS, & HRA VEBA **Total = \$19,643.00**

Claims:

Checks: 17058-17074 **Total = \$32,500.32**

Total Claims and Payroll = \$52,143.32

MAYORS' COMMENTS:

- **Granting Opportunities:** Mayor Lord detailed the agencies he has invited to town hall to talk about future granting opportunities for the Methodist Church building, restaurant space, infrastructure, and parks. So far there have been meetings with CERB, Ned Warnick with Design West, Port of Whitman County, and Partners for Rural Washington.
- **2022-2024 Audit:** The audit of the town's financials has officially started. They will be hosting an audit entrance meeting on **February 18th at 10 am**, and two council members are encouraged to attend. **The audit cost for this cycle will be approximately \$13,700.**
- **RV PARK Matter:** There is person who is interested in staying one month at the RV park. He said he is willing to pay \$600 plus utilities for the month-long stay. Council was in support of this rate and length of time.

- **Community Center Restroom Bids:** There are two community center restroom bids, and it entails removing and replacing the toilets and sinks in both the men's and women's restrooms. Council reviewed the bids and suggested the work could be done and weekday but Monday or Wednesday.

Connie Schaut **MOVED** to approve the **Brando Plumbing bid for \$2,771.84**.
Andrea Mills **seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.**

Mayor Lord said the council will move into **executive session per RCW 42.30.110 (1)(g)** to evaluate credentials of a candidate for council position #1. The executive session will begin at **8:38 P.M.** and will last for **five minutes**. The council will **reconvene at 8:43 P.M. to vote for appointment of council position #1.**

The regular town council meeting resumed at 8:43. Mayor Lord asked for the council's **vote on appointment of position #1**. **Roni Mundell voted for Neal Leon, Andrea Mills voted for Jody Opheim, and Connie Schaut voted for Jody Opheim.** **Jody Opheim** was announced as **newly appointed council seat #1**. Instructions were to visit with Mayor Lord or DonNell to file the "**Oath of Office**" to make the position official. Mayor Lord thanked the other two candidates and encouraged them to stay engaged and if another position were to come available, please express interest again.

ADJOURN:

Roni Mundell **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. Connie Schaut **seconded the motion, and the motion was carried unanimously.** The council meeting was adjourned at **8:44 P.M.**



Cody Lord – Mayor

ATTEST:


Barbara Dial-Flomer - Temp Clerk