



City of Palouse
City Council Minutes
December 09, 2025
Palouse City Hall
120 E Main Street
Palouse, WA 99161

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

In the absence of Mayor Sievers & Mayor Pro Tempore Huff, (CA) La Follett called the meeting to order at 7 PM

Councilmembers present: John Snyder, Danny Mullendore, Leslie Sena, Molly Quigley, Rainy Anderson, Katherine Keener

Councilmembers absent: Jacquelyn Huff

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

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

Councilmember Sena made a motion to appoint Councilmember Anderson as Chair Pro Tempore for the meeting of December 9, 2025. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Snyder and unanimously approved (Y-6 | N-0 | A-0).

PUBLIC HEARING: 2026 REVENUE SOURCES

Chair Pro Tempore Anderson convened the public hearing on the 2026 Revenue Sources with (CA) La Follett presenting a review:

- Revenue sources, including property tax, sales and use tax, and revenues received from Avista make up a significant portion of city income.
- Sewer and water funds were identified as self-sustaining enterprise funds.
- Proposed 2026 revenues are trending downward, recommending a conservative budgeting approach due to revenue uncertainty.
- Budget not yet ready for approval, as the budget committee has not met to review the details.
- Revenue projections are based on current and prior-year trends, with final 2025 figures to be closed in January 2026 to account for year-end payments.
- The budget continues to evolve, noting a pending budget amendment related to the fire truck purchase.

Chair Pro Tempore Anderson opened the floor to public comments regarding 2026 Revenue Sources at 7:07 PM.

Paula Fealy inquired about revenue discrepancies between the previous and proposed budgets, noting reductions in several funds. Questions were raised in the water and sewer system reserves, which she believed should remain consistent based on monthly charges. (CA) La Follett explained the differences reflect a 3% adjustment and reduced projections, primarily due to lower anticipated beginning cash and investment balances. Chair Pro Tempore Anderson noted the largest variance, approximately \$31,000—

stemmed from beginning cash and investments. (CA) La Follett added that 2025 began with lower cash reserves than projected, accounting for the discrepancy, and that a budget amendment will be completed by December 30, 2025.

The hearing closed at 7:14 PM.

PUBLIC HEARING: FINAL 2026 BUDGET HEARING

The Final 2026 Budget Hearing meeting was convened at 7:14 PM.

Chair Pro Tempore Anderson convened the public hearing on the Final 2026 Budget with (CA) La Follett reiterating that this is a working document.

Chair Pro Tempore Anderson opened the floor to public comment regarding the 2026 Final Budget at 7:15 PM.

Carmen Bolyard expressed concern that budgeted wages were overstated by about \$102,453 above actual salaries for specified staff and questioned whether this implied excessive overtime. She also questioned apparent inconsistencies in how employee time was coded and allocated to accounts and urged these issues be resolved before adopting the budget. (CA) La Follett indicated a coding issue had been identified and would be corrected, and there was brief discussion regarding overtime eligibility for city staff, including the police officer.

Paula Fealy asked about expenditure changes, noting an increase of approximately \$446,761 between budget versions and expressing concern about accuracy, citing a likely parks line-item typo and large changes in water and sewer capital expenses. She questioned why significant capital items, such as increased funding for water building improvements and a sewer capital vehicle, appeared only in the latest proposal. Chair Pro Tempore Anderson and (CA) La Follett explained that department heads recently submitted equipment and capital needs, including a truck, scales, SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) computerized system, and a fertilizer sprayer, and that scheduling constraints meant budget meetings occurred as staff were able to meet.

Michael Echanove expressed concern that the final budget document was made available to the council and public too late for the public hearing and questioned whether it was accessible to the public beforehand. He also questioned the listed beginning cash balance in light of the recent fire truck purchase and raised concerns about the funding office furniture while previously declining a financial audit due to cost. (CA) La Follett noted the fire truck payment was receipted that evening and stated the auditors had advised that an accountability audit was in the city's best interest, and further indicated the budget would be made available to the public by Friday for the following Tuesday's meeting and that additional review with the mayor was needed before moving forward.

The hearing closed at 7:29 PM.

The regular council meeting was convened at 7:29 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Councilmember Sena moved to approve the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting – November 25, 2025. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Mullendore and approved (Y-6 | N-0 | A-0).

OPEN FORUM

Carmen Bolyard stated that, in her view, the city's municipal code does not authorize Officer Anderson's current duties and that the code sections cited for vehicle enforcement reference ordinances that are missing, repealed, or inconsistent. She expressed concern that the city is paying for enforcement limited to state laws and further alleged that the city's building inspector has acted without proper licensing for approximately two years, noting she has reported this to state authorities and intends to continue pursuing the matter until, in her view, city actions comply with legal requirements.

Paula Fealy expressed concern that the ordinance authorizing the fire truck purchase set a maximum cost of \$357,000, while an additional approximately \$80,000 was later approved by resolution, which she believes cannot legally amend or override an ordinance. She stated that this discrepancy between the ordinance limit and the total amount spent should be corrected. She also questioned whether the police chief qualifies as exempt from overtime based on salary level and professional/administrative duties and suggested that overtime practices and applicable laws and regulations be reviewed.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

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

Councilmember Sena suggested a correction of the spelling of Niko Geist before going out to the community. (CA) La Follett will get it corrected.

POLICE REPORT

Officer Anderson submitted a written report (attached).

CITY ADMININSTRATOR REPORT

(CA) La Follett reported that the city's audit is progressing, with a tentative target completion date of the 15th of December, subject to possible postponement. She stated that all councilmembers will be invited to the audit exit interview but noted that no more than three may attend to avoid creating a quorum and triggering an official meeting, and asked interested councilmembers to inform her if they plan to attend.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESSResolution 2025-21 Tax Ordinance Ratification – Ordinance 1037-1040:

(CA) La Follett explained that required tax documentation was due December 1, 2025 and that an extension had been anticipated. She stated that, after consulting with Eric Hanson, staff were comfortable with Mayor Sievers and (CA) La Follett signing the tax ordinances because council had already approved the tax levy amounts by resolution and the ordinances confirm acceptance of county amounts. Council then discussed Resolution 2025-21 regarding ratification of the tax ordinances.

Councilmember Sena made a motion to consider resolution 2025-21 read in. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Mullendore and was unanimously approved (Y-6 | N-0 | A-0).

Chair Pro Tempore Anderson noted that Resolution 2025-21 is considered read in.

Councilmember Mullendore made a motion to adopt and approve Resolution 2025-21. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Keener and was unanimously approved (Y-6 | N-0 | A-0).

Special Meeting To Approve the 2026 Budget on December 16, 2025:

Discussion occurred regarding the Special Meeting for December 16, 2025.

Chair Pro Tempore Anderson asked if anyone would like to make a motion in regard to our proposed 2026 budget Special Meeting.

Councilmember Sena made a motion to continue the proposed 2026 budget to a Special Meeting on December 16, 2025 at 7 PM. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Quigley. Councilmember Keener noted she would be unable to attend the meeting and was unanimously approved (Y-6 | N-0 | A-0).

Councilmember Sena made a motion to change the time of the Special Meeting on December 16, 2025 to 6 PM instead of 7 PM. Councilmember Snyder inquired about the process for changing time frames for meetings. The motion failed for lack of a second.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Budget, Finance, Major Acquisitions, Chair Anderson – Will be having a budget meeting this week.

Streets, Property, & Facilities, Chair Mullendore – No report.

Personnel Committee, Chair Leslie Sena – No report.

Water & Sewer, Chair John Snyder – We received an update on the Palouse Cove lift station repairs, with Varela Engineering proposing fixes using planning funds and exploring other sources to preserve the \$6 million utility allocation. (CA) detailed pump failures from flushable wipes, high repair costs, and lack of SCADA alerts, with budget funds allocated for system upgrades. Councilmember Snyder noted aging pumps at end-of-life and two options (\$550k vs. \$650k), preferring the lower cost to reserve funds for larger future improvements.

Policy & Administration, – No chair, no report.

Joint Fire Board, Chair Molly Quigley – No report.

COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS

None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

None.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

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

Payroll Paid	EFT + Check# 14924-14934	\$43,153.50
Claims Paid	EFT + Check # 14935-14981	\$65,675.38
	Total	\$108,828.88

ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Sena moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Keener and unanimously approved (Y-6 | N-0 | A-0). The meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM.

APPROVED: _____

ATTEST: _____

DATE: _____

DRAFT

Public Works Superintendent Council Report

Date: December 05, 2025

KEEP IN MIND THIS IS 4 DAYS BEFORE THE COUNCIL MEETING

WATER:

We had a pressure complaint on the south hill at the beginning of the week. The residents said they were experiencing water pressure that was dropping in pressure and then it would be fine. We told them if they continue to have the same problem to get a hold of us.

STREETS:

Dominick and Mike changed the banners on the light pole's week before last.

The American flag will be put at half mast today in honor of Pearl Harbor.

SHOP:

Sam's Garage Doors came and repaired the door at Dominick's shop. The rails, springs, rollers, and more needed to be replaced. They put a new keypad on the outside of the main shop and another door opener.

SNOW:

Mike plowed a little this week. He plowed and sanded on Tuesday morning and scraped the slush off the road yesterday and a little today.

COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS TREE:

Mike, Chad, and Miko Geist went to Farmington and cut a tree down and placed it in the stand for the city. Nick Samuel put the lights up around the tree with his bucket truck.

RV PARK:

Dumpster has been locked up for the winter.

Palouse Police Department report for Palouse City Council meeting December 9, 2025:

Sixteen calls for service since last council with five being ordinance related.

ZERO callouts.

251125-01 – While on patrol I heard dispatch advise WCSO units of a pickup/elk collision a couple miles outside the Palouse city limits on Palouse Cove RD. Deputy Handley advised his eta would be up to thirty minutes so I responded. Upon arrival I observed Latah County SO out with a large dead elk in the field and I could see a pickup about a mile further down the road into Idaho. Latah County SO deputies advised they had dispatched the elk due to catastrophic injuries to its body/legs. I was able to determine the collision happened on the Washington State side of the border. I made contact with the driver who advised a herd of elk came from the side of the road and one veered into the front of his vehicle. He was not injured. I cleared debris out of the roadway. I took pictures of the elk and sent to Fish and Wildlife Officer Silver so he could determine how to handle removal. Officer Silver arranged for the elk meat to be harvested by a group out of Pullman. Deputy Handley arrived and handled the collision.

251201-02 – While on patrol I observed two vehicles parked in the driveway of a house on the south hill with Idaho plates. Further investigation revealed the owners had moved into Palouse over two months earlier and had not gotten their Washington plates as required by law. I located a phone number for the owners and explained the law to them. They quickly replied back and have now come into compliance.

251202-01 – While on patrol I was contacted by a citizen who was concerned his neighbor was not returning the tools he let him borrow a month prior. The neighbor had not been seen in three weeks and the reporting party did not have his phone number. The tool owner stated he could see the tools on the neighbors back porch but he did not want to go retrieve them himself for fear of being accused of theft/trespass. I located a phone number for the neighbor who borrowed the tools and received permission to go onto the property and give the tools back to the tool owner.

251202-02 – While on patrol I was flagged down by a citizen who pointed out a two car non injury collision at the intersection of E Mohr St and North J Street. Investigation of the scene revealed a vehicle traveling southbound on North J Street did not yield the right of way to a vehicle traveling eastbound on E Mohr St. Total of five people in the vehicles. No injuries. No tows. No citations due to the totality of the circumstances to include a blind intersection corner due to tree branches hanging over the roadway and icy roadway conditions. I facilitated an exchange of information, completed a Spillman report and a SECTOR collision report.

25203-01 – While on patrol I was contacted by a business owner who was concerned about an elderly customer's welfare and hygiene. The business owner stated the customer smelled of urine and had urine stains on his pants. The business owner concern was two-fold in that he could not have that smell driving away customers as well as the health and safety of the elderly male. I knew the male and stated I would call his adult son who has helped his father in the past on other issues that needed to be addressed after a welfare check. The son was very responsive and stated he had just bought his father new jeans but his father would not relinquish the old jeans to be washed. The son stated he would be in Palouse the next day to address the urgency of the matter so that Adult Protective Services did not have

to become involved. I re-contacted the business owner and advised of the game plan to handle the issue.

On 11-24-25 I completed my 2025 Taser recertification via Sheriff Myers at WCSO headquarters. Sheriff Myers is the Taser instructor for WCSO and handles all recerts.

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