

Town of Oakesdale
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
For
May 6, 2024

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Dennis Palmer called the council meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. Guest Roger Hager led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- II. **ROLL CALL:** Mayor Dennis Palmer, Bill Auvil, Randy Robinson, and Bruce Palmer. Council members Claudia Louk and Al Evans were not in attendance. Also present were Mary DeGon, Clerk/Treasurer, and Brad Sullivan, Public Works Director.
- III. **INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:** Kris Johnson, Kim Anderson, Roger Hager, Pete Baljo, and Shon & Dee Eck.
- IV. **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:** Council members reviewed April 1, 2024 minutes. Randy Robinson made the motion to approve the minutes as written. Bill Auvil seconded the motion, all council members voted yes – **motion passed.**
- V. **TOWN MARSHAL REPORT:** Keith Cooper was on duty at his other job and not able to attend tonight. He did submit his department’s report for March & April 2024 involving thirteen cases ranging from suspicious, driving while license suspended, accident, domestic disputes, civil issue, traffic offense, welfare checks, 9-1-1 hangup, unattended death, and disorderly person.
- VI. **PUBLIC WORKS REPORT:** Brad Sullivan gave the department’s report for April 2024. Current projects completed were patching of potholes, relaced gas tank on backhoe, replaced muffler on orange street sweeper, data retrieved off the flow meter for infiltration of sewer system report, removed old apple tree on Steptoe, purchased flowers from Oakesdale FFA for City flower pots, loaded outdoor recycling material container, and read water meters.
- VII. **OLD BUSINESS:**
 - A. **BUSINESS INCUBATOR MAINTENANCE** – Tom with Foster Construction will be coming by in the next few weeks to look at the business incubator flooring and see if he will give us a bid to replace the carpet with some kind of tile. Randy Robinson would like a commitment to rent the space before we spend money to repair the floor.
- VIII. **NEW BUSINESS:**
 - A. **OLD FLOUR MILL TO BE SAVED** – The Innovia Foundation that serves Eastern Washington and North Idaho has entered into an agreement to buy the historic J.C. Flour Mill from Moscow organic farmer Mary Jane Butters. Innovia has raised \$120,000 to purchase the mill. The funds include private donations and a major gift from Oakesdale native and retired CEO and Founder of Empire Bolt and Screw in Spokane, Larry Stanley. Innovia is set to take ownership of the mill on May 2nd. Innovia officials met with the

Port of Whitman County Commissioners to discuss a potential partnership for the mill going forward. The foundation would like to see the mill be restored into a space that can be an economic driver for Oakesdale. Ideas have included a brewery, business incubator or an event center. Design West Architects in Pullman were hired to examine the feasibility of restoring the old mill. The engineering firm determined that the building is in good condition and restoration work is estimated at a cost of six million dollars. Innovia would seek grants and donations to fund the renovation work. The foundation doesn't want to own the mill long-term and officials asked the Port Commissioners if they might be interested in partnering on the project to eventually own the mill. The Port board was receptive to the idea and will continue to discuss the mill at future meetings.

Council members received a copy of the news bulletin from Innovia, a draft fund-raising letter to be sent to the Oakesdale Nighthawk alumni and a poster of a community meeting to be held at the fire station on Monday, May 13th from 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. to learn more about the purchase of the mill, the feasibility study, and the request to have the Port of Whitman County take eventual ownership. Everyone is encouraged to come eat hamburgers & hot dogs and to share your thoughts!

Pete Baljo wants to see us maximize our local politicians and senators and encourage them to attend the public meeting. Pete knows an artist than can make a plaque for the old flour mill out of the brass in our old water meters. He would like some old meters saved for that project.

- B. CEMETERY CELL TOWER UPDATE** – Council members reviewed a press release from the Port of Whitman that on April 5th the Port of Whitman County Commissioners authorized the Port Executive Director to sign an Economic Development and Tourism Agreement with the Oakesdale Cemetery Board. The Port will provide the Oakesdale Cemetery Board with a \$13,000 contribution to install an access road to the cellular tower in Oakesdale. Building this road will allow service vehicles to access the new cell tower and will provide Oakesdale, Farmington, and other surrounding areas with improved cell coverage.
- C. DROUGHT DECLARED BY DOE** – Council members reviewed an email we received from the Department of Ecology declaring a drought emergency for most of Washington State excluding the service areas of the cities of Seattle, Tacoma, and Everett. DOE has a drought 2024 webpage for information and tips on preventing drinking water shortages or outages.
- D. SLFRF COMPLIANCE REPORT – due 04/30/24** – Council members received copies of the State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) Report that was submitted on April 24th. The report shows what we have spent our funds on for improved infrastructure for the water and sewer system. In 2021 we received \$61,333 and in 2022 another \$61,333 totaling \$122,666. We have a remaining \$10,165.32 to spend by the end of this year. Our projects were replacing the electrical panel for Well #4; upgrade the float meter for discharging the lagoons, install a generator at the discharge station and improve mandatory chlorine treatment building & testing station site; upgrade the water system

infrastructure with digital read water meters for improved drinking water; update and bring the waste water treatment plant into compliance, upgrade waste water lift station equipment and grinder controls and move them above ground, add aerators to lagoon pond to aid in pH control; replace a fire hydrant in poor condition.

IX. COUNCIL MEMBERS' BUSINESS:

BILL – He appreciated the junk vehicle/garbage reminder in the last Town’s newsletter.

BRUCE – He agreed with Bill “ditto”

RANDY – Kudos to everyone who have been involved with the old mill purchase.

BRAD SULLIVAN – There are non-licensed vehicles parked along city streets that are not used and, in our way, as we sweep streets or plow streets. This will be referred to Keith.

X. TREASURER’S REPORT/APPROVAL OF CHECKS: Council members reviewed the Treasurer’s Report, Check Register and Receipt Register for April 2024. Bruce Palmer made the motion to approve paid checks #28992 - #29027 in the amount of \$15,420.85 for claims and \$22,373.53 for payroll totaling \$37,794.38 from April 2, 2024 through May 2, 2024. Bill Auvil seconded the motion, all council members voted yes – **motion passed.**

XI. ADJOURNMENT: Randy Robinson made the motion to adjourn the council meeting at 7:42 p.m. Bruce Palmer seconded the motion, all council members voted yes – **motion passed.**

DENNIS PALMER, MAYOR

ATTEST:

MARY DEGON, CLERK/TREASURER