

Town of Oakesdale
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
for
October 21, 2024

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Palmer called the council meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. The meeting was moved next door to the museum to accommodate all the visitors for the Port of Whitman’s presentation. Aaron McMurray from the Innovia Foundation led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- II. **ROLL CALL:** Mayor Dennis Palmer, Bill Auvil, Al Evans, Claudia Louk and Bruce Palmer. Councilman Randy Robinson was not in attendance. Also present was Mary DeGon, Clerk/Treasurer.
- III. **INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:** State Representative Joe Schmick, Shon & Dee Eck, Kara Riebold, Executive Director at Port of Whitman, Ward McDonald with Haley & Aldrich, Inc, Robin Adams, Kris Johnson, Kim Anderson, Laurie Brown, Laureen Brown, Karl Webber, District#1 Port of Whitman County Commissioner, Pete Baljo, Sue Hooper, Teresa Simpson with the Whitman County Gazette, Mike & Debbie Crossett, Gail Parsons, Heather McIntee, Gary Shrope, Conny Crow, Katie Hockett, Greg Partch, Ken & Karen Lindgren, Doug & Rachel Hovde, and Rebekah Huber, Media Community Outreach Manager at the Port of Whitman.
- IV. **PORT OF WHITMAN COUNTY PRESENTATION:** Kara Reibold with the Port of Whitman County announced to the packed room that the Innovia Foundation and the Port will do the transfer of property of the old mill this Wednesday, October 23rd at the Port’s next meeting. The Innovia Foundation will transfer ownership of the mill to the Port of Whitman with the full support of the Oakesdale community and Town Council. There are documents that still need to be approved by both parties: Right of First Refusal – Should the Port ever decide to sell the Old Mill, the Town has the right to elect to acquire the mill under the same terms and conditions as set forth in the offer and the Town shall be entitled to a \$200,000 reduction of the purchase price; The memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – The parties agree to certain priorities and good-faith commitments regarding the mill; Non-Exclusive Interlocal License Agreement – allows the Town to use the old mill property from time-to-time as mutually agreed to by the Port for community events including but not limited to Old Mill Days. The Port received a \$75,000 CERB award for the old mill. The grant will fund a feasibility study to access the suitability of the historic flour mill for development and explore potential future uses for the space. Warren McDonald from Haley & Aldrich then spoke about the due diligence of making sure there is no presence of potential hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants on the old mill property since there were known coal bins. Contamination is likely from historic use of the railroad spur adjacent to the property as well as the coal storage. The site is potentially contaminated with metals. The Port’s EPA Brownfield Community-Wide Assessment Grant will help fund Phase I & Phase II ESA’s, Community engagement and reuse planning. He discussed Whitman County Brownfield redevelopment success stories. Additional state-level grants and funding are being

pursued by the Port to help benefit the future of the old mill. Aaron McMurray from Innovia gave an exciting outlook for the future of the community. The Port of Whitman staff then fielded questions from the public.

**Council members then resumed the council meeting from their chambers at City Hall.

- V. **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:** Council members reviewed October 7, 2024 minutes. Bill Auvil made the motion to approve the minutes as written. Claudia Louk seconded the motion, all council members voted yes – **motion passed.**
- VI. **OLD BUSINESS:**
- A. **2025 BUDGET** – Council members reviewed a copy of notification of liability insurance increase of 6.4% for 2025 from AWC RMSA. The new yearly rate will be \$39,997 and the budget has been adjusted to the increase.
- VII. **NEW BUSINESS:**
- A. **PORT OF WHITMAN – Right of First Refusal, Non-Exclusive Interlocal License Agreement, Memorandum of Understanding** – Mary informed council that all documents have been submitted to the Town Attorney for his review. Mary did not hear back from Eric Hanson, Town Attorney, before tonight’s council meeting. The Memorandum of Understanding has Dennis Palmer signing it as a community member as part of the Innovia Foundation support group for the old mill and not signing as the Mayor for the Town of Oakesdale. The other two agreements do require approval by Town council for Mayor Palmer to sign. Council members discussed they had no issues with either document. Bruce Palmer made the motion to allow Mayor Palmer to sign both agreements as long as we have our Town Attorney’s approval. Al Evans seconded the motion, all council members voted yes – **motion passed.**
- B. **CELL TOWER** – Council members reviewed a copy of letter from the Environmental Corporation of America (ECA) on the proposed 150ft Monopole Telecommunications Structure being installed by Horizon at the Oakesdale Cemetery property. They are providing us a notice to seek any comments we may have regarding the effects of the proposed tower on historic property in our community. We have 30 days to respond with any comments.
- C. **2024 3rd Q BUDGET REPORT** – Council members reviewed 2024 year to date totals on our funds – 001 Current, 101 Streets & 401 Water/Sewer. Mary reported the end of the 3rd quarter 2024 budget looks good. Current Expense 001 had an adopted expense amount of \$173,561.56 and there is a remaining budget of \$33,413.69. Street Fund 101 had an adopted expense amount of \$98,081.92 and there is a remaining budget of \$25,559.12. Water/Sewer Fund 401 had an adopted expense amount of \$519,110.56 and there is a remaining budget of \$161,544.54. Mary does not foresee any budget amendments will be needed by the end of the year.
- VIII. **COUNCIL MEMBER’S BUSINESS:**
- BILL** – None

AL – None

CLAUDIA – None

BRUCE – None

JOE SCHMICK, STATE REPRESENTATIVE – He just wanted to make sure we have updated our ordinances regarding public records requests and making sure we are charging for each piece of paper for the request. He is trying to stop people from making a living out of public records requests.

- IX. TREASURER’S REPORT/APPROVAL OF CHECKS:** Council members reviewed the Treasurer’s Report for October 2024. Bruce Palmer made the motion to approve paid checks #29232 - #29251 in the amount of \$12,521.16 for claims and \$9,425.82 for payroll totaling \$21,946.98 from October 09, 2024 through October 15, 2024. Claudia Louk seconded the motion, all council members voted yes – **motion passed.**
- X. ADJOURNMENT:** Claudia Louk made the motion to adjourn the council meeting at 7:58 p.m. Al Evans seconded the motion, all council members voted yes – **motion passed.**

DENNIS PALMER, MAYOR

ATTEST:

MARY DEGON, CLERK/TREASURER