

# GRANITE FALLS CIVIC CENTER

## Ribbon Cutting August 20, 2019



The Granite Falls Civic Center is open! Mayor Matt Hartman and City Manager Brent Kirk cut the ribbon on August 20, 2019. City Council members joined other dignitaries for the ceremony. Over 125 residents came to the event. Citizens are invited to stop by during business hours and take a look around. In the large front lobby and hallway, local artwork is planned to be featured.

The 1100 square foot Community Room will serve as chambers for City Council meetings, and also be available to rent for events. *Note: Facility rental policies and rates will be available once the Council approves.* There is a smaller conference room also available. A complete audio and visual system is in place in both rooms. There is also a separate kitchen, and rest rooms on the public side of the building. Citizens can enjoy the outdoor public plaza with its train track trellis area and bench seating.

The City Hall portion provides office space for staff, a common work area, break room and restrooms. The entire complex is built on property next to the current police station with space for a future addition to the building as needed. *See more photos on the back page.*



Planning Commissioner Fred Cruger with Duffy



The large community room



City Treasurer Jeff Balentine and Council member Bruce Straughn



# GRANITE FALLS WASHINGTON

GATEWAY TO THE MOUNTAIN LOOP

# Looking Back ...

The original city hall was built in 1893 as the Granite Falls school house. It was moved to its current location on South Granite Avenue in 1910 when a new school was built, and became a combined City Hall/Fire Department.

In 1942 the building was demolished to make way for the current city hall. Over the years, the building has been remodeled and reconfigured to include (at one time or another) the fire department, police department, and jail, in addition to serving as our city hall and public works department.



Over the past several years, the 77 year-old building developed numerous structural problems, public safety concerns, lack of ADA compliance, and no space to expand staffing or records storage. The public works department was in the basement, which is nearly uninhabitable. City Manager Brent Kirk remembers, "When I started working for the City in 2009, I framed and built the office in the basement on my own time with my own money because of the mold and mildew down there."

Now that our City Hall is located inside the new Civic Center, the old building will provide long term storage space for files. It will also serve as transition offices for the Granite Falls Police Department while their building is undergoing critically needed renovations. Eventually, the hope is that the Granite Falls American Legion Post 125 will move into the ground floor and upstairs areas that would allow them a (slightly) better facility than their current location.

## Message from Mayor Matt Hartman



I'm not exactly sure how long it has been since we've had a new city hall—let's just say 50 years or more. Our current city hall has seen so many changes in town, and listened to so many conversations, meetings, discussions, and yes, even a few arguments—oh, the stories it could tell. And now it is time to say goodbye to a wonderful part of our past.

The genesis of the new City Hall is steeped in a few subtle yet profound changes to our town over the past 10 years. First and foremost, our nation's economy rebounded from a Depression the likes we haven't seen for 80 years.

In 2010, the city participated in the ribbon cutting for the Granite Falls Alternate Route, which forever changed the dynamic of our little downtown.

In 2015, the citizens voted to change our form of government from Mayor—Council to Manager—Council, again shifting us from managing our city with a popularity contest to hiring a qualified CEO.

In 2016, the Council hired Brent Kirk to the position of City Manager, a man who has worked tirelessly with the Council to clarify our vision, and bring our dreams to fruition.

Now, in August, 2019, we will open the doors to a new City Hall, designed to look like an old time Railroad station, tying our past in with our future.

Most importantly, the dedication of this cornerstone to our city, is to the people of Granite Falls. The citizens who have lived here for decades, and seen so many changes. The people who have moved here more recently, recognizing a charming town with small town values. And the people who have dedicated their time and effort to see Granite Falls thrive.

There are too many people to list who have given time, energy, and their hearts to see this project to completion. And if we were to list them, then we should also list every citizen who has chosen to make Granite their home.

Welcome to your new City Hall and Community Center. Walk its halls with pride and the knowledge that it is YOURS. We have all built this wonderful town, and can all be proud that we are from Granite Falls.



# Civic Center Design Reflects History

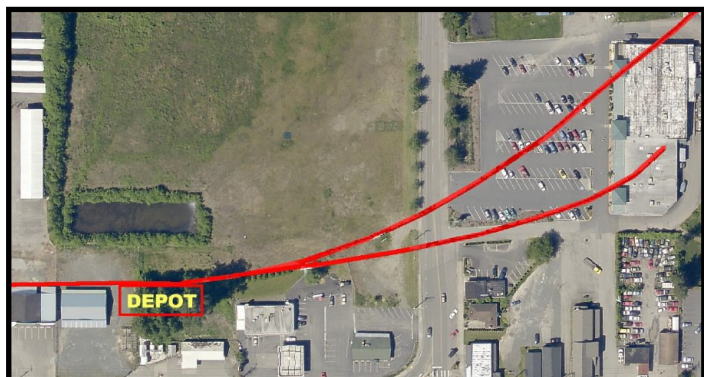
David A. Clark Architects designed the Granite Falls Civic Center to resemble a train station, reflecting the history of the City's railroad days. Inside the City Hall lobby, glassed-in counters resemble a train depot's ticket counters. In fact, the railroad reached Granite Falls in October, 1892 which is why we celebrate Railroad Days the first Saturday of October.

## So Where Was the Depot?

The single most commonly-asked question at the Granite Falls Historical museum is "Where are the Falls?" or the closely-related question, "Are there really any Falls?". However, the next most-commonly asked question is "*Where was the railroad depot?*"

Here is a picture that answers the railroad depot question in detail. The Everett & Monte Cristo Railway ran right where much of SR92 is located today, but the highway deviates from the old railbed very near the western end of Crooked Mile Road. The rails ran on the north side of what is SR92 today, made a single bend, then ran on a straight east/west line into town, north of Stanley St through the downtown area.

Just before reaching what today is N. Granite Ave., the rails turned to the northeast and ran straight out of town, eventually reaching what is today Gun Club Road. As they approached the river, they again turned to follow the river – after the path leaves Iron Mountain quarry property, much of that railbed can be hiked today as part of the Lime Kiln Trail.



How Granite Falls obtained such a nice depot is also an interesting story.

During the late 1800s, the city of Everett was growing quickly, and soon became the economic center of the area. While Snohomish was the County Seat, and had earlier gained significance as the area grew, the folks in Everett felt strongly they should be designated as the County Seat, and it ultimately came down to a public vote. It seems that the folks in Granite Falls were promised a nice railroad depot IF they voted in favor of Everett . . . while it might not be possible to recount the votes today, Granite Falls certainly got a nice depot! It's often pictured with Northern Pacific engine #366 stopped beside it (the NP bought the Monte Cristo

Railway in 1902 as part of the broad NP expansion. It was later sold to logging interests). The depot sat just behind what later became (and is no more) the Nelson Distributors tanks on the north side of Stanley St. The rails branched onto a 710 ft siding that serviced a store, and a couple shingle sheds. The main line headed northeast, right through the parking lot at today's IGA Market. There is a curved row of shrubs in back of the gas



station and convenience store that indicate the original rail line.

A popular picture of the depot was taken while looking west toward Lake Stevens in 1909. When we created the new welcome sign for the City, we took some artistic license, turned the locomotive and station around (the station originally looked the same from both ends), inserted Mt. Pilchuck to the east, and removed the crowd



to make the ticket office visible. *Article adapted from the original provided by the Granite Falls Historical Society.*

In a similar fashion, local historian Fred Cruger created the 'imagined' picture to the right, showing the ghostly images of a train and railroad workers positioned on the Civic Center plaza, juxtaposed with the modern building. Cruger added the snow-covered Mt. Pilchuck at the back of the building. The pergola on the plaza features railroad ties and tracks atop two lines of concrete (each line weighs 9 tons).





# THANK YOU TO THE CITIZENS OF GRANITE FALLS!



*Right: Sultan Mayor John Seehuus, Snohomish Mayor John Kartak, Granite Falls Mayor Matt Hartman, State Representative Robert Sutherland, Senator Keith Wagner, City Manager Brent Kirk, Darrington Mayor Dan Rankin, State Representative Carolyn Eslick*



*City Clerk Darla Reese handed out special City pins.*



*Above: Scott Bower and Kristen FitzGerald check out the new inner lobby of City Hall.*

*Left: People listening to speeches at the ribbon cutting ceremony, with the old City Hall behind them.*

*Right: The first City Council meeting in the new chambers on August 21, 2019.*

