



City of Palouse
City Council Minutes
January 13, 2026
Palouse City Hall
120 E Main Street
Palouse, WA 99161

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Sievers called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

Councilmembers present: John Snyder, Danny Mullendore, Leslie Sena, Bill Slinkard, Rainy Anderson

Councilmembers absent: Jacquelyn Huff

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

ADMINISTRATION OF THE OATH OF OFFICE

Mayor Sievers administered the Oath of Office to councilmembers John Snyder, Danny Mullendore, Leslie Sena, and Bill Slinkard.

Councilmember Mullendore made a motion to excuse Councilmember Huff from the meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Sena and unanimously approved (Y-5 | N-0 | A-0).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Councilmember Anderson moved to approve the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting – December 23, 2025. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Snyder and unanimously approved (Y-5 | N-0 | A-0).

Councilmember Mullendore made a motion to amend the agenda and move the Open Forum to right after the Payment of Bills. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Anderson and unanimously approved (Y-5 | N-0 | A-0).

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

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

(CA) La Follett reported that a resident with property damage from a cemetery tree has agreed to split the repair costs with the City. She commended the residents for their fairness and understanding, noting their cooperation was above and beyond expectations.

Councilmember Anderson inquired about the City filing an insurance claim. (CA) La Follett reported that the City is not filing an insurance claim due to the damage being close to what the deductible would be.

POLICE REPORT

Officer Anderson submitted a written report (attached).

CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

(CA) La Follett stated for the record that the term for Council Seat 7 ended December 31, 2025. Ann Barrington was elected to the seat but has since moved out of the Palouse jurisdiction, creating a vacancy. Applications are being solicited to fill the position, which will run through December 31, 2027, per county guidance.

(CA) La Follett reported that additions were noted to the council packet regarding the RCO grant for pool upgrades. The grant requires a cultural survey. As the City's small works roster lacks cultural resource firms, Whitman County's roster will be used. Council will review the proposal and act at the next meeting to proceed with the grant process. An independent cultural survey will be required for the pool house to meet project benchmarks.

(CA) La Follett reported that Avista's previously announced power outage was incorrect. The outage will only affect a small area south of the river and west of the Division bridge, including the grain plants, Well 3, and a few nearby residences. A correction was issued through the City's ListServ/Mailchimp.

(CA) La Follett reported that, in response to a prior request from Councilmember Sena, the council packet includes a summary of Varela-related sewer plant funding, including unused funds, funding not awarded, and anticipated drawdown timelines. Daniel from Varela is expected to attend a future council meeting to address additional questions.

(DC) Welch reported responses from Jay Larson to council questions from a prior council meeting regarding the solar energy monitoring software. Council was asked to review the information and consider whether to proceed with updates needed to restore full online functionality, including public access to energy savings data. Staff will obtain an updated quote for council consideration at the next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution 2026-01 Salary Schedule:

Councilmember Sena made a motion to consider Resolution 2026-01 read in. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Snyder and was approved (Y-4 | N-0 | A-Anderson).

Mayor Sievers noted that Resolution 2026-01 was read in.

Councilmember Sena made a motion to adopt and approve Resolution 2026-01. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Mullendore and was approved (Y-4 | N-0 | A-Anderson).

Resolution 2026-02 LGIP Authorization:

(CA) La Follett reported that the authorized user title on the City's LGIP Account has been updated from "City Clerk" to "City Administrator" to align with the current municipal code, with no other changes to account authority.

Councilmember Anderson made a motion to consider Resolution 2026-02 read in. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Sena and was unanimously approved (Y-5 | N-0 | A-0).

Mayor Sievers noted that Resolution 2026-02 is considered read in.

Councilmember Anderson made a motion to adopt and approve Resolution 2026-02. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Mullendore and was unanimously approved (Y-5 | N-0 | A-0).

Amendment of Council Rules of Procedure:

Council discussed the proposed Amendment of Council Rules of Procedure regarding replacing oral public comment with written comments. Several councilmembers expressed concern about past instances of incivility, personal attacks, and impacts on council and staff, and emphasized the need to protect staff and maintain orderly meetings while still allowing public input. Councilmembers requested additional time to research legal and procedural options, including the permissibility of limiting oral comments, and agreed to continue the discussion at a future meeting.

Councilmember Snyder made a motion to table the Amendment of Council Rules and Procedure until the next meeting on January 27th, 2026. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Snyder and was unanimously approved (Y-5 | N-0 | A-0).

Opening of Bids for Surplus Fire Trucks:

(CA) La Follett reported that, with the purchase of the new fire truck, the older tanker with a failing transmission was surplus with a minimum bid of \$4,000 and one sealed bid was received from the Vantage Fire Department. The second, higher-value pumper tender, listed at a \$50,000 minimum bid, received no bids and will be re-advertised to a broader audience, including a fire apparatus wholesaler.

Mayor Sievers opened the bid for the surplus of the fire trucks:

\$5,111 for the Autocar Tanker – Riley Triggs from Ellensburg, WA.

Councilmember Sena made a motion to accept the bid from Riley Triggs for \$5,111 on the 1990 Autocar Tanker. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Slinkard and was unanimously approved (Y-5 | N-0 | A-0).

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mayor Sievers noted that he will make committee assignments following the filling of seat 7.

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

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

Personnel Committee, Chair Leslie Sena – No report.

Water & Sewer, Chair John Snyder – We are still waiting on the report back on the test of our sludge. As soon as we get there, we will see a lot more activity.

Policy & Administration, – No chair, no report.

Joint Fire Board, – No chair. Councilmember Sena reported that they have a meeting next Monday, January 19th.

COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS

None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Sievers reported on recent coordination with Varela regarding the sewer project, noting that Daniel from Varela postponed attending this meeting pending results from Clear Creek and further discussion with the Department of Ecology.

Mayor Sievers also met with landowners regarding a potential property acquisition site that remains under consideration and could result in an estimated savings of approximately \$3 million compared to developing on city-owned property, with no final decisions yet made.

Mayor Sievers reported on a recent meeting with EPA staff regarding the demolition of the St. Elmo building and noted that an almost-final Vision-to-Action report is being reviewed for corrections and will be released when finalized. The Mayor also stated that the City will be learning more about a potential EPA funding opportunity that may include forgivable loan principal, with additional information to be provided at future meetings.

Councilmember Slinkard asked whether the potential new sewer facility location is public information, and Mayor Sievers stated it remains confidential while negotiations are ongoing. Mayor Sievers further confirmed that any site located outside current city limits would need to be annexed into the city, consistent with existing practice.

(CA) La Follett reported that there is a quarterly Ecology meeting this month.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Councilmember Anderson moved to allow the payment of bills. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Slinkard, and the motion was unanimously approved (Y-5 | N-0 | A-0).

Payroll Paid	EFT + Check # 15024-15034	\$45,582.71
Claims Paid	EFT + Check # 15035-15060	\$47,906.16
	Total	\$93,488.87

OPEN FORUM

Paula Fealy submitted her letter to council and requested it be read aloud. Mayor Sievers read her letter aloud.

Carmen Bolyard expressed concern about apparent miscoding in the BIAS system, noting examples such as Treasure Valley Coffee expenses coded as fuel, Avista categorized as maintenance/repair, and utilities payments to Hahn Rental, which could create a perception of impropriety and complicate budget accuracy. She further questioned why water/sewer appears to bear disproportionate costs for items such as the audit, Ricoh copier, and BIAS software and training rather than those costs being allocated across all

departments and raised concerns that three employees exceeded their budgeted salaries by approximately \$15,000 without those amounts clearly identified as overtime.

Cheryl Sanders stated support for continuing an open public forum, noting that recent audits, law enforcement involvement, and water/sewer billing issues have contributed to community frustration and concern, particularly among seniors facing rising costs. She requested improved responsiveness to citizen emails, greater accountability, and an emphasis on qualifications such as bookkeeping and government experience when filling future city staff positions, without personal agendas influencing those decisions.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Mullendore moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Snyder and unanimously approved (Y-5 | N-0 | A-0). The meeting adjourned at 7:57 PM.

APPROVED: _____

ATTEST: _____

DATE: _____

DRAFT

Jan. 13, 2026

To: Tim Sievers and City Council Members

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the recent changes made to the Open Forum and meeting agenda during the last council meeting on December 23, 2025. These modifications appear to be an attempt to silence community voices.

Many citizens view these changes as a form of censorship. Such actions undermine the principles of open governance and erode trust between the council and the public.

Transparency is not just a procedural requirement — it is the foundation of public trust.

When decisions are made behind closed doors or public participation is restricted, it raises doubts about the integrity of the process. Accountability demands that elected officials not only listen to their constituents but also provide clear, honest explanations for their actions. Your continued efforts to silence the citizens of Palouse will not be ignored. Per MRSC comments on RCW 42.30.240, it is their opinion “it is helpful to place the public comment period ahead of council action items on the agenda, enabling the council to consider any received public comments BEFORE any votes or decisions.” MRSC also states that “many residents form their total opinions of the city government on the basis of attending just one council meeting.” Failure to connect with the public is why so many people are frustrated with this council.

Another pressing issue raised during the meeting was the proposed budget for 2026, which remains out of balance by \$39,998.00. Over the course of six proposals between December 6th and December 23rd, numerous inconsistencies with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) were identified. These repeated discrepancies, each proposal being off by approximately \$40,000 between different accounts, suggest a troubling lack of completeness and honesty. It is concerning that members of the public are compelled to correct budget errors that should be addressed by the council itself! This raises serious questions: Is this a matter of incompetence, or does it lead to something more dishonest?

Your premeditated silence of the public was the reason the budget remains out of balance. The pattern of errors and the council’s decision to restrict citizen comments lead me to believe that these actions are not merely accidental. Instead, they reflect a consistent disregard for transparency and accountability, which could be interpreted as dishonest or even fraudulent behavior. The community deserves better from its elected officials.


Paula Fealy

Public Works Superintendent Council Report

Date: January 12, 2026

WATER:

There was a couple of complaint about water meter leaks. The boxes were filled with ground water, so nothing was found. The Palouse Grain Growers had a concern that our main leaking along West Main Street after the water was filling up their pit. Again, the ground water was the cause of that.

The locating system for locates has changed. Now you have to submit a response after you are done locating. It is called positive response.

STREETS:

Mike graveled an alley due to mud running over the top of it due to the house being torn down. He also hauled some gravel up to South River Road to fill in some potholes.

PARKS:

Wilson Tree Service chipped all the wood debris from the storms. Dom hauled al over to the corner of the parking lot so there was a big pile.

CEMETERY:

Wilson Tree Service removed the pine tree blown over in the biggest windstorm. They estimated over 5,000 lbs. of wood broke off the tree. There are ruts from the backhoe yarding out the big pieces. Hopefully we'll get it back into shape by spring.

SNOW:

Mike sanded the roads during the last 2 traces of snow we had. No snow to plow just sanding.

CHRISTMAS TREE:

Nick from Avista took down the lights from the tree in front of the Caboose. The tree will be pulled out today.

OTHER:

Mike was gone for a week and a half at Christmas and Dom was sick all last week and the holidays mixed in. So, there wasn't a lot that went on over the last 3 weeks.

Palouse Police Department report for Palouse City Council meeting January 13, 2026:

Twenty two calls for service since last police report with seven ordinance related.

One infraction issued.

ZERO callouts.

251210-01 – While on patrol I was contacted by a citizen reporting a suspicious vehicle with no license plates parked on the west side of the grocery store. I responded to the area and observed the vehicle in motion so I conducted a traffic stop. The driver was an unlicensed fifteen year old with no permit. The driver said the passenger, his mother, wanted him to practice driving. I told the mother it was illegal to knowingly allow an unauthorized driver to drive a motor vehicle on the public roadway. I issued the mother an infraction for Allowing Unauthorized Driver to Operate Motor Vehicle.

251210-02 – While on patrol responded to a report of a downed tree in City Park that had taken down power lines and partially blocking W Main St. I provided traffic control for public works who were able to clear tree debris enough to open the roadway. Contacted Avista to respond and take care of the power line that was relegated to the park property thus not affecting the motoring public.

251213-01 – While off duty and on call I was received a text from a citizen advising that cows and a bull from a neighboring property on the south hill were loose walking on private property on Amber Ridge RD. I text the cows owner and advised of the situation. Received no further reports that day. Three days later I received a text that contained footage of cows and bull trampling a citizen's lawn in the Amber Ridge development. The citizen was concerned property damage was done by the cows. I responded to the location as the owner was out of town and took pictures of the lawn. I sent the property owner the pictures as well as the phone number of the cow's owner in case he wanted to pursue it as a civil matter.

251215-01 – While on patrol I was contacted by an elderly male advising his vehicle had broken down the night before. The male stated he managed to coast the vehicle back to his house but needed to have his insurance company call a tow truck to come take the vehicle back to the repair shop in Albion that supposedly fixed the vehicle the week before. The male has roadside assistance but did not know how to go about requesting it from his insurance company. I told the male I would assist and help him get it done. I got the insurance card from the male and called the company out of Lewiston. They advised the male needs to call a tow truck, have them complete the tow, get a receipt then email the receipt to them for reimbursement. The male became frustrated and stated he did not know how to email a receipt to someone. I advised the male I would email the receipt for him if he brought me a copy. We called a tow truck and were able to get the vehicle towed off the public roadway and to the repair shop. This is a good example of community/small town policing.

251217-02 – While on patrol I was contacted by a business owner who advised his employee had called to say an elderly Palouse resident had urinated in their pants while patronizing the establishment. The business owner advised the staff had removed the male but due to health department standards and concern for other customers, the business owner requested the male be trespassed from the location. I was familiar with the male and was concerned there may be a self-neglect issue occurring. I called the

male's adult son and advised the issue needed to be addressed ASAP. The son was very responsive and took his father to the emergency room for an evaluation. I worked with Adult Protective Services to get the adult son resources for his father. The elderly male had multiple medical issues that had to be treated over the course of three days before being placed in assisted living facility near the adult son. The adult son thanked me for the compassion given to his dad during this delicate time.

251229-01/251229-03/251231-01 – While off duty and on call I received a text from a citizen who lives just outside the city limits requesting a phone call in regards to a harassment issue. I called the adult female and she stated she received a phone call the night before from someone who sounded like they were having a mental health crisis. The caller demanded to know why the reporting party phone number was in her contacts and would not identify herself. When the reporting party said she was going to hang up the woman who called said "if you hang up on me I will burn you to hell." Further investigation determined the number belonged to an adult female that lived in Pullman with a long history of manic episodes in which she calls former employers, former landlords, friends and family speaking in a non-sensical manner and making veiled threats. Later the same day a business owner in Palouse who used to employ the female advised she had received concerning text pictures of a machete and a hand with feces on it. Investigation revealed that Pullman PD had conducted a welfare check on the woman and determined she was in the middle of a manic episode but did not want to hurt herself or others. The female's past history also indicated she has never acted on any of her manic threats. Two days later the business owner advised she was now receiving sexually explicit pictures via text from the woman and requested she be trespass from the business. I called the female and advised she was being trespass immediately for an indefinite amount of time. The female said "good, I wouldn't want to go there anyway." A third Palouse resident who was a former co-worker of the female when she worked in Palouse also reported the woman texting her about cosmetic surgery and offering to break her nose so she could get a nose job. A check of the police computer shows no further incidents involving the female since 12-31-25 indicating the manic episode may have run its course.

01/08/26
10:52

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					
251208-01	10:16:15 12/08/25	Welfare Check	S	INA	
251208-02	10:16:49 12/08/25	Utility Problem	S	INA	
251210-01	11:32:08 12/10/25	Traffic Offense		CAA	
251210-02	12:19:31 12/10/25	Utility Problem		INA	
251211-01	14:40:42 12/11/25	Found Property	S	INA	
251213-01	10:28:25 12/13/25	Animal Problem	S	INA	
251213-02	16:26:42 12/13/25	Animal Problem	S	INA	
251215-01	12:25:17 12/15/25	Citizen Assist	N	INA	
251216-01	14:03:06 12/16/25	Animal Problem	N	INA	
251217-01	06:12:40 12/17/25	Traffic Hazard	N	INA	
251217-02	14:05:52 12/17/25	Trespassing	N	INA	
251217-03	15:53:50 12/17/25	Aps Referral	S	ACT	
251218-01	10:25:37 12/18/25	Lockout	N	INA	
251226-01	12:29:31 12/26/25	Found Property	N	INA	
251228-01	20:22:38 12/28/25	Suspicious	N	INA	
251229-01	07:49:04 12/29/25	Harassment	S	INA	
251229-02	11:27:00 12/29/25	Welfare Check	N	INA	
251229-03	11:15:00 12/29/25	Suspicious	N	INA	
251231-01	14:33:09 12/31/25	Trespassing	N	INA	
260105-01	19:18:32 01/05/26	Animal Problem	N	INA	
260106-01	08:15:37 01/06/26	Traffic Offense	S	INA	
260106-02	08:16:14 01/06/26	Animal Problem	N	INA	
Total Incidents for This Agency: 22					

Total Incidents for This Report: 22

Report Includes:

All dates greater than `00:00:00 12/08/25`
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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