

Town of Oakesdale
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
for
March 17, 2025

HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Dennis Palmer called the council meeting to order at 7 p.m. Councilman Bill Auvil led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- II. **ROLL CALL:** Mayor Dennis Palmer, Bill Auvil, Shon Eck, Claudia Louk and Bruce Palmer. Councilman Randy Robinson was not in attendance. Also present was Mary DeGon, Clerk/Treasurer.
- III. **INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:** Kris Johnson, Leta Palmer, Pete Baljo, Kim Anderson, Ben Crossett, Jack Fanning and Frank Sabo.

Kris Johnson asked about the email she forwarded to the Town with her conversation between Department of Ecology and herself regarding the flood. Kris said as an Oakesdale resident she was appalled to hear that the DOE agency will not allow our town to dig out the creeks to remove sediment that has collected over the years. In a nutshell, DOE's response was that Ecology is not the agency that oversees or authorizes dredging. She referred Kris to contact the Army Corps of Engineers and WA Department of Fish and Wildlife to inquire about their permits or approvals. Flooding is a natural process that can be compounded by many factors and in this case, it was a record rain on top of snow on frozen ground event. Mary explained this same event happened 11 years ago and DOE came on site after seeing Oakesdale make the news. They asked the Town to declare an emergency and they would help us to get funds to clean up the creek south of Town where it backs up. After two days the water receded and they no longer considered it an emergency. DOE wanted either the Town or Whitman County to pay around \$50,000 (at the time) for a hydraulic study of McCoy Creek. The Town was not going to pay for a study that was needed outside of city limits. The county denied the study as well. Mayor Palmer did talk to Casey at Pine Creek Conservation and the conversation did not seem favorable in getting their support to clean the creek of the silt and grasses that have choked out the channel of the creek. Needless to say, over the years we are not getting through to DOE of our situation when we experience significant rain on frozen ground.

Jack said he is tearing down his back yard fence and pouring a 4ft concrete wall along the back of his property to help with flooding. He asked for the list of contacts he had asked for at the last

council meeting. Mayor Palmer said it was on his desk and he would give it to him after the meeting was over.

IV. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES: Council members reviewed March 3, 2025 minutes. Bill Auvil made the motion to approve of the minutes as written. Bruce Palmer seconded the motion, all council members voted yes – **motion passed.**

V. OLD BUSINESS:

A. WIFIBER FRANCHISE AGREEMENT – No updates

B. ORDINANCE NO 655 SEWER RATE INCREASE – No updates

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

A. CRITICAL ALERTS SIGN-UP – BEN CROSSETT, PALOUSE SOFTWARE & SUPPORT – Mary had asked Ben if he could figure a way the Town could have an emergency alert system. Alerting our residents to a flood, water leak, or any other emergency is needed. Ben found a way through our website using an email notification system that cost the Town very little. Ben would create a distribution group for critical Town emergencies. You will be able to complete the Critical Town of Oakesdale Alerts Sign-Up Form on the Town’s website at oakesdale.org or submit your form in person to Mary at City Hall. No information will be shared. The notification can be received on cell phones for those who view their emails on their phones. No other emails can be viewed in the mass mailing. It will only show your personal email. Bruce said it would be nice to have the notifications by texting. To purchase that kind of software would be expensive. Mary will have this in the Town’s monthly newsletter and include the form with the water bill.

B. HEART & SOUL MEETING 03/19/25 – Bruce & Leta Palmer and Pete Baljo were amongst several that attended a workshop today at the Innovia Foundation for a training that pertained to the Heart & Soul committee members. There were national people attending this workshop and will be attending our own Heart & Soul meeting on Wednesday, March 19th at 5:30 p.m. at the fire station. Bruce encouraged a good community support showing. Dinner will be provided. The Innovia Foundation has many funding opportunities. Bruce would like to get this training available for council members to watch. It was a very important training today that would even benefit our Town Council. The workshop emphasis was on what a city needs. Look at what real estate is available – make a list of what lots are for sale. We need to have a vision and a mission statement that will help market the Town. What is the Town of Oakesdale’s assets? It was very detailed advice. Leta announced Michele Wright has been hired as their Coordinator for the Heart & Soul grant.

VII. COUNCIL MEMBER’S BUSINESS:

BILL – None

SHON – None

CLAUDIA – None

BRUCE – None

VIII. TREASURER’S REPORT/APPROVAL OF CHECKS: Council members reviewed the Treasurer’s Report for March 2025. Claudia Louk made the motion to approve paid checks #29418 - #29436 in the amount of \$12,258.24 for claims and \$9,385.46 for payroll totaling \$21,643.70 from March 05, 2025 through March 13, 2025. Bill Auvil seconded the motion, all council members voted yes – **motion passed.**

IX. ADJOURNMENT: Claudia Louk made the motion to adjourn the council meeting at 7:28 p.m. Shon Eck seconded the motion, all council members voted yes – **motion passed.**

DENNIS PALMER, MAYOR

ATTEST:

MARY DEGON, CLERK/TREASURER