

Town of Garfield
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – Preliminary Draft
May 27, 2009

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Jarrod Pfaff called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Jarrod Pfaff, Andrew Flodin, John Kuehner, and Rob Watkins. Staff - Public Works Superintendent Dave Ulrick, Police Chief Jerry Neumann, Clerk/Treasurer Annie Pillers. Absent: Larry Hunt and Tim Southern.
Guests: Brian Conklin

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Andrew Flodin **MOVED** the minutes of May 13, 2009, be approved as written. John Kuehner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC WORKS:

Reservoir Overflow Meter – Dave reported he ordered the new transducer today. Previously he had received a quote of \$715 for the same item from the technician Larry. The quote Dave got was for \$638.10. In either case, the town would still have to install the item, so Dave authorized the \$638.10 purchase. He anticipates the transducer to be built by June 3rd and take another 3 days to arrive. While talking with the tech support unit, Dave found out the average life of a transducer is 3 to 4 years and once it starts to malfunction the levels bounce all over the place, just like the current one has been doing. The current unit is closer to 6 years old, so it lasted longer than the anticipated life expectancy. Dave clarified the transducer measures the water level and senses pressure. He noted the transducer is bad, not the panel after all. After the transducer is taken care of Larry will figure out how to put the sensor in for overflow issues.

2. 2" Water Meter School & Meat Market – Dave confirmed once school is out (June 6th) he will be replacing the existing water meter. He has already coordinated this with Richard Leinweber at the school. He noted since cleaning the meat market meter it seems to be functioning fine but he still plans to install a new divider plate when the meat market is not so busy.

3. Smoke Testing – It was confirmed the smoke testing of town is scheduled for the last week of July (Tuesday through Thursday). Dave noted if the toilet has a trap, smoke will not come up. The Mayor suggested notification go out to town prior to the smoke testing.

4. Well Decommissioning – Dave presented council with 2 quotes for the well decommissioning: Fogle Pump at \$10,580 and H2O Well Drilling at \$12,500. Council approved accepting the Fogle Pump quote.

5. Garbage Truck Repair – a new hydraulic line was needed for the garbage truck this past week.

6. Recycle Appliance Dump Box - Dave recently talked with the Whitman County landfill about getting a dump box here in Garfield for appliances. They said it would take a couple of weeks before they could get to it, maybe 3 weeks. Dave said this was a better option than filling the town's garbage truck. Once the dump box was filled, the county can come and get it.

POLICE DEPARTMENT:

Council was provided with the bi-weekly time log. Chief Neumann clarified that a stray cat was recently found dead, but there is no indicator of what might have happened. Further, he clarified it takes about 30 to 40 minutes to set up the radar trailer, including removing the tongue for security reasons, and about 4 hours to recharge the battery. The time report accounts for when the officers are in town and when they leave.

Chief Neumann went over the proposed Justice Assistance Grant for police department equipment.

He noted the initial items proposed for the grant were 3 mobile data terminal lap tops, an exterior cell phone booster antenna, 2 rifles and a radar trailer. Some of the items came in more expensive than anticipated, so he is proposing holding off on the radar trailer. He said the town should have more access to the existing shared radar trailer and he was addressing this with the Sheriff. He noted the antenna will increase cell phone reception, the lap tops will enhance wireless communications in the car, and the additional 2 patrol rifles will enhance the department's ability to respond to an active shooter type situation in or around Garfield. There is no match for this \$9,999.99 grant and all the equipment would be owned by the Town of Garfield.

Rob Watkins **MOVED** the Mayor be given authority to sign the CTED Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) police grant application. Andrew Flodin seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Chief Neumann felt May Day was a huge success. He said there were no reported incidence at any time of things getting out of hand. To provide coverage all day, into the early hours of the next day, additional law enforcement help was hired from Oakesdale.

FIRE DEPARTMENT:

Mayor Pfaff announced that Brian Conklin agreed to be the new Fire Chief. The Mayor said he had looked at the budget and was in favor of raising the wage. Right now the position pays \$50 a month. The rural fire district also pays the fire chief a wage. Rob Watkins asked about the overall budget and the Mayor noted the current budget is about \$11,000. Rob asked if the wage increase would take away from other budget line items. The Mayor agreed to come up with a number and present it to council.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Ordinance No. 370N – Budget Amendment: Mayor Pfaff reported this proposal amends the Utilities Equipment Reserve fund for the purchase of the water/sewer camera system, locator and transmitter. It was clarified this purchase was not included when the initial budget was adopted. Rob Watkins **MOVED** to approved Ordinance No. 370N Amending the Utilities Equipment Reserve Fund for the purchase of the water/sewer camera system, locator and transmitter. John Kuehner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Town Clean Up: Council discussed a recent letter sent anonymously to council expressing concern about the condition of properties in town and the council's responsibility to clean things up. Council talked about balancing private property rights of the individual. Chief Neumann noted if there was a health hazard then action can be taken, but unless there were covenants established for a neighborhood, regulating what people do or leave in their yards is a private property right. He noted junk vehicles were a different issue that can be addressed through the junk vehicle ordinance. Chief Neumann cited the current requirements of the Palouse nuisance ordinance, noting it was related to putrid, unsound, unwholesome situations that harbored rats, mosquitoes, flies, etc. He offered to review the town's current ordinance. Rob Watkins felt it was a private property owner issue that often involves the owner working with a renter. Mayor Pfaff supported the rights of private property owners. Council agreed if there was a health or safety issue, or grass is tall enough it's a fire hazard, something should be done, but conforming to a neighbor's standard was not a regulatory issue. Brian Conklin noted Port Orchard tried to address a similar issue about 14 or 15 years ago and it boiled down to a health code issue in superior court. Council talked about a variety of options available to folks in town for cleaning up including the 2 town-clean up days each year, plus the recycle center drop off for appliances, lawn mowers, etc. Chief Neumann talked about taking a soft approach and letting people know about the options available to them for clean-up. No action was taken by council.

3. School Utility Charges: Dave Ulrick reported meeting early in the day with Neva Kuehner from

the school regarding their current sewer and garbage rates. They are trying to cut costs where possible. Right now they are charged for 20 sewer connections at \$35 each for a total of \$700 a month and for 1 heavy dumpster and 3 light dumpsters for a total of \$259 a month. The request was to maybe cut this down during the 3 months school is out with 1 sewer connection and 2 light dumpsters, since there are only 4 employees around 4 days a week. The estimated cost savings over 3 months would be approximately \$2,400. Rob Watkins talked about perhaps 2 months since school is in the first part of June and starts up the last week of August. He also talked about how to address other issues during the summer such as board meetings, events, etc., that affect usage. It was not clear how many toilets are on the school property. The Mayor said once something like this was started, the town would need a very defensible position when the next person asked. Brian Conklin said he could think of 3 churches in town who would want to ask for a reduction since they only use their buildings one day a week. Both Rob Watkins and Dave Ulrick said what about the person who is not home all day and not using the facilities or the person that doesn't use 2 garbage cans each week, asking for a reduction. The Mayor said this would be how it would start and how do you defend the next no. Rob Watkins said he did not want to start this. John Kuehner said he was not involved in the situation and had no opinion. Council took no action on the matter.

APPROVAL OF CHECKS/1st QUARTER 2009 SPOILED CHECK REGISTER:

John Kuehner **MOVED** to approve the 1st Quarter 2009 Spoiled Check Register and the following bills presented to council for payment. Rob Watkins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Check Register #9046-#9058. Claims: \$8,840.83, Payroll: \$5,319.66. TOTAL: \$14,160.49.

ADJOURNMENT: Andrew Flodin **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 p.m. John Kuehner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Jarrold Pfaff, Mayor

ATTEST: _____
Annie Pillers, Clerk/Treasurer