



# CITY OF SELAH

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## Mayor's Monthly Newsletter

### December 2024

Hello Selah Community! Yes, we made it through my first year as Mayor and here are a few things that were accomplished this year:

1. I have put out a monthly Mayor's Newsletter each month this year.
2. I presented over 50 Community Pride Awards to deserving people that are making a difference in Selah.
3. I formed an official "Legislative Committee" this year and have been lobbying for support from the county, state and federal legislators and agencies for our many needs. We also had the Council formally adopt a legislative agenda for 2025.
4. We purchased the current building housing our Police Department, saving over \$100,000 per year in rental payments until we can construct an adequate facility within the next couple of years.
5. For parks, we paved a pathway in Wixson Park giving broader access to those with mobility issues. We opened 8 pickleball courts and resurfaced the tennis courts in Carlon Park, along with a paved pathway between the courts and the skate park.
6. We gave City Hall an inexpensive facelift for improved appearance and a much-needed seal coating to prevent moisture from leaking through the inside walls. Earlier in the year we completed the sidewalk and ADA ramp in front of City Hall also.
7. The Lyle Loop water main project was completed for improved water service.
8. The East Home Avenue sidewalk project was finished for a safe walking path to schools.
9. We implemented a new software package. While the transition had a few major hiccups, we are now working with an accurate payroll, billing and accounting system that will provide greater flexibility, transparency and customized tracking.
10. We increased our fair share of dollars returned through grants and low interest loans from state and federal sources for investment back into the community. We were awarded over 10 million dollars for various projects around town including water and street improvements; waste water treatment plant design; and cross walk improvements. Some are already completed and many you will see completed over the next two years.
11. The Fire District put into service a new ladder truck that was purchased 3 years ago and finally built and delivered. This was at a savings of nearly \$500,000.00 over today's pricing.

12. We have partnered with Pacific Power to install electric vehicle charging stations at the Civic Center, improving our carbon footprint. They are also replacing the lighting in the fire station with energy efficient bulbs that will provide ongoing cost savings.
13. The S.A.F.E. mural on the retaining wall on North First Street, representing unity for all, was completed and dedicated bringing a real splash of color to a drab wall.
14. We passed the 2025 budget with just shy of 30 million in appropriations, while still committing to enlarging - not shrinking - the City's reserves.
15. We entered into an agreement with Civic Plus, who is going to design a new website to improve our ability to communicate both internally and with our residents on multiple platforms.
16. We renewed the contract for the afterschool program at the Civic Center; and the kids were able to harvest their first fruits and vegetables from their community garden behind Wixson Park.
17. We have moved forward with the next phase of improvements to the Civic Center by adding ADA features and upgrading the kitchen, all to better serve you.
18. Our second round of Flock cameras were installed. These are effectively improving our Police response to potential criminal activity; and keeping Selah a safer community.
19. Our Deputy Fire Chief has now been certified as a Fire Marshall. This is a continuing investment in the overall quality of our fire service.
20. Many of our streets were crack sealed in the continuing annual program to prolong the life of our City Streets and parking lots.

These are just some highlights from the year as we are continuously improving on how the City can better serve the entire community one step at a time.

The most important takeaway from all of this is to know that while most cities and government offices throughout the valley are struggling to provide essential services and maintain financial viability; the City of Selah is comparatively stable and in a good position of growing reserves and improving services. We are blessed with a strong and financially responsible City Council.

#### **Now, here are the highlights from December for the City of Selah.**

December 6<sup>th</sup> saw this year's rendition of the lighted Christmas parade. The SDA was the lead on making this a more exciting and impressive event every year.

The City partnered with the Chamber and SDA to have a contest for the best decorated residences and businesses selected by each organization. After the six winners were determined, they were included in two nights of bus tours around the City to view the lights of the season. Thanks to all of the businesses and homes that brightened the nights for everyone with colorful displays. Hot chocolate and cider with cookies were provided at City Hall for the participants. And the winners were for businesses: Manhattan Station, Kings Row and Helms Hardware. For residents: 211 West Naches, 760 Dixie Drive and 604 West Fremont.

The City Council only meets once in December; but there were several important items that were taken care of to end the year. Construction projects at Wixson Park and East Goodlander were

approved as being completed and a grant from the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) for grind and overlay on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and Speyers Road was signed. This one is a 10% match by the City; so, we get a half million-dollar project for \$50,000 of City funds.

They also approved the purchase of two drones for the Police department. These will be used for a variety of purposes within the City for Police, Fire and Public Works. A huge shout out to the SDA for their grant of \$15,000 reducing our cost to about \$16,000.

Contracts with HLA to provide our periodic Comprehensive Plan update and with YVCOG to provide technical assistance to the City in 2025 were both approved by Council.

Yakima County advised that we still had \$100,000 in ARPA funds that could be allocated to Selah Parks; and the Council approved allocating the funds for multiple projects in our parks.

Selah Community Pride Awards were presented to seven Selah Middle School students for their presentations to state educators on their participation in the Dual Language Program. They were Emily Macias, Max Garcia, Jorge Romero, Allison Ramos, Hannah Draney, Annick Thompson and Andres Marquez.

**I am looking for some help.** I would like to display a complete set of “Community Days” buttons at City Hall and I am missing some. If you would be willing to donate some, please drop them off at City Hall attention Mayor Bell. The years I am missing are: anything prior to 1958, 1959 thru 1981, 1986, 1987, 1994, 2013 thru 2016 and anything after 2018.

**Get engaged with what's going on in Selah by being an active participant.**

**Please contact me if you have an interest in volunteering on a City committee this coming year. [roger.bell@selahwa.gov](mailto:roger.bell@selahwa.gov)**

**That's all folks for this year. I'll be back in 2025 with more to report on your City.**

# Happy New Year

**If you wish to be added or removed from the Mayor's Monthly email please send a message to [michelle.damron@selahwa.gov](mailto:michelle.damron@selahwa.gov)**

Roger Bell, Selah Mayor