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Tenino Council bids fond farewell to the TPD

Proclamation of recognition is approved

By Dan Fisher
News Editor

An official goodbye to the Tenino Police Department was the main feature of the June 9 regular meeting of the Tenino City Council, which at its previous meeting on May 26 had approved a resolution dissolving the department after 120 years of existence.

The closing roster for the TPD includes Chief Robert Auderer, patrol officers Alec McClelland and Yvonne Sneed, and Sergeant Aaron Lee, now a trooper with the Washington State Patrol.

A transitional update was given to the Council by Thurston County Sheriff's Office (TCSO) Lieutenant Malcolm McIver, TCSO Liaison to Tenino.

McIver handed out sheets showing the number of calls for service and case numbers handled by the TCSO during April and May, 2026 – 59 calls and five case numbers in April and 90 calls and eight cases in May.

"The number of calls seems inflated, but as summer comes and the weather gets nicer, it comes with an uptick



Photo by Dan Fisher

Thurston County Sheriff's Office Lieutenant Malcolm McIver describes Tenino's transition from its police force to TCSO law enforcement coverage at the Tenino City Council's meeting on June 9.

(in calls)," McIver said. "We had a number of follow-ups. We are now staffing as much as we can; an extra data car. We haven't seen anything in the town indicting an ongoing problem." McIver pointed out that Tenino residents can file online reports with the TCSO in its website.

When the proclamation came up on the meeting agenda, Mayor Dave Watterson read the document aloud. The proclamation noted the establishment of the TPD in 1906, and that it has

safeguarded the "lives, liberty and property of the citizens of Tenino, and faithfully served its community across every generation since its founding," for 120 years.

It said the men and women of the TPD had upheld the highest ideals of law enforcement, made personal sacrifices and weathered decades of growth, social transformation and evolving challenges, and has left a legacy to the city "in lives protected, conflicts resolved, the vulnerable defended and the bonds of trust

forged between officers and the neighbors they served."

The conclusion was to proclaim that the Mayor, City Council and the people of Tenino honor and celebrate the 120 years of services by the TPD, extend the deepest and most heartfelt gratitude to its officers and staff members, acknowledge the families of those who served and commit to preserving its memory as part of the City's history.

Also during the June 9 meeting, the Council voted to adopt ordinances 941 and 942, bringing Tenino's municipal code in line with that of the county regard to allowed discharge and sale times for fireworks.

Also approved was the forwarding of a Development Code update of flood hazard regulations to Tenino Municipal Code Chapter 5.24 to the state Department of Commerce for a 60 day notice to adopt, which will have an effect on local flood insurance rates.

All were passed by 3-0 votes of the council, Council Members Gotovac and Eisel being absent.

In reports, Watterson read a written statement from Public Works Director Troy Cannon that the "village hydrants" near Tenino's schools had been scheduled for replacement in September with larger hydrants capable of producing a greater flow of water,

and that Public Works was getting the Quarry Pool ready to open, either that week or next.

A remote presentation was given by Waterworth, delayed somewhat by technical problems and sound, in which representatives of the company conducting a water and sewer rate study for the city displayed charts showing an expected three percent inflation rate on costs of the city systems and noting that rates have not been increased since 2006.

Watterson noted that Tenino has, in fact, implemented rate reductions in 2014 and 2015 for the water system.

"The cash position of these systems will be negative in 2026 and 2027," Waterworth representatives said "We want to get that cash position positive by 2028."

The Waterworth officials noted that rate increases will be necessary, and Watterson replied that he was "very comfortable that we're working with good, accurate numbers."

Clerk-Treasurer Nancy Riddick reported she is still working on unclaimed property.

"We are applying for a grant to help resolve that," she said. "Our chances are about 50/50. We're going to have to update our ordinance on gambling, because we charge a rate above the state level."



Photo by Dan Fisher

Dr. Jennifer Bethman was given a retirement tribute dinner last Saturday, June 13 at Swede Hall, where she was lauded for her 38 years of work in education and her four years as Superintendent of Schools in Rochester.

RSD honors Dr. Bethman with a retirement dinner

Tributes paid during a dinner at Swede Hall

By Dan Fisher
News Editor

Dr. Jennifer Bethman, who earlier announced she was retiring from her position as superintendent of the Rochester School District, was given a surprise testimonial dinner at Swede Hall last Saturday, May 13, to mark the end of her 38 years in education.

RSD IT Director Justin Black, who will be taking over as Interim Superintendent on July 1, was master of ceremonies for the event. He gave a quick overview of Bethman's educational career, including her service as RSD Superintendent for the past four school years.

He then introduces Grant Rodeheaver, president of the Rochester School Board, to make some appropriate remarks on her contributions to the district, and then brought on staff member Andrea Knudson.

"She didn't just come here

to work," Knudson said of Bethman. "She set down roots."

Also speaking during the tribute was Bethman's mother, who noted how her daughter had been a student protestor during her school days, "marching around the school with a sign, protesting plans to shut it down."

The decision to shut down that school was then revoked by the school district, she said.

Bethman herself was the final speaker, describing her career path from teacher and cheer coach to administration work.

"I started teaching in 1987, and came to this state at Bethel in 1991," Bethman said. "I'm an adjunct professor at Pacific Lutheran University in school administration."

"It's been 38 years, and Rochester was a great way to end it," Bethman said. "I'm not going anywhere, you'll still see me around."

She also gave a vote of confidence to Black as her replacement.

"I feel real comfortable knowing he's going to take the reins," she said.

Rochester to celebrate Swede Day this Saturday, June 20

By Dan Fisher
News Editor

The Rochester/Grand Mound area will celebrate the Scandinavian character of its settlers this Saturday, June 20, with the annual Swede Day Midsommar Festival.

The Independent/Sun News had been informed some weeks ago that ROOF Community Services Executive Director Kellie McNelly had been named Grand Marshal, but she informed us Tuesday morning that it was for Olympia's Lakefair Celebration in July.

We know of no other person having been named Grand Marshal, and none has been publicly announced, though McNelly said she thought Kate Peterson had been named Grand Marshal.

This year there is no Swede Day Court, as no local high school seniors-to-be signed up to compete for Swede Day Queen. This development also cancelled the coronation event usually held on the Friday night before Swede Day.

A full slate of events is still scheduled, however, beginning with a fun run starting and end-

ing at Swede Hall at 8 a.m. and a breakfast in the Swede Hall kitchen from 8-10 a.m.

Vendor and carnival booths will be set up around Swede Hall, opening at about 10 a.m. and a luncheon featuring Swedish meatballs will be available at the hall following the parade.

U.S. 12 through Rochester will be closed by Thurston County Sheriff's Office deputies by 10:30 a.m., so those wishing to view the procession should arrive early to find parking and take their places along the route.

TES holds moving up ceremony



Photo by Charlie Plante

Two soon-to-be-sixth graders dance at the moving up ceremony in Tenino Elementary School on June 12, 2026.

Hanson named to spring Dean's List

BIRMINGHAM, AL - Lorinda Hanson, English major from Tenino, was named to Samford University's Dean's List for the spring 2026 semester.

To qualify for the dean's list, a student must earn a minimum 3.5 grade-point average out of a possible 4.0 while attempting at least 12 credit hours of coursework. The Dean's List is the highest academic recognition given by the school at the end of

each semester.

Located in the Homewood suburb of Birmingham, Alabama, Samford is a leading Christian university offering undergraduate programs grounded in the liberal arts with an array of nationally recognized graduate and professional schools. Founded in 1841, Samford enrolls 6,324 students from 44 states, Puerto Rico and 16 countries in its 10 academic schools: arts, arts and scienc-

es, business, divinity, education, health professions, law, nursing, pharmacy and public health. Ranked among U.S. News & World Report's 35 Most Beautiful College Campuses, Samford fields 17 athletic teams that compete in the tradition-rich Southern Conference and boasts one of the highest scores in the nation for its 97% Graduation Success Rate among all NCAA Division I schools.