

Town of Garfield
TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
August 12th, 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: Jody Opheim, Roni Mundell (phone in) and Andrea Mills.
Clerk-Treasurer: Rebecca Pfaff and Public Works: Matt Roper

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS: Micheal Slavish, Betty Walden, Bruce Roper, Marilyn Westervelt, Tom Bronson, Nathan Arganbright

REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING:

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: July 8th, 2026, Regular Town Council Meeting, July 22nd, 2026 No Quorum Andrea Mills **MOVED** to approve minutes
Jody Opheim seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT: Matt Roper

- Water meters are in and Matt is hoping to get them set up with HD Fowler
- Matt helped Greg at restaurant
- Matt and David are taking 1 load a week to BarTeck
- Light on the flagpole is fixed in the park
- EdKa assisted in fixing the pump on the Jetter
- Water leaks at Styers and the water tower are fixed
- Carpets at Library are shampooed
- OIT (Operator In Training) status for Matt, is set up with Ecology, has books and is studying
- 10th and Adams leak in the middle of the road, will repair when we dig out the culvert
- Warner property needs pipe replacement
- JUB mapping demo with an engineer to help use software was successful. Will help with maps for locating leaks to a very tight proximity. GIS mapping will assist in making unknown infrastructure details in the future.

OLD BUSINESS:

8th & California, Marple property, the town will send a notice about living in RV. Purchasing a Building Permit and starting construction, will give 6 months grace. Continued allowance will further aggravate the situation in the long run. Sending out notices to all citizens out of compliance is necessary for Code Enforcement. Roni Mundell, temporary code officer, asked what if we ignore code, what are the consequences for that? Jody Opheim, applying “teeth” will be sending letters and fining people. The town can use old police tickets to issue violations that will need to be processed and paid through the JIS system in coordination with the county.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Interview for Open Council Position # 2 / Announce Open Council Position**

We will be questioning candidates for the Council Position #2 at this meeting and announcing an opening for Council Position #4 to be questioned and appointed at the August 26th meeting. Jody and Roni will be joining us by phone at this meeting.

There were five candidates that submitted applications for the vacant city council seat position, with one dropping out at the last minute. Each candidate was asked the same three questions as stated below.

Candidates: Michael Slavish, Betty Walden, Bruce Roper, Marilyn Westervelt and Tom Bronson(dropped out)

1. Why would you like to join the Garfield Town Council?
2. Describe one area you would like to see the Town of Garfield improve.
3. What do you see as the primary role of a city council member?

Executive Session: Began 7:19pm Ended 7:24pm **RCW 42.30.110(h)**, to evaluate the qualifications of a candidate for appointment to elected office.

Decision – Michael Slavish appointed and sworn in by Mayor Lord @ 7:26pm for position #2 Garfield City Council.

- **Fire Station Electrical Repair (Bids for Electrical Boxes)**

A fuse melted and shutdown the electric panel. This has caused another arc incident and is no longer safe. Avista has a grant for heat pumps and Whitman County Library has submitted for one panel to be replaced, along with putting in the heat pump system for AC in the summer and heat in winter. We will know more about this grant in the next few weeks. The system needs replacement, regardless, before much longer. The Town of Garfield will ask Beth at Fire Department to chip in some funds as well. Moving right along to get the bids with planning help from WCL, James might be at the next meeting with updates.

- **Conditional Use Application**

With much push back by the surrounding residential citizens of Garfield, the applicant, James Kuszniir AKA Kuszniir Holdings or IFN, has decided to remove his application for submission to the Garfield Zoning and Planning Commission.

- **Resolution 2026-14 Revised Pay Resolution for Public Works Assistant Position**

Jessica Johnson has 7 years of service in public works, water and sewer. She will be able to test for her Operator 1 status as soon as she studies for the test. Mayor Lord expresses the importance of keeping employees fair pay and appreciation for their service. Andrea Mills **MOVED** to approve Resolution 2026-14, Michael Slavish **seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.**

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

MAYOR'S COMMENTS:

Washer and Dryer at Sewer Plant needed. Roughly \$500 for combo, approved Matt to buy.

Public Works should be eligible for a \$400 clothing allowance for bibs, jackets, boots and pants. Michael Slavish **MOVED** to allow a clothing allowance of \$400. Roni Mundell **seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.**

The town is still down 2 pumps at Sewer Plant, heading into high flow season, we need to get those working/replaced. \$16k-\$19k approx. cost with KME help on the electrical side. Jody Opheim **MOVED** to purchase two pumps for the sewer treatment plant. Andrea Mills **seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.**

Roni Mundell left at video chat at 7:50pm.

Meat Shop- repairs for heating the floor to thaw the ground. They will be moving into a CONEX unit, between apartment and business at shop door. Asking for flexibility on stay at the location with an 8x6 ft electrical unit. Michael suggests a check-in at 60 days, if still not complete at 90 days they will need to petition council to approve consideration past this point.

Kids on bikes on the highway. There are no sidewalk restrictions in Garfield. Check with the State of Washington on sidewalk laws. Brett Meyers is aware of the situation. At the beginning of school year, the Sheriff's office should visit the school with a DARE officer. Presently, there are some safety issues with kids on bikes and properly crossing the highway. Community engagement memo might help to reduce the issues.

Lawn Mower Bids: We are surplus the mower from the WWTP for sealed bids. Andrea Mills **MOVED** to surplus the Mark X and sell to the highest bidder. Michael Slavish **seconded the motion and the motion was carried unanimously.**

Mower Bids:

*Lyle \$350-Winner

Bruce \$263

Deann \$150

Jothan \$110.80

The town might want to start thinking about a DATA center moratorium, to be aware and protected beforehand. Jody will have information for us to review in the near future.

GIS Meeting, years ago the town bought a Trimble GIS antenna with grant funds. They got the 3cm license for accurately dropping locations on digital maps. Can keep track of many layers of things in the infrastructure system. Brings new technology to our mapping and locations for easier and more efficient usage. Jody Opheim stated that being proactive with the infrastructure is a great step forward.

We have a candidate for the Public Works Maintenance position. She comes with many years of time in service on water and sewer systems and is prepared to move forward with licensing, given a bit of time to refresh her knowledge base. I will be asking the council to support a \$52,000 starting salary and we will be quickly sending her to testing to be our water operator I and sewer operator II, until Matt can get his licensing completed. I believe the agreement is a \$2,500 raise for the WOI and \$2,500 for the WWOPII which would move her up to \$57,000 once licensed. Matt is currently making \$68,000 and will remain in the supervisor position, as he has done a wonderful job in the public works department.

ADJOURN:

Andrea Mills **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. Michael Slavish **seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.** The council meeting adjourned at 8:11pm.

ATTEST:

Cody Lord – Mayor

Rebecca Pfaff - Clerk-Treasurer

