

*Town of Oakesdale*  
**TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**  
*for*  
*October 7, 2024*

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Dennis Palmer called the council meeting to order at 7 p.m. Brad Sullivan led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- II. **ROLL CALL:** Mayor Dennis Palmer, Bill Auvil, Al Evans, Claudia Louk, Bruce Palmer and Randy Robinson. Also present were Mary DeGon, Clerk/Treasurer, Brad Sullivan, Public Works Director and Keith Cooper, Town Marshal.
- III. **INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:** Nolan Glueckert with the Innovia Foundation, Kris Johnson, Kim Anderson, Pete Baljo, Frank Sabo, Conny Crow, and Greg Partch.

Nolan – He wanted to give council members the latest updates on the talks between Innovia and the Port of Whitman regarding the old mill. On October 21<sup>st</sup>, the Port of Whitman will be making a presentation at our council meeting to learn more about the Port’s anticipated ownership of the old mill, the plan to apply for site clean-up funding, and the Port’s Whitman County Site Reuse & Revitalization Program. The Port will then have their meeting on October 23<sup>rd</sup> at 9 a.m. in Colfax to discuss the old mill and Nolan encouraged as many people as possible from Oakesdale should attend the meeting in support of the Port taking ownership of the old mill from Innovia. Kara Riebold from the Port will have their maintenance coordinator come inspect the mill property and see what they need to do to get it ready for winter. Innovia will continue endowment fund raising for the old mill and continue to make an impact in our community. The Port will be hiring a coordinator through the Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) grant that was awarded for the old mill project.

Conny – She just came from Innovia’s celebration and has great news for us! They were awarded the Heart & Soul grant! They will have two coaches to work with herself and Josey Booth. They will help give our community visions.

- IV. **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:** Council members reviewed September 16, 2024 minutes. Bill Auvil made the motion to approve the minutes as written. Randy Robinson seconded the motion, all council members voted yes – **motion passed.**
- V. **TOWN MARSHAL REPORT:** Keith Cooper gave his department’s report for September 2024. There were eight cases ranging from trespassing, warrant arrest, domestic dispute, non-injury accident, civil issue, animal problem, fraud and other calls. Whitman County handled a few calls for Oakesdale while Keith was attending training out of state.
- VI. **PUBLIC WORKS REPORT:** Brad Sullivan reported to council the projects they completed last month. They cleaned off the railroad right-of-way behind the old mill, installed a new water service line at City Hall/Museum, and mowed the ditches around Town with the Tiger mower.

Brad asked council members if they would consider the old generator from the grinders to be declared surplus. We were told by an electrician and a technician from Cuummins that it is so old that there are no longer parts available to fix it. It does start, but can't maintain RPMs. It is an electronic issue that involves replacing the boards that are no longer made. It's only good for scrap now in the condition it is in. Randy Robison made the motion to declare the generator surplus for scrap. Bruce Palmer seconded the motion, all council members voted yes – **motion passed.**

**VII. OLD BUSINESS:**

- A. 2025 BUDGET** – Council members reviewed the changes to the 2025 budget since the last council meeting. Our employee health premiums will increase by 7.3% with no increases to the dental, vision or EAP insurance premiums. TIB application has a recommendation from the application committee to award the Town of Oakesdale with \$400,000 for ADA ramp upgrades. The initial application was for \$1,101,200 so the budget has been adjusted accordingly. Bruce Palmer had asked at the last council meeting if the 2025 budget for Water/Sewer reflected the increase in water rates should we be approved for the Public Works Board Funding grant of \$2,572,600. Mary noted the increase had not been included in the 2025 budget yet. An increase of \$40 per month per household has been added to the budget. If we are not approved for the funding, then the rate increase and the grant funds will be removed from the budget. The month of October is when the staff completes their time studies to see how much time they spend in our three operating funds – Current, Streets and Water/Sewer. The payroll and benefits will be adjusted accordingly to the results of the time studies.
- B. WEBSITE REMODEL** – Ben Crossett was not able to attend tonight's meeting. However, he is working on the News & Events section of the new website now. He will then add photos to the gallery. He has reached out to Anne Hockett for some community photos she has taken for use.

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS:**

- A. RESOLUTION NO. 2024-432 INCREASE OF 1% FROM COUNTY** – Whereas the population of this governing body is less than 10,000 population, by RCW 84.55.120 we are entitled to ask the County for an additional 1% increase from the previous year in the amount of \$562.77. Randy Robinson made the motion dispense with the reading of Resolution 2024-432. Claudia Louk seconded the motion and all council members voted yes – **motion passed.** Randy Robinson made the motion adopt Resolution No. 2024-432 requesting an additional 1% increase over last year's levy amount totaling \$562.77. Bill Auvil seconded the motion, four council members voted yes and one council member voted no – **motion passed.**
- B. 2025 LEVY CERTIFICATION** – The Levy Certification for our regular and excess levies needs to be submitted to Whitman County by November 15<sup>th</sup>. Our regular Levy amount will be \$56,840.61, Excess Levy amount of \$14,000 for Safety; \$60,000 for Street Maintenance; and \$50,000 for asphalt street work totaling \$124,000.

- C. **\$75,000 CERB GRANT FOR OLD MILL – Presentation on 10/21/24** – Council members received copies of a news release from the Port of Whitman announcing they were awarded \$75,000 grant from the Washington State Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) for its Oakesdale Mill project. The grant will fund a feasibility study to assess the suitability of the historic Oakesdale Flour Mill for development and explore potential future uses for the space. The CERB grant brings the Port one step closer to preserving the Oakesdale Mill and creating economic opportunities from this historical community asset. They are grateful to the people of Oakesdale for their overwhelming support of the project and to the CERB Board for their investment in the Oakesdale Mill’s future.

IX. **COUNCIL MEMBER’S BUSINESS:**

**BILL** – None

**AL** – None

**CLAUDIA** – None

**BRUCE** – Kids are blowing through the intersections at night while riding their electric scooters. There is going to be an accident someday.

**RANDY** – He asked how we are looking on cleaning the streets off with extra vehicles, trailers and RVs for plowing streets this winter. Mary had a message in the Town’s October newsletter making that same request to have the extra vehicles removed from city right-of-way’s and/or streets and put them on their own property.

- X. **TREASURER’S REPORT/APPROVAL OF CHECKS:** Council members reviewed the Treasurer’s Report, Check Register and Receipt Register for September 2024. Al Evans made the motion to approve paid checks #29204 - #29231 in the amount of \$8,737.82 for claims and \$13,761.88 for payroll totaling \$22,499.70 from September 18, 2024 through October 1, 2024. Bruce Palmer seconded the motion, all council members voted yes – **motion passed**.

- XI. **ADJOURNMENT:** Randy Robinson made the motion to adjourn the council meeting at 7:54 p.m. Bill Auvil seconded the motion, all council members voted yes – **motion passed**.

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**DENNIS PALMER, MAYOR**

**ATTEST:**

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**MARY DEGON, CLERK/TREASURER**

