

Town of Garfield
TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
February 25, 2026 – 7:00 P.M.
405 W California St.

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Cody Lord

ROLL CALL: Council Members: Jason Bankus, Roni Mundell, Jody Opheim (*via telephone*), Connie Schaut, and Andrea Mills.

Clerk-Treasurer: DonNell Ellsworth **Public Works:** Walt Fealy

Guest: Chad Hawkins, Eugene Kobzar, Neal Leon, Abel Rushing, Logan Pfaff, Michael Slavish

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:

LOGAN PFAFF AND CHAD HAWKINS:

Logan Pfaff and Chad Hawkins addressed the town council to ask if the dissolution of the town garbage department and contracting with Empire Disposal was decided yet. Mayor Lord stated that the town council has not yet reached a decision and that no action would be taken at the current meeting. He noted that a **formal public hearing** is scheduled for **March 11, at 7:00 p.m.**

In response to questions regarding the condition of the garbage truck, Walt informed the town council that he has not had a chance to drive the truck yet, but he knows of significant rust through the rear container and underbelly, as well as failing seals and gaskets. Mayor Lord added that the vehicle lacks a functioning backup camera, requires new steer tires, and is having power loss on grades. Jason Bankus shared that **McCully Repair Service** estimated that **\$5,000 in repairs** could extend the life of the truck, and Mayor Lord requested a formal bid for that work.

Regarding the department's finances, Logan Pfaff inquired about the maintenance budget and the impact of dissolution on town expenses. Mayor Lord estimated the **annual maintenance budget at \$2,000** and invited residents to town hall to review specific revenue and expenditure data. Roni Mundell noted that while the department generates \$175,000 in revenue, the majority is offset by operational expenses, leaving little for equipment replacement. Mayor Lord also reminded the public that Empire Disposal's rates are set by the Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission.

Roni stated that she feels the town should hold a meeting to discuss the numbers. Mayor Lord agreed and asked the town council and residents to hold a **Garbage Department Workshop on Wednesday, March 4, at 7:00 p.m.**

Mayor Lord also notified everyone that Abel Rushing is willing to help with the garbage route, and this will be discussed later in the meeting.

Mayor Lord closed guest comments at 7:21 P.M.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Roni Mundell **MOVED** to approve the minutes for the Regular Town Council Meeting on February 11, 2026. Connie Schaut **seconded the motion, and the motion was carried unanimously.**

POLICE REPORT:

There was nothing report.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT:

Walt Fealy was present at the meeting.

The Garfield Community Center restrooms have undergone a partial remodel, including the installation of new toilets, vanities, and fans. While the functional upgrades are complete, it was noted that a fresh coat of paint may be beneficial to finish the project.

WATER/SEWER

Walt reported that a vacuum truck was used on February 25 to locate the intake and outflow piping for Well #4. The pipes were located in the town hall yard, on the north side of the Evergreens. The next step is to determine which valves will isolate the intake and outflow for Well #4 to install a shut-off valve. We want to minimize service interruption to the town.

Phil from KME updated the council that the new pump for Well #4 is still **being built**. Once it is finished, he will schedule the installation, which will involve bringing in a crane to set the pump in place.

JUB Engineering were onsite on February 20 to assist Walt and Cody with the installation of flow meters. These meters are intended to detect and monitor ongoing Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) issues. Walt has been trained on how to retrieve the data collected and get it over to JUB for analysis.

PARK/GARBAGE/STREET: There is nothing to report at this time.

OLD BUSINESS:

CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER: Mayor Lord reminded the town council that Joe Handley has submitted a formal letter of interest for the Code Enforcement Officer position for \$1,000 per month. He also noted that a second resident expressed interest verbally, proposing a monthly rate of \$600. This second candidate

suggested a role focused on administrative tasks, such as issuing letters and citations, while requesting that the mayor and town hall manage all direct, face-to-face communications.

Connie Schaut asked about the specific requirements for the position, Mayor Lord and DonNell can gather that information and get back to the council. DonNell is currently contacting neighboring towns to ask who they use and gauge their interest in possibly becoming the town's contracted code enforcement officer.

EMPIRE DISPOSAL DRAFT CONTRACT: Mayor Lord stated that we will table this discussion until the next meeting, so that the town can also hold a public hearing.

NEW BUSINESS:

POLICE CRUISER SURPLUS: Mayor Lord reported that he consulted with the Colfax Police Chief, who confirmed they are not interested in purchasing the surplus police cruiser. Mayor Lord asked the town council whether to list the vehicle on a public surplus site. The town council reached a consensus and directed DonNell to proceed with placing the cruiser on a surplus auction website. She will look into how to proceed.

RESOLUTION 2026-03: SEWER UTILITY RESOLUTION LANGUAGE

AMENDMENT 2026: Roni Mundell **MOVED** to approve and adopt Resolution 2026-03 Sewer Utility Resolution Language Amendment 2026. Connie Schaut **seconded the motion, and the motion was carried unanimously.**

DAVID TYSZ CONTRACT FOR WASTEWATER OPERATOR AND CONTRACT WATER DISTRIBUTION MANAGER FOR \$800 PER MONTH:

Jason Bankus **MOVED** to approve hiring David Tysz to be the town's contracted wastewater treatment plant operator and the contracted water distribution manager for \$800 per month. Andrea Mills **seconded the motion, and the motion was carried unanimously.**

RESOLUTION 2026-04: AUTHORIZING THE CONTRACT WASTEWATER TREATMENT OPERATOR AND CONTRACT WATER DISTRIBUTION

MANAGER: Andrea Mills **MOVED** to approve and adopt Resolution 2026-04 Authorizing the Contract Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator and Contract Water Distribution Manager. Connie Schaut **seconded the motion, and the motion was carried unanimously.**

FINANCIAL:

Approval of Checks

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

Payroll:

Checks: 17075 – 17077

Total = \$3,712.71

Claims:

Town of Garfield

February 25, 2026

Checks: EFT, 17078 - 17085

Total = \$16,712.35

Total Claims and Payroll = \$20,425.06

MAYORS' COMMENTS:

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK: Mayor Lord stated that we haven't updated the handbook since 2018. He asked if the council had a chance to review the current manual and are ready to discuss changes.

Council members and the mayor had some suggestions and questions, they are listed below.

On Page 5: Staff should live near town, but staff should be close: How close is it near and do we want to state that. The mayor stated that yes, the town wants to hire someone from town but that is not always possible. Jason Bankus suggested the language stay the same.

Page 15: Can rewrite this to state 0-2 years employees accrue at 8 hours a month 3-9 years at 10 hours a month and 10 years and beyond at 12 hours a month.

Page 17: Language changed from FMLA to PFML and WA Cares.

Page 24: Town employee cell language: Make it clear all communication is a public record and not to delete.

Page 26-27: Credit Card Receipts/Policy: Need more language to clarify what's allowed and include and pass financial policy.

Page 28: 10.2 The wording of Town's needs to be changed to Mayor's.

Page 35: Change the language to include substance not just alcohol all through the manual/handbook.

Mayor Lord has asked the council to state how many hours are considered full-time and whether that is different for any department/employee. He also suggested changing the language regarding lunch and the length and having waivers signed if an employee works through theirs.

Page 11: Payroll Date Change: Mayor Lord asked the council to change the payroll dates starting March 1, to the 1st and the 15th because of the reporting issues that keep coming up with different agencies.

Jason Bankus **MOVED** to change payroll to the 1st and 15th of every month starting March 1. Andrea Mills **seconded the motion, and the motion was carried unanimously.**

Page 13: Performance evaluation; completing them every six months.

These were the suggestions brought up for corrections and updating.

Mayor Lord asked Jody if she would like to leave the meeting as he did not believe there would be any other action taken tonight. Jody Opheim left the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Roni Mundell **nominated Connie Schaut** to replace her on the **Finance Committee** and **nominated Jody Opheim** to replace her on the **Fire Board**. The town council reached a consensus and approved both appointments.

MAYORS' COMMENTS:

PAYROLL RATE STUDY: Mayor Lord notified the town council that the Washington State Auditor wants us to complete a quarterly rate study on payroll time and ask everyone to show where everyone is spending their time. We were supposed to do this after the last audit.

BISHOP LAW OFFICE: Mayor Lord notified the town council that Mr. Hanson with Bishop Law is fulfilling his military duty and if the town has an emergency, we can reach out to Stephen Bishop for assistance. The town may have to figure out a short-term solution if a situation requires immediate attention.

PUBLIC WORKS OPEN POSITION: Mayor Lord and Walt will be meeting with a candidate with a pesticide license. This will be the 2nd Interview. The candidate has some experience working with heavy equipment, and a little with water and sewer. Unfortunately, we are not receiving any applications from people with water or sewer operator's licensure. Roni Mundell asked if he seems confident that he would be able to complete a pass the required testing. Mayor Lord stated that he is. Jason Bankus states that Matt Roper is interested in applying and he has his CDL.

TOWN PROPERTY LOCATIONS: Mayor Lord stated that he will be going to the assessor's office on Tuesday, March 3, at 9 a.m., to locate the town properties on a map. He asked if any council members would like to join him and reminded everyone that only two can attend to not violate the OPMA. Andrea stated that she wants to join, Connie stated that she did as well, and Roni stated that she will be a back-up.

LOSS PREVENTION GRANT: Mayor Lord informed the town council that the town is eligible to apply for a loss prevention grant through its insurance provider. These funds, typically totaling several thousand dollars, are intended for repairs or replacements that reduce the risk of future claims. The mayor requested that town council members identify potential projects and submit their recommendations to DonNell for consideration.

ABLE RUSHING TEMPORARY PUBLIC WORKS HELP: Mayor Lord notified the town council that Abel Rushing has agreed to help the town by running the garbage route with Walt as he holds a Class A CDL. He asked the council if they were okay with paying him the \$28 per hour allowance or temporary help.

Jason Bankus **MOVED** to approve hiring **Abel Rushing for \$28 per hour** as temporary public works help. **Andrea Mills seconded the motion, and the motion was carried unanimously.**

CLERK-TREASURER HOURS AND PAY: Mayor Lord requested clarification regarding DonNell's compensation following recent scheduling changes. He noted that while a previous agreement with former Mayor Jarrod Pfaff allowed for a four-day, 10-hour work week to accommodate her obligations to the Town of Waverly, Mayor Lord updated this schedule effective February 1, 2026. This changed to a Monday-Friday schedule and was implemented to align with the town employee manual and ensure adequate town hall coverage following the departure of public works employee, and only two people on staff.

Mayor Lord reported that DonNell requested, and he agreed to new office hours of 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. He asked the Council to determine if her full salary of \$63,087, originally approved on December 2, should remain unchanged despite a reduction of ten hours per pay period. It was noted that maintaining the current salary would adjust her **effective hourly rate from \$30.33 to \$34.66.**

Jason Bankus suggested postponing the deliberation until the full council could be present.

Jason Bankus **MOVED** to table the discussion until the March 11th Town Council meeting. **Connie Schaut seconded the motion.** The motion passed with **Andrea Mills voting yea** and **Roni Mundell voting nay.**

JODY OPHEIM ABSENCES: Mayor Lord notified the town council that Jody emailed the dates that she will be unable to attend to the council due to prior obligations. She will be gone on March 25th, but can call in, May 27th, unable to attend at all, and August 26th, but can call in.

ADJOURN:

Jason Bankus **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. **Connie Schaut seconded the motion, and the motion was carried unanimously.** The council meeting was adjourned at **8:10 P.M.**


Cody Lord - Mayor

ATTEST:


DonNell Ellsworth - Clerk-Treasurer