

MINUTES OF THE NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON
February 02, 2026

A meeting of the Newport City Council was held on February 02, 2026, at 6:00 PM in Council Chambers, City Hall, 200 S. Washington Avenue, Newport, Washington, with the following present:

	Keith Campbell	Mayor
	Abby Gribi	City Administrator
	Nickole North	Clerk/Treasurer
Nathan Weathers		Councilmember
Elizabeth Spring		Councilmember
Jami Sears		Councilmember
Mark Zorica		Mayor Pro Tem
Nathan Longly		Councilmember

At 6:00 PM, Mayor Campbell called the meeting to order followed by roll call and the pledge of allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA & MINUTES:

The executive session was removed from the agenda. Councilmember Zorica moved to approve the agenda as amended and the minutes from the January 20, 2026 Council Meeting; Councilmember Weathers seconded. Motion carried.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Mayor Campbell announced that the groundhog had seen his shadow earlier in the day and so we are to look forward to 6 more weeks of winter!

CITY ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS:

Administrator Gribi asked the Council if they would like to be the City representative for the Tri County Economic Development or if they preferred for her to keep attending these meetings. They agreed to have her continue attending on the City's behalf.

Being a member of RMSA, an appraisal will be done every 3-5 years on the City's assets. The appraisal began today and will be completed tomorrow.

A source water study grant has been received in the amount of \$187,000. This will allow the City to better improve its water sources. It is an 18-24 month study and will provide factual data that to her knowledge, the City has never had before.

The City's Planning Consultant Rachel Granrath will be attending the next Council Meeting to give an update on the Comprehensive Plan.

Administrator Gribi asked Council to allow her to apply for \$60,000 to complete Phase 1 of the Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade. This funding would be 50/50 grant/loan so would require a \$30,000 repayment. The Council had no issues with her applying for the funding.

There is a vendor license ordinance on the agenda for Council approval tonight. The fee being recommended by staff for this license would be \$10.00 per day. Approval of this fee will be on a future agenda.

Administrator Gribi attended City Action Days and met with the State Senator as well as the Representatives. The condition of the wastewater treatment plant was a topic of discussion.

Fire District 5 has had a failure of one of their engines. The City currently has a green fire engine that is not in use. The estimated value of the engine ranges from \$5,000-\$7,000. Administrator Gribi will be bringing this matter back before Council at a future meeting to ask to surplus this engine and sell it for a minimal cost to the Fire District in need. The engine would stay within the County and be a benefit to the County as a whole. She mentioned possibly selling it to them for around \$1,500 or less.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Police Chief Nelson gave a law enforcement update. On average for the last quarter, they had around 100 calls for service each month. December and January had increased vehicle prowls and accidents have doubled compared to last year at this time. There have been three protests in the City in the last month. Chief Nelson invited the Council and Mayor to come to Coffee with a Cop on the third Thursday of each month at 10:00 AM at Sidewalk Café. Citizens that attend have asked to speak to a Councilmember in the past. Recently the Chief has found out that the Newport Hospital does not do sexual assault cases, which he feels they should be able to provide. He is also working with neighborhood churches to help the homeless in the area. There currently is a nationwide push to talk on cell phones making radios and phones interchangeable. This would be an initial buy in fee of \$9,000 for the whole county. With the increased complaints about speed in the City, Chief Nelson is working with Public Works Director North on getting the traffic speed signs operational again. Councilmember Sears asked if the adoption of the curfew code had made a difference. Chief Nelson stated that it has really helped.

South Pend Oreille Fire & Rescue Chief Stocking gave a fire update. He also is in support of the big push for the radio/phone push to talk feature to come to the County. The department has been involved with the school, having fire/safety talks and being on site for sports events. The Santa tour for Christmas and Halloween Downtown Trick or Treat events were very successful. They are having an all-time high in training engagement. There have been no major incidents in Newport outside of a Hazmat spill. SPOFR conducted eleven fire inspections in Newport in the 4th Quarter of 2025. SPOFR has no position or involvement with the Fire District 2/Fire District 4 merger.

Public Works Director Dave North gave a public works update. Road restrictions were put up today due to the warmer weather. When it cools down again, they will be removed. The Deicer is working really well. There has not been much need for it so far this year, but when it has been used it was very effective. They have been working on street signs and will be assisting Chief

Nelson on the speed signs. They have been maintaining equipment and getting ready for Summer. Director North has been working on GIS mapping so that all water valves, meters and hydrants are easily recognized. He built the deicer tank that is currently being used, saving the City from buying a new tank. Public Utility District assisted the City by grinding up the slash piles at the well field.

Plant Superintendent Howard gave an update on the Wastewater Treatment Plant and Collection System. There has been an issue with the collection system on 8th Street. They have responded to 5-6 callouts regarding plugged sewer lines; all were the residential owner's issue. He and Bryce have been working on GIS mapping all manholes. They have found out that they have been using the wrong chemical to measure the Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) in the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP). The BODs measure the oxygen required by microorganisms to decompose organic matter, acting as a critical indicator of water pollution and treatment efficiency. High BOD levels indicate high pollution; reducing it requires multi-stage processes—primary (physical removal) and secondary (biological treatment like activated sludge)—to ensure safe, regulated discharge into water bodies. They have ordered the correct chemical to correct this.

Clerk/Treasurer North gave a financial update. The City ended 2025 with \$5,582,984 in cash and investments. This was an increase of \$743,453 from the year before. Sales tax in the 4th quarter was up around \$3800 from last year and property tax was down around \$6300. Delinquent accounts in the 4th quarter were up to 16 from 11 but the amount delinquent was less. These have all been dealt with. Four liens have been filed, two are on current payment plans and the remainder paid the required amount to keep service. The Finance Office during the 4th quarter consisted of Accounting Clerk Schoener working on dog license renewals, changing the system to reflect new rates and organizing inventory and getting it ready for department head review. Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Hansen has been working on a large public records request that has taken a great deal of her time as well as creating an Accident Prevention Plan for review with department heads. Clerk/Treasurer North worked on compiling data to finalize the 2026 budget as well as amend the 2025 budget. In addition, she reviewed agreements and ensured that all renewals were completed for the year.

NEW BUSINESS:

Pend Oreille County Commissioner Brian Smiley gave an update on the proposed Transportation Benefit District. This district would likely increase sales tax to up to .3%. It may be placed on the ballot for public vote in the future. It is believed to generate around \$400,000-\$600,000 per year. The funds will need to be saved up for around 3-4 years before a project can be funded. There is still talk about how the funds would be disbursed. Currently he is thinking that half of the funds would be dispersed by population to the County, towns and the City in the County and half would be placed in a fund to pay out to the towns, County or City for needed projects that they would apply to the Transportation Benefit District for. An elected from the County Commissioners and each town and city would be on the board. The Council is still interested in moving forward with the creation of this District.

Councilmember Sears moved to approve Resolution 20260202 Allocating Funds In The Tourism Budget To Assist With Pend Oreille County Historical Society Operating & Maintenance Costs: Councilmember Spring seconded. Motion carried.

Councilmember Zorica moved to approve Ordinance 2146 Amending Newport Municipal Code Section 5.05, Amending Ordinance 2111 and Ordinance 2138; Adding 5.05.020(6) and (7), 5.05.040 Special Event Vendor License, and 5.05.070(K); Councilmember Longly seconded. Motion carried.


BILLS & PAYROLL:

Councilmember Longly moved to approve the bills and payroll; Councilmember Weathers seconded. Motion carried.


CLAIMS CHECKS 67343-67361, (67175, 67269, 67333 Void)	\$400,822.89
CLAIMS EFT 2026 Feb 1 st Mtg: Run 1-9	\$ 11,833.70
CLAIMS DIRECT PAY 2026 Feb 1 st Mtg: Run 1-2	\$ 2,279.00
PAYROLL EFT 2026 Jan 2 nd PR 1-9; Dir Deposit Run 01/20/2026	\$ 92,512.40

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 PM.

Attest: 

Nickole North, MMC, CPFA
Clerk/Treasurer

By: 

Keith Campbell
Mayor