



Fall 2018

GRANITE FALLS WASHINGTON

GATEWAY TO THE MOUNTAIN LOOP



CITY COUNCIL APPROVES NEW CONTRACT WITH SHERIFF

At their September 5 meeting, the Granite Falls City Council voted to approve a new five-year contract for law enforcement with the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office. The decision followed months of contract negotiations between the City and Sheriff's Office. The new contract addresses unmet needs and staffing issues that arose in the original 2014 contract's first term, which ends in December.

The biggest issue with the existing contract was a extremely restricted amount of overtime funding available to cover for deputies that wanted to take vacation, attend trainings, fulfill military leave assignments, or fill in for people on sick leave. There was also a problem adding extra patrols when needed.

The primary changes in the new, approved contract include:

- A larger pool of overtime to provide more patrols as needed, and give flexibility for deputies to attend trainings and take vacations
- Additional overtime targeted specifically for special events in the City, such as Railroad Days
- An option to increase services in 2022 if needed, by adding a full-time swing shift patrol
- Elimination of the existing \$1500 monthly credit for use of the City Police Department building until necessary upgrades can be made



City Manager Brent Kirk said, "This model has never been utilized before, but we believe that it will provide the highest level of service with the greatest amount of flexibility for the price." The cost of contracting with the Sheriff's Office is substantially less than maintaining a stand-alone police department. The Snohomish County Sheriff's Office also uses the local Police Station as a substation for deputies patrolling outside the contract area, which is an added bonus for the community because extra Deputies are usually in the area if needed for back-up support. The Contract will become effective in January 2019 pending approval by the Snohomish County Council.

WASTEWATER FACILITIES PLAN

The City is currently in a sewer moratorium as a result of capacity limitations at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. A new Wastewater Facilities Plan was completed, and is now under review by the Department of Ecology. The plan looks at process control limitations and future upgrades to expand the plant capacity.

In April of 2018, the City was informed that a funding request for a \$500,000 loan had been approved by the Public Works Board, with a 5 year term at 0.7833%. The money from this loan will be used to fund the engineering design of the upgrades, and give the City a starting point to develop cost estimates.

The City Council discussed a key question: Will growth continue as envisioned in the City's Comprehensive Plan? If yes, then revenue should be sufficient to pay for the debt servicing. If not, there is the possibility the debt servicing would fall on the rate payers in the form of sewer rate increases. The major improvements are assumed to occur in 2021 and 2022.

The City Council approved the pre-construction loan contract.

NEWS BRIEFS



This photo (taken in mid-September) shows the progress on the new Granite Falls Civic Center, which will house City Hall, City Council Chambers, and provide a Community Center. Sabry Construction is the contractor. Target completion date is early February, 2019.

After years of tourist photos, the One Spot engine on the corner of Stanley and Cascade is being returned to the original donor's family farm, the Scherrers. A small community park will replace the patch sometime in 2019.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT ON JEFF BALENTINE

There are two questions City staff hear from visitors lately:
Who owns the big yellow Tonka truck? And who is the new fellow?

The answer to both questions is the same: Our recently contracted Treasurer, Jeff Balentine. "I did love my Tonka toys as a child," he admits with a laugh. As a boy growing up in a military family, he moved several times before graduating high school and immediately joining the U.S. Army. He was tapped to join an elite and highly trained team as a Russian linguist during the 1980 - 1990's Cold War years.



After serving eight years (including service during Desert Storm) and graduating from college, he worked for a defense contractor to train Soldiers and Marines before they went into harm's way, leading the accounting, finance, and supply chain. Jeff then worked for a subsidiary of Campbell Soup Company as Vice President of Finance, Operations, and International Sales. Eventually, Jeff started his own company in Kirkland, providing military training support, local government audit and financial support, and owned and operated a manufacturing company in Baton Rouge. His company grew to approximately 1,500 employees and was located across 35 offices worldwide before he sold it.

Four years ago, he and his wife Yvonne moved to Granite Falls, where Jeff worked briefly for the school district as the finance officer. Next, he opened his second company, Belenus Solutions, to provide integrated service solutions, training, and analysis through defense contracting and local government support. Current work includes providing military training support for the Army's Joint Readiness Training Center in Louisiana, construction management services for the Granite Falls School District, and other financial and program management assignments. His experience and insight in managing construction sites means he brings added value to his job at City Hall, as we build the new Civic Center.

Jeff loves living in Granite Falls. When he found out he was ineligible to run for a City Council seat (Jeff lives outside of town), he found other ways to serve the community, including his company's bid to provide financial services. As an avid outdoorsman, Jeff says "It feels like I'm on vacation every time I go home!" He and Yvonne have four children, and two grandchildren, who he keeps well supplied with Tonka toys.

STREET AND WATER IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS KEEP PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT BUSY



Corner of Pioneer and S. Granite

Over the summer, the Granite Falls Public Works Department made substantial progress on local street improvements.

Repared: Portions of Cascade Avenue, Galena Street, Alder Avenue, Pioneer from Wabash to Alder, North Granite from Alpine to the 800 block, and a section of Burn Road.

S. Kentucky Avenue water and storm replacement project and storm infrastructure upgrade, plus street overlay and pavers were expected to be completed before Halloween.

The same project includes Union Street. The storm

infrastructure upgrade will redirect storm water back into the ground, and alleviate the potential for flooding.

City crews also worked on water main tie-ins on Cascade and Portage.

Public Works Supervisor Charles White says this Fall, "we're still working on the meter replacement program, which should be completed by December." A December completion date is also expected for a sewer manhole project, that will repair and rehabilitate inflow and infiltration.

Charles also asks people to please keep their storm drains free of leaves and debris, as winter approaches. This will significantly help prevent street flooding. Removed leaves can be placed in your yard waste receptacle or composted. Be sure to remove and dispose of any trash properly.

Questions? Give us a call during regular office hours.



COFFEE WITH THE CHIEF

On the third Wednesday of each month, residents can meet with Police Chief Chris Ferreria to discuss public safety issues. Meetings start at 5:30pm at Hanky Pies Restaurant, 106 Cascade Ave.

PLANNING COMMISSION

The Granite Falls Planning Commission meets the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm upstairs at City Hall. Residents are welcome!

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!

www.GraniteFallsWA.gov



NEW IN TOWN?

New residents can pick up a Welcome brochure with map at City Hall, register to vote, and sign up for water (as well as pay a water bill.)

Contact Us

Granite Falls City Hall
206 S. Granite Avenue
PO Box 1440
Granite Falls, WA 98252

360-691-6441 phone
360-691-6734 fax

Open 8:30am—5:00pm
Mondays—Thursdays
8:30am—noon Fridays
Closed on legal holidays

For after hours water or sewer emergencies, call Public Works at 425-583-1781 or call 911.

**FOR POLICE OR FIRE
EMERGENCIES
CALL 911**