

YOUR MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

The Town of South Prairie was incorporated on February 6, 1909 and operates under the State of Washington regulations for a Town, as referenced in the RCW (Revised Code of Washington) 35.27.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

The Town of South Prairie has a Mayor/Council form of municipal government. The Mayor is the chief executive of the Town. The Town Council, comprised of five positions, is the legislative body of the Town government.

APPOINTED OFFICIALS

The Clerk/Treasurer and Deputy Clerk/Treasurer perform the general administrative business for the Town, and the Mayor appoints these positions. The utilities and public works departments are operated by the Utility Operator, which is appointed by the Mayor.

The employees listed above are represented by the Union under an agreement between the Town of South Prairie and Laborers Local 242.

RESPONSIBILITIES IN TOWN GOVERNMENT

No person shall be eligible to or hold an elective office in a town unless he or she is a resident and registered voter in the town, RCW 35.27.080.

MAYOR: The Mayor is the chief executive officer of the town. This position in the Town of South Prairie is not a full time position with regular business hours. He/she keeps abreast of Town business through regular contact with department heads. He/she is the authorized signatory for the town, including warrants, ordinances, resolutions, meeting minutes, and contractual agreements. He/she shall preside over all meetings of the council at which he or she is present. The Mayor may administer oaths and affirmations, and take affidavits and certify them. He/she shall sign all conveyances made by the town and all instruments, which require the seal of the town. The Mayor is the official representative of the Town Council. It is also the duty of the Mayor to interview, hire, discipline and discharge employees of the town.

In the absence of the Mayor, the Mayor Pro-Tempore, appointed by the Town Council, will fill these duties.

MAYOR PRO-TEMPORE: Town Council may choose a Mayor Pro-Tempore for a specified period of time, not to exceed six months, to act as the Mayor in the absence of the Mayor.

TOWN COUNCIL: The five members of the Town Council are the legislative body of the Town. It is the duty of this body to gather information, discuss issues and make decisions affecting the populace. They shall hold regular meetings at least once each month at such times as may be fixed by ordinance. Special meetings may be called at any time by the mayor or by three councilmembers, by written notice as provided in RCW 42.30.080. No resolution or order for the payment of money shall be passed at any other than a regular meeting. No such resolution or order shall be valid unless passed by the votes of at least three councilmembers.

All meetings of the Council shall be held at such places as may be designated by the Town Council. All final actions on resolutions and ordinances must take place within the corporate limits of the town. All meetings of the Town Council must be public. Reference RCW 35.27.270.

A majority of the councilmembers shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The Mayor shall preside at all meetings of the Council. The Mayor shall have a vote only in case of a tie in votes of the councilmembers. Reference RCW 35.27.280.

The Council conducts Public Hearings, as required by the Revised Code of Washington, for financial and land use issues. However, the Council may hold Public Hearings concerning topics that may be deemed advisable to provide an opportunity for public comment.

The Town Council sets the town's utility rates, license and permit fees, property rental rates, property taxes, employee salaries and miscellaneous fees.

The Council adopts the annual budget, following a Public Hearing; and they review the Annual Report. They make the final decisions regarding land use issues, contractual agreements and approval of accounts payable.

VACANCIES IN ELECTED POSITIONS: When a vacancy of an elected position occurs due to resignation, death, forfeiture, etc., the vacancy shall be filled as follows unless the provisions of law relating to the town provide otherwise:

- 1) Where one position is vacant, the remaining members of the governing body shall appoint a qualified person to fill the vacant position.
- 2) Where two or more positions are vacant and two or more members of the governing body remains in office, the remaining members of the governing body shall appoint a qualified person to fill one of the vacant positions, the remaining members of the governing body and the newly appointed person shall appoint another qualified person to fill another vacant position, and so on until each of the vacant positions is filled with each of the new appointees participating in each appointment that is made after his or her appointment.
- 3) If less than two members of a governing body remain in office, the county legislative authority of the county in which all or the largest geographic portion of the town is located shall appoint a qualified person or persons to the governing body until the governing body has two members.
- 4) If a governing body fails to appoint a qualified person to fill a vacancy within ninety days of the occurrence of the vacancy, the authority of the governing body to fill the vacancy shall cease and the county legislative authority of the county in which all or the largest geographic portion of the town is located shall appoint a qualified person to fill the vacancy.
- 5) If the county legislative authority of the county fails to appoint a qualified person within one hundred eighty days of the occurrence of the vacancy, the county legislative authority or the remaining members of the governing body of the town may petition the governor to appoint a qualified person to fill the vacancy. The governor may appoint a qualified

person to fill the vacancy after being petitioned if at the time the governor fills the vacancy the county legislative authority has not appointed a qualified person to fill the vacancy.

- 6) As provided in *RCW 29.15.190 and 29.21.410, each person who is appointed shall serve until a qualified person is elected at the next election at which a member of the governing body normally would be elected that occurs twenty-eight or more days after the occurrence of the vacancy. If needed, special filing periods shall be authorized as provided in *RCW 29.15.170 and 29.15.180 for qualified persons to file for the vacant office. A primary shall be held to nominate candidates if sufficient time exists to hold a primary and more than two candidates file for the vacant office. Otherwise, a primary shall not be held and the person receiving the greatest number of votes shall be elected. The person shall take office immediately and serve the remainder of the unexpired term.

If an election for the position that became vacant would otherwise have been held at this general election date, only one election to fill the position shall be held and the person elected to fill the succeeding term for that position shall take office immediately when qualified as defined in *RCW 29.01.135 and shall service both the remainder of the unexpired term and the succeeding term. Reference RCW 42.12.070.

ADMINISTRATION: The administration of Town business is handled through the Town Hall including Community Center reservations, receipts and deposit disbursements; and the Water and Sewer Utilities billing and payment receipts.

Clerk/Treasurer duties include: 1) Issuance of business licenses; 2) Filing records requests; 3) Maintaining Official Records of all Council Meetings, Public Hearings, Ordinances, Resolutions, as well as official correspondence and reports; 4) Refer requests to the Town Attorney to prepare ordinances and resolutions, as directed by the Town Council; 5) Research and provide background information on issues to the Council; 6) Prepare meeting agendas; 7) Attend Council Meetings, as secretary and staff resource; and 8) Publish all Legal Notices for the Town. He/she works closely with the Mayor in all phases of the municipality's interests, and is the signatory on ordinances, resolutions, contracts, minutes, and Town warrants, and attests to the accuracy and the Mayor's signature. He/she is the certifying official of the Town.

Deputy Clerk/Treasurer duties include: 1) Maintain records for Town projects and special funding, such as grants and loans; 2) Prepares the Town Budget and Annual Reports, including supportive and clarifying documentation; 3) Performs all bookkeeping and accounting functions, and utility billing for the Town; 4) Receipts payments; 5) Pays vendor bills, contractual fees and taxes; and 6) Distributes revenues and expenditures to appropriate departments and accounts.

The Deputy Clerk/Treasurer assists the Clerk/Treasurer in various aspects of Town Hall functions, and fills the duties of the Clerk/Treasurer in his/her absence.

UTILITIES: The Town operates domestic sewage collection and treatment. There are approximately 136 sewer utility customers. Sewage is collected through a Septic Tank Effluent Pumping (STEP) System and treated at the Town's Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP), located on South Prairie Carbon River Road. Chemical testing is performed in the accredited

laboratory at the treatment plant. In recent years, the volume of required tests have increased and demands a larger percentage of the Utility Operator's time each day. Test records are submitted on a regular basis and an annual permit fee is paid to the Washington State Department of Ecology (WDOE). The town has approximately 150 Water customers and the water meters are read on a monthly basis. Rates are calculated on a two-stage billing system: 1) Base rate, which is calculated according to the number of Equivalent Residential Units (ERU) and 2) water usage. Water testing and treatment are federally mandated by the Washington State Department of Health, Safe Drinking Water Act. Some of these procedures are very expensive, which necessitate increases in user rates for the general system operation.

Utility Operator duties include: 1) Performs testing on wastewater samples 2) Performs test on water samples; 3) Prepare testing reports and maintains records; 4) Read water meters; and 4) Maintenance of Wastewater Treatment Plant, the Water System, town parks, property and streets.

SOUTH PRAIRIE COMMUNITY CENTER can be rented for non-alcoholic events for a fee established by the Town Council. Paid and volunteer personnel maintain this facility. For rental information, contact the South Prairie Town Hall.

TOWN OF SOUTH PRAIRIE PARKS include the Third Street Park, located on SW Third Street, and the Veterans Memorial Park, located east of the Fire Station/Community Center on Highway 162. The Town leases the Third Street Park from the White River School District and the Town maintains the park. The Third Street Park provides a basketball court, baseball field, playground equipment and a picnic area. Numerous volunteers built the Veterans Memorial and a dedication ceremony took place on November 11, 2004. The Veterans Memorial Park provides a picnic area, playground equipment, and the covered pavilion and is adjacent to the Foothills Trail and South Prairie Creek. The Town has been very fortunate to have both parks greatly improved through the efforts of numerous volunteers and local Boy Scouts who have completed their Eagle Scout Projects in Town.

PLANNING COMMISSION members are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Town Council. The Planning Commission acts as an advisory board to the Town Council on all land use issues including: applications for annexations, zoning, variances, conditional use permits, shoreline development permits, short and long plats and sub-divisions, and commercial development. After review and recommendation by the Town Planner, the Commission makes recommendations to the Town Council. Public hearings may be conducted at the Planning Commission or Town Council level. In the absence of a Planning Commission, the Town Council would perform the duties of the Planning Commission, with review and recommendation by the Town Planner. The Town Council makes the final decision on planning-related issues.

TOWN SERVICE AREA: The Town of South Prairie serves a municipal population of approximately 440 residents, within an area along State Highway 162 bordering South Prairie Creek. The Town also provides water service to some customers outside the town limits.