City of Gold Bar
EST. 1910

107 – 5th Street, Gold Bar, WA 98251

City of Gold Bar Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 20th, 2026

CALL TO ORDER, FLAG SALUTE, ROLL CALL

Mayor Yarbrough called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. The meeting was held in hybrid format. Present in person were Councilmembers Craig, Lie, Martin, Russell, and Sears. Staff members present in person included Public Works Director Norris, Clerk Stowe, and Chief Whalen. Office Manager Beaston attended via Zoom.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Councilmember Sears moved to approve the agenda as presented and with a second by Councilmember Russell, the motion carried.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Yarbrough reviewed several meetings he attended, including the opening of Erinwood Trail, the installation of broadband for Index, and the City's Tree Board meeting, which needs a volunteer. Volunteers need to be city residents. He also sent out letters of support for DNR and State Parks.

STAFF REPORT

Chief Whalen and deputies continue to deal with nuisance issues, suspicious activities, attending meetings, and changes to staffing. He is also working on the theft of the U.S. flag from the city hall. Sheriff Johnson and the county prosecutor would like to attend a council meeting to answer any questions. Councilmember Lie asked about a person sleeping under a bridge around Ley Road and said residents of the area have been vocal. Chief Whalen said that deputies respond to multiple calls in that area, but the majority are parking issues and locals not stopping at signs. He has received no calls reporting illegal camping or ordinance violations and deputies continue to monitor the bridges.

Director Norris talked about maintenance work including installation of new transfer switches for wells, booster pumps, stormwater, the retirement of a staff member, and posting of an open maintenance position. Councilmember Lie and Director Norris talked about a home with a temporary pump installed for a flooding crawl space and camping at the old Loth Lumber site that city staff are addressing with the property owner. Councilmember Russell and Director Norris talked about watermain replacement and that the city still has roughly twenty percent remaining to replace.

Clerk Stowe presented a plaque received from AWC Risk Management in recognition of the city's work to reduce risk in 2026. Along with that, the city received a small loss control grant that she hopes to use for a new defibrillator for the city hall.

Office Manager Beaston continues to deal with loose dogs and issues with people posting on social media rather than calling the city hall for animal control. Councilmember Russell commended her work on code violations relating to a property and how much better the area now looks.

Prior to moving into the next portion of the agenda, Mayor Yarbrough reminded people of conduct during public comment times. He also said he forgot to mention during his mayor report that Snohomish County Council approved the conservation grant for the potential purchase of property, which will have an appraisal done prior to any potential offer.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember Sears asked about the need for executive session as required by law for property purchases. The Council will hold one when it is time to discuss whether to move forward and to review potential offers. Councilmember Sears also offered congratulations to staff member Art Stowe on his retirement.

Councilmember Lie spoke on multiple topics including Snohomish County Tomorrow, the status of a vacant house, and encouraging voters to use drop boxes.

Councilmember Martin also encouraged the use of drop boxes and asked if the city tracked water usage relating to leakage, which it does.

Councilmember Russell talked about the work law enforcement did in helping Office Manager Beaston with code violations, increased safety in the area, how much he appreciated their help, and that he is seeing more compliance with the new regulations around e-bikes.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Clerk Stowe received a written public comment opposing the potential purchase of land for a pedestrian path from Alicia Flansburg, which was sent out to councilmembers.

Danielle (no last name given) expressed gratitude for council service but wanted to address the last meeting. She said people felt dismissed and disappointed, and that Councilmember Lie's comments about disgruntled people on Birch Court were disrespectful. She said the council encourages participation, but when citizens do, they are met with condescension. She acknowledged Director Norris, saying he was consistently helpful and professional. She then asked that the council be better leaders, more collaborative, and that they treat residents who show up and participate with respect.

PUBLIC HEARING

Clerk Stowe called the public hearing to order at 7:27 for the purpose of reviewing the 2027 budget and ordinance #796 amending municipal codes. She reviewed the public hearing rules and no councilmember had reason to recuse themselves from the hearing.

Discussion around the 2027 budget included loss of tax revenue, review of budget details, an engineered study of stormwater, 2027 grants and projects, potential changes to prosecution services, a request for new speed bumps which can be utilized with funds from capital revenue, assisting the street fund, reduction of water assessment fees and increases to stormwater fees, stormwater services, what projects are necessary and which can be postponed, replacement of old vehicles, and the use of beginning funds. There were no public comments. Mayor Yarbrough thanked Director Norris and Clerk Stowe for their work on the budget.

Ordinance #796 was presented for a second reading and action. The consensus of the council was to table this ordinance until after the first of the year. There were no public comments.

With no further action, Councilmember Sears moved to adjourn the public hearing. With a second by Councilmember Russell the hearing was adjourned at 8:09 and the council returned to the regular agenda.

CONTINUED BUSINESS

Ordinance #799 Closing Funds. This ordinance relating to the former USDA loan was presented for a second reading and action. Councilmember Sears moved to approve the ordinance and with a second by Councilmember Russell the motion carried.

Ordinance #800 Banning Family Burials. This ordinance was presented for an introduction and first reading. There was discussion around potential conflicts, property values, that the regulation does not include cremation, authorization under existing RCWs, public health, and small lots. Councilmember Sears moved to accept the ordinance for an introduction and first reading and with a second by Councilmember Russell, the motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Comprehensive Plan Consultant Agreement. There was discussion around the agreement, the letter the city finally received from the Department of Commerce with requirements, the housing element of the Comprehensive Plan, changes in state legislation, the current budget for consultation services, the assistance received by AWC and legislators, implications for obtaining grants if the work isn't done, and that the Council will approve final amendments. After discussion the consensus of the council was to move forward with the existing consultant agreement.

FINAL COUNCIL COMMENTS/OTHER BUSINESS

Councilmember Lie responded to the earlier citizen comment regarding council behavior. He agreed with every comment she made and said that he was on the council because he did not trust city hall. He said he was treated poorly by previous regimes, that the city hall had been a den of stupid secrets for over twenty years, and he had to submit a public records request just to get the information that Director Norris summarized earlier. He said he was willing to meet with her and that he was the one who was their champion to decrease short-term rentals.

Councilmember Russell said he has never worked with a finer group.

Councilmember Craig has concerns about electric vehicles, appreciated the citizen comment, and promised to do better.

COUNCIL MINUTES APPROVAL

Councilmember Sears moved to approve the October 6th, 2026, minutes as presented and with a second by Councilmember Russell, the motion carried.

VOUCHER APPROVAL

Councilmember Martin moved to approve checks numbering 39451 through 39478 and EFTs, with $83,745.10 for claims and $2,727.33 for payroll and taxes, for a grand total of $86,472.43 and with a second by Councilmember Sears, the motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Russell moved to adjourn the meeting and with a second by Councilmember Sears, the motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 8:31 pm.

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Steve Yarbrough, Mayor

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Lisa Stowe, Clerk/Treasurer