Town of Garfield
TOWN COUNCIL
PRELIMINARY BUDGET HEARING
REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
September 23rd, 2026, at 7:00 P.M.
Town Hall
405 W. California

CALL TO ORDER: Called to order at 7pm

ROLL CALL: Mayor: Cody Lord. Councilmembers: Roni Mundell and Michael Slavish(phone-in), Andrea Mills, Jody Opheim, and Bruce Roper in attendance. Public Works: Matt Roper and Clerk/Treasurer: Rebecca Pfaff

PRELIMINARY BUDGET HEARING:

Mayor Lord and Clerk/Treasurer Becky Pfaff have been completing budget preparation for all funds except 001, 101, and 401 and the notes are detailed. Matt will bring items to table if needed for large repairs in 2027. Budgeting for staffing, benefits, contracted vendors, PDS, Springbrook office, contract for Whitman County in 001,101 & 401 will come later at the beginning of November. We will look at levy and readjust by adopting an adjustment in December meeting if needed. Council asked to take the budget information home and come with questions and revision suggestions for 2027 final budget hearing.

Andrea Mills **MOVED** to adjourn the Preliminary Budget Hearing meeting. Jody Opheim **seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.** Adjourn at **7:04pm**

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS: Greg Partch, Sherry Partch and Daymon Marple

- Daymon Marple was present to discuss a proposed building permit for 204 North 8th Street. The property is zoned R-2, with setbacks along California and 8th Street, and the available area is very limited. Daymon is considering bringing in a Palm Harbor single-wide from Oregon, approximately 14 feet 8 inches by 68 feet, with a sloped roof. Because single-wide homes are not currently allowed in the city, he is wondering if a variance is required. The property and proposed home dimensions will need to be reviewed again to confirm the setbacks and determine whether the home will fit.

Mayor Lord said Daymon could reach out to Chairperson Tammy Howard of the Planning and Zoning but there is currently no allowance for single wide manufactured in the current code. This would take a change to the current zoning ordinance to allow such use but that would affect all of town and not a quick process. The setbacks also likely wouldn't be altered as variances are not typically granted to overcome lots with setback issues to accommodate the purchaser.

Daymon also discussed the need for water, sewer, and garbage service and would like to convert the existing garden meter to residential service. The building inspector has the permit, but it reflects the current single wide configuration. He is working through the construction and utility process. He has also indicated that the outdoor storage of items on the property is being cleaned up and moved. He is concerned about financing and the construction timeline. The council will wait to see how the building permit and variance process develops, with a possible six-month period to complete the concrete foundation and begin construction.

- **Greg Partch spoke** on behalf of private owner Dan McDaniel and shared Dan's vision for reopening and improving the restaurant space in Garfield. Dan, who was born and raised in the area and is now 90 years old and still has fond memories of the community and wants to continue supporting Garfield. He currently donates $5,000 annually to both the library and the GEM museum. Greg explained that Dan had proposed leasing the restaurant previously and is interested in helping make the space operational. Ideas discussed included determining what repairs can be made to the existing small appliances, completing electrical work, replacing the awning, and getting the propane grill & stove, air conditioning, and bar operational. Greg described himself as the "in-between man" and requested an executive session with the City Council to discuss possible next steps to discuss real estate and set up a meeting with Dan.

  The Council discussed possible uses for the vacant restaurant, including food service or other creative options, while noting that the building has been vacant for more than 10 years as the town continues to pay for utilities and maintenance. The city would prefer to lease the building to someone who can operate it, but a sale is also an option, which would require appraisal and council approval. Grants and support from regional organizations may be available for improvements. Two parties are currently interested, so the city needs to determine how it wants to proceed. Dan McDaniel is also the donor of the trash receptacles that will be installed downtown.

REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING:

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: September 9th, 2026, Regular Town Council Meeting. Andrea Mills **MOVED** to approve the previous meeting minutes. Bruce Roper **seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.**

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT: Matthew Roper

- **Water**
  - Warner line repair has been completed, with the service line now reaching the main line. The new resident and future residents will be responsible for the line from the main to the home.
  - Well 3 had an electrical housing meltdown at the meter. The meter has been repaired by McCully's out of Oakesdale and Avista has it back online and up and running.
- **Sewer**
  - The sewer jetting equipment is broken. Matt is working with Abel on repair options. Repairs could be costly and may require contacting Roach if the current options do not work. A possible replacement of the equipment may be needed in the future to continue to aid with sewer and storm line repairs.
  - The snowplow blade was taken to Edka for repair.
  - UV lights at the sewer plant have been burning electrical plugs. They are currently working, but the issue needs attention. Matt will be making these repairs in the future.
  - New pumps have been ordered but will require modifications. The pumps come with cords for connection.
  - There are multiple quotes being received to include the screw press, pumps, wiring, and work related to the influent hatch. All will be done to code.
- **Parks and Streets**
  - Streets are being swept in preparation for Harvest Fest, with half being completed today and the remainder tomorrow.
  - Additional supplies will be delivered later this week for the festivities.
- **Recycling and Materials**
  - Scrap metal container is full and awaiting pickup.
  - Compost container is full and awaiting pickup.
  - Recycling container is also full and awaiting pickup.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Update on Electrical Boxes at the Fire Station, Avista Grant

The **Avista grant** will provide **$23,000** for the fire station and library heat pump and electrical panel. **$2,900 will be the responsibility of the town for an electrical panel.** TNA will be able to complete the electrical work. Matt will supervise the installation for the town.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Public Works Employee, Matthew Roper six-month review.

Mayor Lord highlighted his progress, ability to understand and execute projects, and willingness to take on a significant learning curve. He has completed training and submitted the required paperwork for his OIT sewer license. He has demonstrated that he can take on and resolve a wide range of projects. Mayor Lord suggested a pay raise and encouraged council to discuss a pay increase in recognition of his performance and accomplishments. The proposed rate would increase to **$34.61 per hour, equivalent to $72,000 annually**. A resolution for the new pay rate will be presented at the next meeting, with the increase proposed to be retroactive to October 1st.

- Dept of Ecology meeting/updates

Mayor Lord, Councilmember Roper, DOE TA Andy O'Neill, Operator David Tysz, Matt Roper, and Becky Pfaff had an unofficial discussion regarding Garfield's sewer system. The group discussed concerns with the expensive treatment plants being recommended to small communities and the potential for alternative systems to be more practical options for a town our size. Andy, a Technical Assistant with the Department of Ecology, was supportive of Garfield and indicated he would take the discussions back to the Department of Ecology.

A major concern is inflow and infiltration (I&I)**,** which was identified as a root cause of the sewer plant's problems. The group believes the high-flow issues should be addressed while exploring options for a new treatment plant. Possible sources include stormwater entering sewer lines, groundwater infiltration, improperly connected plumbing, and connections from large roof surfaces in town. The summer flows were approximately 35,000–45,000, while rainfall of up to one inch can increase flows rapidly, reaching as high as 70,000 and beyond. The town plans to use dye testing and manholes to locate problem areas, map portions of the storm system that are currently unmapped and identify entry points at the larger roof runoff locations. The group also discussed installing flow meters around the sewer plant on the influent and effluent lines and pursuing emergency I&I funding through the Department of Ecology.

Demonstrating that Garfield can identify and proactively address the I&I problem may help support future plant sizing requests.

- 2027 Election Pamphlet Waiver

There is an option to waive the cost of publishing the voters' statement, which would eliminate the associated publication expense. Jody Opheim asked about the election budget, and it was stated that the current election budget is around $4,000.

Andrea Mills **MOVED** to sign the election waiver. Roni Mundell **seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.**

- ORD 507 Budget Amendment ~ 2 WWTP Pumps Purchased and Wired

The Town of Garfield Town Council is amending the **2026 Operating Budget**. An increased revenue of $23,320 in Fund 001 reflects the Avista Grant to install a heat pump at the library.

Fund expenditure changes include **Fund 001** Current Expense increase of $35,870 to expenditures including; $10,000 PUG Grant, $23,320 Avista to TNA Electrical, increasing $2,950 for Towns portion of electrical box at Fire Station. **Fund 101** Street Fund increasing expenditures by $34,358 for final retainage payment on 2025 TIB project. **Fund 410** Utilities Reserve Fund, increasing water capital expenditures by $20,735 of which $8,225 to cover overage on well 4 repairs, as well as $2,950 to cover electrical repairs on well 3 and sewer capital expenditures will increase to $32,510 total expense to cover 2 new WWTP pumps and electrical for these pumps, total estimated cost will be $20,000.

Jody Opheim **MOVED** to adopt Ordinance #507, to amend the 2026 operating budget. Andrea Mills **seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.**

FINANCIAL: Approval of bills to be paid

Claims: $7,942.53
Payroll: $3,571.10
Total Expenses: $11,513.63

Andrea Mills **MOVED** to approve paying the bills. Jody Opheim **seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.**

MAYOR'S COMMENTS:

- IACC Conference:

Whitman County Port has sent an agreement for the IACC conference and will be covering the attendance and room for two people from Garfield to attend the IACC. The

town will cover meals and mileage, while the Port will cover the hotel and conference costs for both Bruce Roper and Matthew Roper. Jody will attend and present on behalf of PRWA regarding funding. AWC will be paying for Mayor Lord's attendance. This conference is to bring all decision makers for sewer related projects together to get projects sourced and funded.

- Springbrook update:

The Springbrook system should be cloud based by next meeting.

- Floodplain Ordinance Revisions:

Mayor Lord will review the FEMA and SEPA emails ahead of the December 23 deadline. The ordinance will be drafted and reviewed by Eric, then passed to Council for review before the next meeting. Garfield has raised no objections to the proposed changes to the 100-year floodplain plan. The main remaining questions are what steps are required to formally adopt the updated floodplain plan for FEMA flood insurance purposes and what documentation or language the DOE and FEMA require in the final ordinance.

- Avista Electric car Plug-in at Park:

Becky will contact Avista regarding the card reader for AV charges and move forward with getting the payment system set up. The funds, or at least a portion of them, are expected to be received by Garfield.

- Mayor Pro-Tem**:**

Due to personal reasons, councilmember Roni Mundell stated that she would need to step down as the current Mayor Pro-tem. The Mayor Pro-Tem needs to be available to step in if the mayor is not present, sign checks, schedule & facilitate meetings, as well as handle other related responsibilities. The council discussed Michael Slavish to fill the position. Jody Opheim, Roni Mundell, Bruce Roper, and Andrea Mills were all yea votes in support of Michael Slavish filling the Mayor Pro-tem position.

ADJOURN:

Andrea Mills **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. Jody Opheim **seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.** The council meeting adjourned at 8:54 pm.

ATTEST:

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Cody Lord – Mayor

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Rebecca Pfaff - Clerk-Treasurer