

Edit Referral

H-21-365 Referral Information

Hotline ID: H-21-365

Date of Submission: 8/17/2021

Entity Type: Local

Entity Category Type: City/Town

Entity: Lind, Town of

Sub Entity Name:

Category: Open Public Meetings and Records

1-2 sentence description of concern:

Report Issued: No

Reporting Type: Verbal Resolution

Report Number:

Investigation Contracted: No

Contract Number:

Contract Name:

Billing Time Code:

Costs:

Public Records Request: No

Flag For Annual Report: No

Substantiated: No

ARRA: No

Action: Referred to Audit Team - Consider Next Audit

Audit Team: Tri-Cities

Audit Team Contact: waltmang@sao.wa.gov

cc:

Referral Date: 8/17/2021

Action Taken: No

Response Date:

Report Date:

Follow Up Date:

Date Closed: 10/12/2021

Edit Referral

H-21-365 Contact Information

Hotline ID: H-21-365

Date of Submission: 8/17/2021

Submission Method: Web

Submission Type: Local government employee

Staff:

Author(Last, First): Snead , Denise

Address: 105 e 6th

City: Lind

State: WA **Zip:** 99341

Home Phone: 509-230-4832

Work Phone:

Mobile Phone:

Email:

Can Contact: Yes

Contact Preference: Home Phone

Anonymous: No

Waived Confidentiality: Yes

Edit Referral

H-21-365 Referral Details

Hotline ID: H-21-365

What state or local organization is involved?

Please identify the specific concerns you are hoping the audit will address.

consequences for mayor and council

Please provide a detailed description of the assertion or outstanding achievement, including who, when, where, what, how and how much.

Aug 10th regular meeting, no agenda was available so we had to ask for one. Council voted to approve a resolution that was not on ore added to the agenda. Council decided to refuse selling our water to a local farmer and this was not on the agenda either. We have always sold water to farmers. They held an executive session on personnel matter.

How did this issue come to your attention?

I was in attendance to back up the girl asking for her \$5000 back.

**What employee(s), contractors, etc., were involved in the assertion or achievement?
Please include employee titles if possible.**

Mayor and council

Please provide the names of any witnesses to the assertion or achievement, if possible.

Everyone in the audience

Please provide any additional details or comments that would help us understand your assertion or achievement.

Edit Referral

H-21-365
Activity
Log
Hotline ID: H-21-365

Entry Date ▼	Log Entry
10/12/2021	Referral updated by 'JEANA Gillis (gillisj)'.
10/11/2021	Referral updated by 'GINNY Waltman (waltmang)'.
10/11/2021	See supporting documents for article attached. --waltmang
10/11/2021	Based on the article attached, this issue was resolved between the Town and the citizen that had a concern. The Town refunded the money. This hotline is closed. --waltmang
08/24/2021	Called Citizen and left message on answering machine. --garciaj
08/18/2021	Referral updated by 'MARY Leider (leiderm)'.
08/18/2021	Task assigned to 'waltmang@sao.wa.gov'. Team notification email sent to: waltmang@sao.wa.gov
08/18/2021	Referral updated by 'MARY Leider (leiderm)'. Action changed from (not set) to Referred to Audit Team - Consider Next Audit.

The Ritzville Adams County Journal - Eastern Adams County's Only Independent Voice Since 1887



Council overturns Lind mayor

By [Roger Harnack](#)
The Journal

Town returns funds collected illegally

LIND – A resident who was overcharged for water connection is getting thousands of dollars returned.

Briana Osborn appeared before the Town Council on Tuesday, Sept. 28, to plead her case for reimbursement of water connection fees after Mayor Paula Bell failed to provide proof of legal authority to collect the funds.

After listening to Osborn, and the mayor's rebuttal, the council voted unanimously to return \$5,239.85 to the homeowner.

At issue was whether the mayor had authority to authorize a contractor to trespass on Osborn's property and perform work without first obtaining permission and without providing the owner the opportunity to hire her own contractor. The mayor also failed to seek a council vote on her unilateral action.

Furthermore, the issue included discussion on whether the mayor even had the authority to demand payments totaling \$6,460 after only providing Osborn with information that set the connection cost at \$500 for water and \$500 for sewer, then agreeing with the fee schedule.

Osborn showed up at the meeting with a number of supporters and the signatures of about 100 residents calling for the exorbitant amount to be refunded.



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"I was given an amount (\$500 for water and \$500 for sewer connection); I paid cash that day," Osborn told the council. "I don't think it's fair to charge me thousands of dollars... The council should honor what your mayor and your clerk told me."

The mayor tried to justify collecting additional the excess amount, noting that she contacted a company working in town and asked if it would have employees install a water meter on Osborn's property.

Osborn said she came home to find a meter installed and the mayor extorted the funds in exchange for turning on the water.

She said the mayor has made the issue "nothing but hell for me," noting the issue had been ongoing for several months without resolution.

Those at the meeting asked the mayor to provide some verification Osborn new and agreed to the fees, but Bell was unable to provide any proof.



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"I don't know why she would have to approve it," Bell said.

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Residents pointed out the mayor, and town, would lose if Osborn sued. So, they asked the council for a refund vote.

The council unanimously approved of the refunded amount.

Author Bio

Roger Harnack, Publisher

Roger Harnack is co-owner and publisher of Free Press Publishing. An award-winning journalist, photographer, editor and publisher who grew up in Eastern Washington, he's one of only two Washington state journalists ever to receive the international Golden Quill for editorial/commentary writing. Roger is committed to preserving local media, and along with it, a local voice for Eastern Washington.

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