



# CITY OF SELAH

115 West Naches Ave  
Selah, WA 98942

P: 509-698-7328  
F: 509-698-7338

## Mayor's Monthly Newsletter

March 2024

Hello Selah Community! Here are the highlights from March for the City of Selah.

We started the month out with completing our workshop for the City Council. This was an extremely interactive process where the Council was able to define their three top priorities for this year. The number 1 goal is to move forward with a new police station. Second on their list is upgrading the Civic Center and the third priority is to engage with the community.

The first Council Meeting March 12<sup>th</sup> we had a double study session with a report from Yakima Valley Council of Governments (YVCOG) Executive Director, Chris Wickenhagen, on the 2023 yearend report. It included a report on the success of the Crime Lab that opened in August and the many services that are offered by YVCOG to member cities.

The other study session was an update on the Selah Fire District from Fire Commissioner Rex Reed. He explained the uniqueness of our fire district being a joint operation of the City and County. Costs are shared based on call volumes for responses in either the City limits or in the County. These have consistently been in the 40% City and 60% County range over the past years. He also explained that EMS calls represented about 82% of total call volume.

Before the regular council meeting we took a break to view the brand-new ladder truck fire apparatus. This was actually purchased 3 years ago at a cost of about 1 million dollars and took this long to build and deliver. The same unit if purchased today would be about \$500,000 more; so, it was a significant saving to the District.

During the Council Meeting, Chief Lange introduced the new Training Officer, Jason Wood. He comes to us from the West Valley Fire District and this puts us back to a full staff.

Our Public Works Director, Rocky Wallace and myself traveled to Washington DC as part of a Yakima County Delegation to meet with our legislators and various departments to discuss the infrastructure needs in the valley. This was very productive as we were able to meet with the Department of Defense at the Pentagon, Senator Murray, Senator Cantwell, Representative Newhouse, Governor Inslee's DC Office and the Federal Highway Administration. We have already heard back from some of them on possible funding sources in the future. This effort is as a result of having formed a Legislative Committee for Selah this year.





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Our March 26<sup>th</sup> meeting started with another study session. This was on the ADU/Middle Housing Analysis led by Jeff Peters, Planning Department and Tom Beckwith, our hired consultant. This is a continuation of the Housing Action Plan adopted by the City Council.

During the regular Council Meeting, I recognized Selah High School student, Noah Lorton, with a Selah Community Pride Award. As Senior Drum Major, Noah has excelled in creating unique arrangements, infectious cheers and a musical legacy for the school and fans.

It was announced that two long time employees are leaving for great career opportunities at another city. They are Dorraine Bigby and Treesa Morales. We will miss them; but wish them well with their new positions.

The Council unanimously approved the conceptual design of the mural to be placed on the wall on North 1<sup>st</sup> Street across from the High School. This is a result of the settlement with the SAFE Group and will now move to the next step that is the completion of the actual design work before final Council approval. The Council also approved the Mayor to sign and enter into a new contract with Police Chief, Dan Christman. In addition, they approved the current Clerk/Treasurer position to be retitled as Finance Director along with creating a Human Resource/Community Outreach position and the reallocation of the functions of Administrative Assistant/Public Records/clerk duties.

Start planning to be an active participant in Selah Community Days May 15<sup>th</sup> through the 19<sup>th</sup>.

**That's all folks for this month.**

Roger Bell, Selah Mayor

