

Town of Garfield
TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
August 26th, 2026, at 7:00 P.M.
Town Hall
405 W. California

CALL TO ORDER: the regular meeting was called to order at 7pm

ROLL CALL: Council members: Roni Mundell (phone in), Andrea Mills and Michael Slavish. Clerk-Treasurer: Rebecca Pfaff. Council Member Jody Opheim, excused absence.
Guests: Bruce Roper, Betty Walden, Kasey Hawkins, Ethan Hawkins

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:

Kasey and Ethan Hawkins are exploring leasing the restaurant space to create a part-time mercantile-style business with possible light food and beverage, with a focus on bringing more community involvement. They are interested in operating primarily Friday–Sunday, with possible special dinner nights, classes, and other public events. They would like to use the restaurant as a food-service space, while also providing a place for vendors to display and sell goods, and potentially providing a better location for the farmer’s market. They are also considering opening the tavern space in the back.

The Hawkins’s are being asked to develop and present a basic business plan explaining exactly what they propose. The council is open to reviewing options presented by Hawkins’s. Whitman County Port or Avista may be able provide some grant funding to help with building and tenant improvements.

The council wants to consider potential proximity requirements and liquor-license conflicts. The council is supportive of new businesses and discussed \$250/month rent as a possible rate, compared with a previous proposal of \$1/month for a year. Other locations, including the Methodist church, were discussed as alternatives, depending on needed updates.

Ethan Hawkins inquired about the possibility of upgrading the community’s 5G service. Verizon has presented potential plans for improvements, but no plans have been finalized or approved at this time. There is hope that a 5G installation could eventually be placed on the community’s water tower. Mayor Lord will be working to finalize future options for Verizon service placement and better coverage for citizens of Garfield.

Interview of Candidates for Open Council Position #4

Candidates: Bruce Roper and Betty Walden

1. What are your top three priorities for the city and why?
2. How do you approach making an unpopular or controversial decision?
3. As one vote on a multi-member body, how do you build consensus with other council members?

Executive Session: Will begin at 7:30pm and end at 7:35pm **RCW 42.30.110(h)**, to evaluate the qualifications of a candidate for appointment to elected office.

Decision – The voting council members were in unanimous support of appointing Bruce Roper for Council Position #4. Mr. Roper was sworn in by Mayor Lord @ 7:35pm for position #4 Garfield City Council.

REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING:

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: August 12th, 2026, Regular Town Council Meeting Andrea Mills **MOVED** to approve minutes. Michael Slavish **seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.**

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT: Matt Roper had the evening off, no formal report was provided.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Update on Fire Station Electrical Bids

3 bids received; 2 are for bidding replacements and 1 is for upgrades with Avista. We are seeking grant funding for the heat pump and box replacement, with the hope that the grant will fully cover the costs. Building safety: Mayor Lord believes the buildings are currently in a safe working condition by evening out the load on the electrical boxes and breakers, however, soon the electrical boxes need to be replaced with equipment that is up to code.

- Code Enforcement – Letters of Issues Sent to Citizens

The town plans to address repeated violators by sending letters to residents concerning issues that are frequently questioned at town hall. The 5th & Main trailer will be sent a letter and asked to clean up or move the dilapidated and unsafe trailer from the property. Elected officials would see improvements in property upkeep and overall care throughout town and will be asking citizens to address garbage, noxious weeds and obvious code violations. A notice was also mailed to the owner of the RV living situation that is currently not in compliance

with town code and to the resident who has a retaining wall that has been in disrepair for many years.

- Update on Recycling Services

The recycling and compost areas are open, but illegal dumping and misuse, particularly by non-residents, is increasing. The town will improve signage, install a floodlight, report violations to authorities, and work with the county on citations and enforcement. Residents will be reminded that the services are for Garfield citizens only, and violators may be reported to Whitman County Sheriff's office.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Reimbursement of Resident's Cost of Materials for Removed Fencing

The city removed two sections of a resident's fence and damaged two 4x4 posts while repairing a plugged sewer line. However, the resident's fence encroaches on town property. The resident requested \$33.16 for materials, this reimbursement would be a one-time exception. Future repairs will be the resident's responsibility. The reimbursement request was denied, with members noting the resident had previously been advised where the street owned property was located and he later requested the street as abandoned, which was also never granted.

- Bike Safety Concerns

Safety discussion focused on e-bike and bicycles in town, particularly safer highway/street crossings. Ideas included installing flashing crosswalk signs, painting street lines, and seeking state or TIB grant funding for signage and safety improvements. The city may consider a bicycle ordinance and review how other states regulate e-bikes. Members also discussed educating children and parents through the school and DARE program, encouraging helmet use, and seeking donations or grants to provide helmets. Michael Slavish will research e-bike regulations and potential funding for helmets with local partnerships.

FINANCIAL: Approval of bills to be paid. Andrea Mills **MOVED** to pay the bills. Michael Slavish **seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously**

MAYOR'S COMMENTS:

Mayor Lord invited council members to add issues to the agenda for future council meetings.

The public works department new hire worked part-time for three days before it was decided that it wasn't a perfect fit for the town's current employment offering. The town plans to use a part-time-to-full-time approach for future hires, with a six-month

probationary period being discussed and at-will employment. The employee handbook is also being reviewed and revised, pending legal review.

The budget is currently 65% of the year-to-date budget, which looks good. The goal is to begin preliminary budget work in September and complete the budget and financial policies by November. A council workshop will be planned for September to ensure everything is completed well ahead of the December 5th deadline.

The brother printer used for utility billing broke during the billing print cycle. Mayor Lord was in Lewiston at the time and stopped by Staples and purchased a new printer for town hall. The total cost of printer and ink was \$1,200.

The town has \$6,500 budgeted for road oiling, but currently only one road needs oiled and is the responsibility of the grain elevator that shares this road access in the summer. Mayor Lord inquires whether these funds would be better used for mowing ditches and improving roadside appearance, including purchasing a ditch-mowing attachment. Since the town may not need its grader, council discussed declaring it surplus and purchasing other more useful equipment. The county can provide grader assistance as needed and at an hourly rate.

The town was contacted by Vertical Asset Group on behalf of Verizon regarding potential use of a tower, possibly at the decommissioned black tower site. WiFiber indicated there would be no conflict. Mayor Lord wants to locate Verizon's original contract, determine the proposed coverage/footprint, and identify the appropriate contract for renegotiating terms. The town sees a potential revenue opportunity and may consider a contract that benefits the town.

ADJOURN:

Andrea Mills **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. Michael Slavish **seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.** The council meeting adjourned at 9:09pm.

ATTEST:

Cody Lord – Mayor

Rebecca Pfaff - Clerk-Treasurer