

CITY OF BLACK DIAMOND

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Mayor's Message

JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH 2024



Welcome 2024! It's hard to believe 2024 is here. The saying "Time Flies" certainly is true. It feels like only yesterday that we were enjoying summertime activities, and now we are dressing in layers to stay warm. With the colder weather comes some challenges so please make sure to check weather conditions before going out and check on your neighbors too.

2024 will be another busy year for the city and I would like to take this opportunity to share with you the following announcements, events, and updates.

*Happy
New Year
2024*

City Offices
will be Closed:

1/1 - New Year's Day
1/15 - Martin Luther
King Day
2/19 - Presidents' Day

CITY COUNCIL OFFICIALS:

Mayor:
Carol Benson

Councilmembers:
Tamie Deady
Brad Douglass
Therron Smith
Leih Mulvihill
Kristiana de Leon
Nathan Jones
Debbie Page



Retirement of Finance Director, Mayene Miller

After 16 years, City Finance Director Mayene Miller is retiring from the City. May came to the City of Black Diamond with the intent of only staying six months, however she fell in love with our town and community and the feeling was mutual, so she stayed. Before coming here, May worked at the City of Milton and the City of Kent. In total May has 50 years of public service – that is quite the accomplishment! During her tenure here, May made sure that the city finances were in good shape and we always had clean audits. I thank her for all of her help and guidance in helping our city navigate through the financial ups and downs. It's always difficult to say goodbye to a loyal and dedicated staff member but believe me, she has earned this retirement. She will be dearly missed, and I wish her much happiness and I hope retirement brings her many wonderful things, as she will be leaving the City of Black Diamond at the end of December.



www.blackdiamondwa.gov

Welcome New City Staff

I would like to introduce new staff members who have joined our BD Team! (Left to right below) Deborah Gill, Police Clerk; Xavier Mason, Finance Director; and Jasmine Foth, Administrative Assistant II. Please join me in welcoming them to our City.



Re+ Pledge

On September 21, 2023, the City Council authorized the signing of the RE+ Pledge acknowledging the city's support of King County's Re+ Program. The Mission of this program is: Reducing single use; Reusing everything that can be; Recycling what's left; Renewing communities; Rethinking what's possible. I along with representatives from the many cities that have signed the Re+ Pledge joined a celebration hosted by King County's Solid Waste Division and led by King County Executive Dow Constantine.



Hybrid Council and Planning Commission Meetings

Did you know the city holds hybrid Council and Planning Commission meetings? This allows citizens to have the opportunity to participate in the comfort of their home, office, or wherever they may be. These meetings have been very successful, and I hope you can join us either in-person or virtually at a meeting. For dates and times please visit the City's website calendar at www.blackdiamondwa.gov.



2024 Operating Budget

On December 4th the City Council passed the City's Operating Budget. Once again, the focus was to prepare a budget that addresses our current needs, while at the same time being mindful of future needs. You can read more about the budget on the Finance Department's webpage at <https://www.blackdiamondwa.gov/finance>.



Town Hall Meeting

On March 14, 2024, the City will be holding a Town Hall meeting at 7:00 p.m. and you can attend this meeting either in-person or virtually. Town Hall meetings are held twice a year on the second Thursday in the months of March and October. I encourage you to attend and talk with your Councilmembers on any concerns, issues, or questions you may have.

Hometown Christmas

Saturday, December 9th was the Hometown Christmas in the historic downtown area of Black Diamond. This event was filled with fun activities for the whole family, and it was nice to see so many out enjoying it. I want to thank all the volunteers for all their hard work to put on this event - it couldn't happen without them. This is a free event and if you couldn't attend this year, I encourage you to mark your calendar for next December - you won't be disappointed.



In closing, I want to express what a wonderful community we live in. We are very fortunate to have such dedicated Councilmembers and city staff and I want to thank them all for their support and hard work. I hope 2024 is a good year for us all and I encourage you to continue to be involved in our great community. Should you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me, Councilmembers, or city staff.

Stay safe and healthy,



Mayor Carol Benson



FINANCE DEPARTMENT



Lifeline Utility Discount Program

The City of Black Diamond offers a Lifeline Utility Discount Program for low-income seniors 62+ residents, and for low income permanently disabled customers. After approval, residents can receive a 50% discount on city billed utilities. For information on the city Lifeline Utility Discount Program, please visit our website at www.blackdiamondwa.gov.

2024 UTILITY RATE INCREASES



King County Rate Increase

King County has increased their monthly sewer rate by \$3.00 per month, per ERU, from \$52.11 to \$55.11, effective January 1, 2024. This increase will be shown on customers' January 2024 statement. This rate is charged to all King County utility customers to help pay for transferring waste from city limits to the King County Transfer station in Seattle where King County Metro sanitizes waste to protect our water ways before it is released to the Puget Sound. City utility rates for Water and Stormwater have not increased.

Black Diamond Sewer Rate Increase

The City of Black Diamond has also increased our sewer rates. The City Council voted for the City to increase sewer rates by 5%, per ERU, from \$25.00 to \$26.50, effective January 1, 2024. Similarly, to the King County sewer increase, this will also be effective January 1, 2024. Each subsequent year, the rate will be adjusted annually to account for inflation. That adjustment will align with the change in the June CPI-U for the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue area.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

NEWLY ADOPTED ORDINANCES

- 23-1192 - Repealing & Replacing Ch. 8.24 Water Safety
- 23-1193 - Property Tax 1% dollar & % Increase for 2023
- 23-1194 - Property Tax AV & Max dollar
- 23-1195 - Comp Plan Amendment to Adopt 2024 School District CFP's
- 23-1196 - 2023 Budget Change Amendment
- 23-1197 - Adopt 2024 Budget
- 23-1198 - Repealing Ch. 20.04 & 20.08 re Cannabis Prohibitions
- 23-1199 - Amend Property Tax AV & Max dollar

Community Development has developed a New Business Welcome Packet and process for a Small Business Consultation to encourage new businesses in Black Diamond and assist applicants with the permitting process. The Welcome Packet and consultation handouts can be found on the City's website here:

<https://www.blackdiamondwa.gov/communitydevelopment/pages/applications-checklists-handouts-and-maps> and offer a wealth of information and links around zoning, types of permits, and helpful tips!

Staff continues to work hard on the 2024 Comprehensive Plan periodic update and will be having additional work sessions and public meetings to continue to engage citizens in the public participation process. Look for more information on the City's website and social media accounts!



POLICE DEPARTMENT



Black Diamond Police is FULLY STAFFED

Since 2008, we are happy to report that we are fully staffed. In 2008, we had our first round of layoffs, which included two officers. Again in 2012, we laid off another 2 officers. Since then, two of those positions remained frozen until last year. While it's taken some time, we have hired some outstanding officers!

Our last hire we'd like to welcome is Officer Emilee Greve. She comes to us from the Algona Police Department and is a graduate of Portland State University where she earned her degree in Criminal Justice.

She brings a lot of energy and a desire to represent our city and department with professionalism. We are blessed to have her on our team and please be sure to welcome her when you see her around town.

VEHICLE CRIMES

As we enter the holiday season, we would like to discuss some recent crime trends within our community and some steps that can be taken to help deter thieves.

In the last several weeks, we've witnessed an increase in both thefts from vehicles and attempted vehicle thefts in our community. Kia, Hyundai, and Ford trucks seem to be the primary targets. However, any vehicle left unlocked or with valuables that are visible in the interior are especially easy targets for opportunistic thieves.

In the month of October 2023, there was one theft of a package and one commercial burglary reported. In sharp contrast, for the month of November 2023, there were a total of twelve reported thefts and two attempted thefts; one theft of a vehicle, one theft of construction materials and ten thefts were from vehicles.

On a single night, eight thefts from vehicles occurred, with two male juveniles suspects in both incidents. Additionally, the theft of a vehicle and another attempted theft involved three juvenile females as the primary suspects.

While all vehicles are at risk, but Kia, Hyundai, and Ford trucks appear to be the primary focus of recent thefts and attempts. Owners of these vehicles are strongly urged to take extra precautions. The below measures are recommended.

Unlocked Vehicles at Higher Risk: It cannot be stressed enough that leaving your vehicle unlocked significantly increases the risk of theft. Thieves are more likely to target unlocked vehicles, considering them easy opportunities. Always lock your car doors and windows, even if you're only stepping away for a moment. This simple action can be a strong deterrent to potential thieves.

Secure Valuables: Remove valuables from your vehicle or keep them out of sight. Thieves are more likely to target vehicles with visible items of value.

Enhanced Security Measures: Consider additional security measures, such as steering wheel locks or car alarms, to further protect your vehicle.

Increased Vigilance Needed: We urge all residents to be watchful and take proactive steps to safeguard their vehicles and belongings. Community awareness is a powerful tool in preventing and addressing these incidents.

If you have any information related to these incidents or notice anything that seems suspicious, please contact our department at 360-851-4450 or call 911. ---Sgt. L. DelValle



POLICE DEPARTMENT CONTINUED

POLICE NAME NEW PATROL VESSEL 'ESPING' By Chief Kiblinger

In 1998, the City of Black Diamond annexed Lake Sawyer. With that came the beginning of our marine patrol program in the police department. I was 22 years old when I got hired and in the middle of field training when Officer Kevin and I left for marine training in Kennewick, WA. I had never driven a boat before, but Kevin reassured me 'it'd be fine.' He was right, after 40 hours of intense training, I did just fine, but only for his extra help with those knots. This week back in 1998 was my introduction to who Kevin was. This man goes above and beyond and has the most selfless heart of anyone I have known. The past 26 years, he's remained the same caring, humble man devoted to the city. If our marine patrol had a face, it would be Kevin's. He's responded to every marine detail we've needed since incorporation. It's Kevin who maintains the buoys and both our vessels, Kevin who fixes things when they break, Kevin who knows who to contact for what, Kevin dragging debris off the lake. The list goes on and on and on. So, it was only fitting when our new boat arrived, to dedicate it to the person responsible for so much of our program. Thank you, Kevin, for all you've done!



*Thank you
very much!*



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT



Please follow this QR Code to take a brief survey for our Public Works department relating to your lawn care practices.



Bill Discount Rate

PSE has launched a [Bill Discount Rate](#) program to save customers money on their monthly energy bill. Income-eligible customers can now reduce their PSE energy bills by up to 45% a month. The program is designed to be easily accessible and in most cases no proof of income is required. The program can be used in addition to our other [assistance programs](#).

To quickly find out if they're eligible, customers can go to pse.com/discount. The only information needed is: household size, county of residency, and monthly household income. Please feel free to share with your networks.

Administration

Mayor Carol Benson

City Clerk/HR Manager

Brenda L. Martinez, MMC

Community

Development

Mona Davis

MDRT/Economic

Development

Andrew Williamson

Public Works

Scott Hanis

Finance

Xavier Mason

Police

Chief Jamey Kiblinger

CITY COUNCIL

MEETINGS:

Jan. 4th @ 7 p.m. (Regular)

Jan. 11th @ 6 p.m. (Work Session)

Jan. 18th @ 7 p.m. (Regular)

Feb. 1st @ 7 p.m. (Regular)

Feb. 8th @ 6 p.m. (Work Session)

Feb. 15th @ 7 p.m. (Regular)

Mar. 7th @ 7 p.m. (Regular)

Mar. 14th @ 6 p.m. (Work Session)

Mar. 21st @ 7 p.m. (Regular)

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS:

Jan. 9th @ 6 p.m.

Feb. 6th @ 6 p.m.

Mar. 12th @ 6 p.m.

CITY HALL

(Admin., Public Works, Comm. Dev. and MDRT/Econ. Dev.)

Physical Address.....24301 Roberts Dr.

Mailing Address..... P.O. Box 599

Phone Numbers: Main Line.....360-851-4500

Comm. Dev.....360-851-4447

MDRT/Econ. Dev.....360-851-4448

Public Works.....360-851-4446

For any Public Works emergencies, call the main line and use the prompts

Fax Number: (for all depts. listed above).....360-851-4501

POLICE DEPARTMENT:

Physical Address.....25510 Lawson St.

Mailing Address **P.O. Box 309**

Phone Numbers (non-emergencies).360-851-4450

(EMERGENCIES).....911

Fax Number.....360-851-4451

MUNICIPAL COURT:

Physical & Mailing Address.....25510 Lawson St.

Phone Number.....360-851-4490

Fax Number.....360-851-4491

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Phone Number (non-emergencies)253-735-0284

(EMERGENCIES)911

Council/Commission/Committee Meetings

Monthly meetings for City Council are held the first and third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. Work Sessions are held the second Thursday of each month at 6 p.m. Planning Commission meetings are held on the first Tuesday after the first Council meeting at 6 p.m. of each month. Please contact the Clerk's office for more information 360-851-4564, or check the City Clerk's webpage at: www.blackdiamondwa.gov/Depts/Clerk. If you'd like to be added to the Council Agenda or Planning Commission Agenda Distribution List, please email your request to: info@blackdiamondwa.gov.

Typically meetings are held in the Council Chambers located at 25510 Lawson Street unless otherwise specified. All meetings are now being held both in-person and via ZOOM.