



**City of Palouse
City Council Minutes
November 25, 2025
Palouse City Hall
120 E Main Street
Palouse, WA 99161**

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Sievers called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM

Councilmembers present: John Snyder, Danny Mullendore, Leslie Sena, Molly Quigley, Jacquelyn Huff, Katherine Keener

Councilmembers absent: Rainy Anderson

City Staff Present: City Administrator (CA) Misty La Follett, Deputy Clerk (DC) Stephanie Welch

Councilmember Sena made a motion to excuse Councilmember Anderson from the meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Huff and unanimously approved (Y-6 | N-0 | A-0).

PUBLIC HEARING: PRELIMINARY BUDGET

Mayor Sievers convened the public hearing on the Preliminary Budget with (CA) La Follett presenting a review:

- Year-to-date revenue trends were reviewed, noting sales tax is down, but the change is not considered significant.
- A reduction in expenses was observed in insurance costs.
- The preliminary proposed budget is based on a 3% increase from last year, with property and levy taxes now known.
- Budgeted items that increased or decreased were adjusted accordingly.
- Funds designated as 001-005 represent the main budget, while water and sewer operate as enterprise funds, intended to be fiscally self-sustaining for fees and loan payments.

Mayor Sievers opened the floor to public comment regarding the Preliminary Budget.

Carmen Bolyard had questions about the total amount shown under salary lines, noting that some entries represent contractor costs and expressing concern about paying benefits to contractors and the allocation of compost-related costs. She also raised concerns about the distribution of benefit costs, additional pay associated with snow removal, the treatment of certain roadway services, and the classification of furniture and salary charges within capital improvement and utility capital lines.

Barb Hodson had questions about why Officer Anderson, who is paid on a salary basis, is also receiving approximately \$15,000 in overtime. She stated her understanding that salaried employees should not receive overtime.

Cheryl Sanders encouraged the city to consider paying off certain loans early to save on interest costs and questioned an increase in a 2026 building budget line. She emphasized a desire to save money, especially with anticipated water/sewer expenses. Staff explained that loan payments must come from their respective funds, that current interest rates on these loans are very low, and that accelerating payoff would

significantly reduce cash reserves needed for emergencies, though there are no penalties for paying more toward principal.

Steve McGehee reported that he, along with Councilmembers Katherine Keener and John Snyder, and Michael Echanove met with Senator Schoesler to discuss the sewer treatment facility. He stated that the discussion was positive and that there may be a potential solution to the sewer treatment facility issues that would avoid bankrupting the city.

Joe Ferlito noted a difference in council meetings, which now feels collegial and effective.

Kelsey Blair asked about the lack of Haunted Palouse donations listed for the pool, noting past contributions, and questioned a perceived \$2 million revenue surplus. Staff clarified that the Haunted Palouse donation received last year was already budgeted and used for the pool boiler deposit. City staff also explained that the current figures are not final, as they still include interfund transfers. Blair additionally expressed support that salaried staff, not just police, should not receive overtime; staff responded overtime is paid if they work over the required threshold.

Michael Echanove noted that the current expense fund ending balance appears overstated by about \$360,000 due to transfers out, bringing the effective balance closer to \$450,000. He pointed out deficits or downward trends in the joint fire board and sewer funds, concern that water and sewer capital funds rely on transfers rather than being fully self-supporting, and the absence of certain anticipated capital and loan details in the budget. He also cautioned that long-term borrowing could result in over \$1 million in interest over 30 years.

Paula Fealy asked why the City Hall capital outlay was \$15,000 and was told it reflects the proportional share of a pickup and furniture, in addition to the usual annual amount. She also noted that benefits did not appear to align with salaries and questioned the benefit-to-salary ratios; staff explained they are working with the city's financial software provider to correct internal coding, so those figures align properly.

The hearing closed at 7:51PM.

The regular council meeting was convened at 7:51PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Councilmember Huff moved to approve the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting – November 10, 2025. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Mullendore and approved (Y-6 | N-0 | A-0).

OPEN FORUM

Carmen Bolyard expressed concern that portions of the municipal code and archived ordinances are outdated, incomplete, or not properly tracked, including old utility ordinances she believes should have expired. She stated that difficulty obtaining correct original ordinances has contributed to her frustration.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

Public Works Superintendent Wolf submitted a written report (attached).

POLICE REPORT

Officer Anderson submitted a written report (attached).

CITY ADMININSTRATOR REPORT

(CA) La Follett and (DC) Welch reported that the solar panels have not been reporting how much power has been generated. The solar data logger box needs to be replaced to update the energy savings data onto the website. A quote for the replacement to be purchased and installed from Jay Larson at Spokane Electric (formerly PCI Renewables) was \$1,568. Discussion followed with additional questions for Jay Larson before making a decision.

OLD BUSINESS

Resolution 2025-19 Final Interfund Loan for the Firetruck Purchase:

Discussion occurred regarding the final interfund loan for the firetruck purchase.

Mayor Sievers read the resolution aloud. Councilmember Sena made a motion to adopt and approve Resolution 2025-19. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Huff and was unanimously approved (Y-6 | N-0 | A-0).

Resolution 2025-20 Fee Schedule 2026:

Discussion occurred regarding the 2026 Fee Schedule.

Councilmember Huff made a motion to consider resolution 2025-20 read-in. Councilmember Sena seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (Y-6 | N-0 | A-0).

Mayor Sievers noted that Resolution 2025-20 is considered read-in.

Councilmember Keener made a motion to adopt and approve Resolution 2025-20. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Snyder and was unanimously approved (Y-6 | N-0 | A-0).

Whitman County Criminal Justice Contract:

Discussion occurred regarding the Whitman County Criminal Justice Contract.

Councilmember Snyder made a motion to adopt and approve the Interlocal Agreement for Criminal Justice Services. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Huff and was unanimously approved (Y-6 | N-0 | A-0).

TIB Grant Agreement for Chip Sealing:

Council discussed a TIB Grant agreement for a chip sealing project totaling approximately \$1,283,999 to chip seal about four miles of roadway within city limits, with no local match required. (CA) La Follett & Mayor Sievers explained that if project costs exceed the grant award the city would be responsible for the difference, and if bids are lower the grant amount could be reduced. Invoices will be processed through the city's engineer (TD&H) and reimbursed by TIB, so the city expends grant funds on a reimbursement/as-used basis rather than fronting its own money.

Councilmember Mullendore made a motion to approve the TIB Grant Agreement. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Keener and was unanimously approved (Y-6 | N-0 | A-0).

NEW BUSINESS

None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Budget, Finance, Major Acquisitions, Chair Anderson – Absent, No report.

Streets, Property, & Facilities, Chair Mullendore – We had a meeting, discussed quite a bit, and will have more to discuss early next year after the budget is done.

Personnel Committee, Chair Leslie Sena – A brief meeting was held. There was concern expressed about the city's current building plan review inspector residing in Florida, with a preference stated for finding a more local and readily available inspector. (CA) La Follett reported that Jacob Billington is working toward obtaining full plan review certification. Chair Sena raised concerns about cemetery maintenance and the need for training or equipment and also asked about progress on establishing a police oversight committee. Mayor Sievers noted that draft documents from the sheriff's office have been received and the intent is to move forward with a committee structure for next year.

Water & Sewer, Chair John Snyder – A meeting was held this morning that McGehee referred to. Chair Snyder would like a chance to review with the committee before a more thorough report is made, and hoping to have more information at the next meeting in December.

Policy & Administration, – No chair, no report.

Joint Fire Board, Chair Molly Quigley – Fire Chief Wil Edwards reported that the University of Idaho is assisting with the Shady Lane slash piles and seeks direction on burning expectations from the city or council. Staff directed the fire department to contact Al Pancoast for coordination and noted that Eric Hanson requires landowner forms prior to burning. Chair Quigley announced the delivery of the new fire truck yesterday, with thanks from the fire department.

COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS

Councilmember Keener expressed concern about fast traffic endangering children and pedestrians with **carriages (strollers???)** on Main Street, and requested consideration of a "children present" sign to slow speeds.

Councilmember Sena supported traffic calming measures, suggesting a vehicle with rear-facing speed display camera (such as a Ford Bronco) or radar feedback sign, and stated that the current 25 mph speed limit feels too fast around children.

Councilmember Huff inquired about rumors of efforts to make Shady Lane accessible for vehicular traffic. (CA) La Follett & Mayor Sievers reported that the matter is under review by the city attorney because a property owner is requesting vehicular access to landlocked property. The city is not actively pursuing this action, just responding to an inquiry.

Councilmember Huff acknowledged an apology and expressed discomfort from recent public comments questioning council's competence, emphasizing that councilmembers are dedicated volunteers balancing family and work. She encouraged respectful issue-raising with potential solutions rather than adversarial tones, requested grace given the complexity of city challenges, and suggested addressing concerns in work sessions rather than open meetings.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Sievers reported speaking with Daniel from Varela, requesting agenda space for him on January 13, and to meet with the sewer committee in early December meeting.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Councilmember Huff moved to allow the payment of bills. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Keener. The motion was unanimously approved (Y-6 | N-0 | A-0).

Payroll Paid		\$
Claims Paid	EFT + Check # 14913-14923	\$224,968.76
	Total	\$224,968.76

ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Huff moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Mullendore and unanimously approved (Y-6 | N-0 | A-0). The meeting adjourned at 8:36 PM.

APPROVED: _____

ATTEST: _____

DATE: _____

Public Works Superintendent Council Report

Date: November 24, 2025

WATER:

Telemetry went out over this last weekend.

On Wednesday Avista hit our 1 ½' supply line on Culton Street near Bluff Street. The cause was a missed mark line on our part and them digging deeper than they should have been digging.

SEWER:

We are doing samples today because of the holiday on Thursday.

The Beeson lift station got plugged up with a rag lag last Monday night. We had to manually pump out the lift station until KME could come and work on it. They put the new pump in that had been here since Dwayne was still the superintendent. The new pump only turns about a quarter of what it should. KME went through all the electrical in the panel and it still ran the same. They ordered and put a new starter kit on it and still ran the same. Determined the pump is not working properly. KME took the pump to their shop to see if they could find anything wrong with it. I'm waiting to hear from them this morning.

The sewer plant has had a lot of electrical issues in the last 2 weeks. The plants electrical power would fail after generator power went to shore power. KME and Avista spent quite a bit of time monitoring the cycles. KME thought it had something to do with the power line coming from Main Street. Avista connected their computer to monitor it for a week and nothing unusual was found. It was determined the contacts in the generator were dirty. The electrical in the panel of the generator has loose components from the use over the last 30 years of exercising it once a week and the times it has started because of power failures.

Chad is gone all week on vacation.

STREETS:

We've been sweeping streets trying to finish up before the weather turns bad. We have about one more day of sweeping left and then suck out some storm drains. Then the plan is take the sweeper to Spokane to get an estimate on repairs needed.

Dom is putting holiday banners up today.

PARKS:

Dom is done fertilizing.

We winterized the restrooms last Friday.

POOL:

We filled the pool and winterized it last Friday.

SNOW:

The sanding gravel is under cover for the winter.

The sander and snowplow is on the little dump truck. Still have a little prep work to do on it but it will be ready for snow or slick roads.

SHOP:

Mike changed the oil in the backhoe last week.

CEMETERY:

Dom is working on fertilizing.

Palouse Police Department report for Palouse City Council meeting November 25, 2025:

Twelve calls for service with four calls being ordinance related.

ZERO callouts.

251112-03 – While working patrol I was contacted by a citizen on the south hill advising he was the victim of an attempted scam. The reporting party advised he answered a call from a blocked number. The caller identified himself as a WCSO Deputy who was calling to advise the victim he had missed jury duty and there was now a warrant for his arrest. The caller advised the victim could make payment for bail over the phone (SUBJECTS WITH WARRANTS ARE NEVER GIVEN THAT OPTION) or the caller would dispatch deputies to his residence to arrest and book him on the warrant. Luckily the caller was wise to the scam and hung up on the caller. NEVER give any payment over the phone for alleged warrants for family friends or yourself. Law enforcement will not solicit funds over the phone.

251118-01 – While off duty and on vacation I received a text from a resident on the south hill advising they found a package on S River RD that had a Palouse address on the front. They text me a picture of the name and I recognized it to be another south hill resident. I text the package owner and advised of the reporting party location and cell so they could arrange to meet and pick up the package. Both thanked me for getting them in touch with each other so the package was returned to the owner.

251120-01 – While off duty and on vacation I received a text from a resident on the north hill advising he had been the victim of theft from his Alaska Airlines Mileage Plan account. The victim was on hold with Alaska customer service while texting me. He advised someone had traveled from JFK to Shanghai using his miles. I pulled a theft case number with Whitcom as I believed Alaska would need proof the victim had reported the theft to the police. This would help cut some of the red tape with Alaska and make reimbursement of the miles possible. Further investigation revealed a travel agency had withdrawn the miles as this appears to be a common scam in the airline industry currently. While texting with the victim he advised Alaska did indeed refund all the miles that had been stolen back to his account. The victim sent me a text that read "Thank you again for being so willing to help while you are away. It truly is above and beyond of you."

251122-01 – While off duty and on vacation I received a phone call from a property owner on E Main St advising her renter had sent her a picture of "garbage" dumped on her property. A few minutes later the renter sent a picture of the "garbage" which turned out to be a large pile of old cornstalks. The cornstalks appeared to be the same used for decorations during Haunted Palouse festivities a month earlier. I text two members of the HP committee a picture and asked if it was their property. Both replied quickly and agreed it was. They explained a woman was coming to pick it up for her livestock. I requested they respond and move from the private property and place it in front of Palouse PD old jail door so no private citizens were affected. The HP committee members were very responsive and quickly remedied the problem. I re-contacted the renter and property owner to advise of the enforcement action taken.

On 11-7-25 at 1130 hours, at the request of the GarPal Athletic Director, I led a police escort out of town for the state qualified cross country team.

On 11-11-25 at 1045 hours, at the request of the GarPal Athletic Director, I led a police escort out of town for the state qualified and eventual NEWLY CROWNED WIAA 1B STATE CHAMPION GARPAL GIRLS VOLLEYBALL TEAM. The team steamrolled their four state opponents by a dominant combined set score of 12-1 leaving no doubt the best team in the state 1B resided in the Palouse.

On 11-18-25 I received dispositions on two Palouse PD cases from Whitman County District Court. Palouse PD case number 250731-02 was a license plate fraud investigation that resulted in the violator being charged with a gross misdemeanor for evading Washington state taxes and fees associated with licensing properly licensing their plates while living in Washington for the past few years. The charge was dropped after the violator finally came into compliance by getting Washington plate for their vehicle.

The second disposition was under Palouse PD case number 250913-03. This was the Reckless Driving charge I filed against the driver of a Dodge Charger during Palouse Days who peeled on the W Main Street after leaving the car show. I measured over 150 feet of peeled out tire skid marks on the roadway as part of that case. The driver was allowed to plead down to Negligent Driving Second Degree and pay the fine.

Restocked Palouse PD handgun ammunition via an order through King's Arms. Total cost of five 50 round boxes of duty ammo and ten 50 round boxes of practice ammo was \$393.84. Copy of invoice emailed to City Administrator Lafollett for payment. Palouse PD will come in under budget for the 2024 budget year.

11/23/25
11:03

Palouse Police Department
Law Incident Summary Report, by Incident Number

1100
Page: 1

Number	Time and Date	Nature	Address	Loctn	Dsp
Agency: Palouse Police Department					
251107-01	15:17:22	11/07/25 Child Abuse	S		INA
251110-01	10:24:31	11/10/25 Chest Pain	N		INA
251111-01	14:40:20	11/11/25 Found Property	N		INA
251112-01	07:45:22	11/12/25 Animal Stray	N		INA
251112-02	08:33:06	11/12/25 Lost Property	N		INA
251112-03	13:51:46	11/12/25 Fraud	S		INA
251117-01	11:35:27	11/17/25 Animal Problem	N		INA
251118-01	14:46:07	11/18/25 Found Property	S		INA
251120-01	16:33:41	11/20/25 Theft Other	N		INA
251121-01	09:44:20	11/21/25 Animal Problem	S		INA
251122-01	11:55:27	11/22/25 Code Violations	S		INA
251123-01	10:18:41	11/23/25 Suspicious	S		INA
Total Incidents for This Agency:			12		

Total Incidents for This Report: 12

Report Includes:

All dates greater than `00:00:00 11/07/25`
All agencies matching `PAPD`
All officers
All dispositions
All natures
All locations
All cities matching `PALOUSE`
All clearance codes
All observed offenses
All reported offenses
All offense codes
All circumstance codes

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