



# OUR TOWN

The official newsletter of Kalama, WA



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## Safe Holiday Travel

The holiday season is fast approaching and many will take to the roads to visit friends and family. We want you to stay safe on the roads every day. Here are a few things to remember while preparing to travel:

- Prepare your car for winter and keep an emergency preparedness kit with you.
- Get a good night's sleep before departing and avoid driving drowsy.
- Leave early. Plan ahead for heavy traffic!
- Make sure every person in the vehicle is properly buckled up, no matter how long or short the distance traveled.
- Put that cell phone away! Many distractions occur while driving, but cell phones have become the main culprit.
- Practice defensive driving and pay attention to your surroundings.
- Designate a sober driver to ensure guests make it home safely after a holiday party. Alcohol, over-the-counter prescriptions, marijuana, and illegal drugs cause impairment.

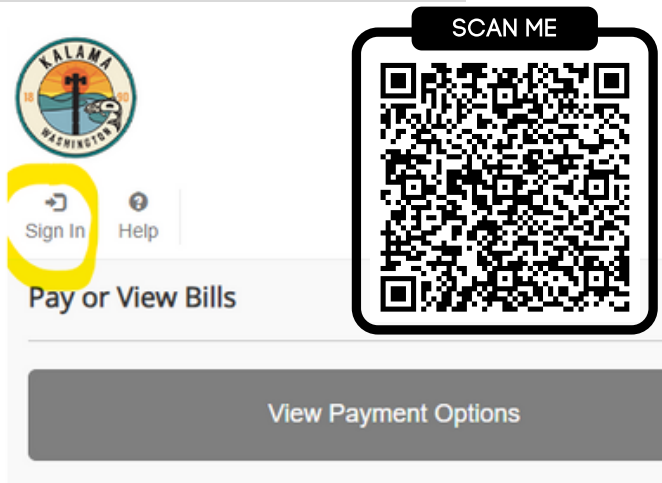
We wish you a safe and wonderful holiday season!

Sincerely,

*The Kalama  
Police Department*



## Pay Your Utility Bill Online



Interested in signing up for autopay or online payments? Here's how:

Scan the QR code or follow the link here:

<https://www.invoicecloud.com>.

Next select "sign in" (see circled in yellow). There are **no transaction fees for online utility payments.**

If you do not have "sign in" information, select "Register Now" on the next screen. You will need to have your City of Kalama account number available. Please note this number will be 5 characters: XXXX.X

Even if your account number ends in "0", you will need to include the 0 to pull up your account in the online system.

Questions? Reach out to the utility clerk at [360-673-4554](tel:360-673-4554) or [utilityclerk@cityofkalama.com](mailto:utilityclerk@cityofkalama.com)

## Update Your Utility Contact Info

The utility department is asking that you update your contact information so they can contact you with **any urgent notices** such as water shut off notices, boil water notices, payment issues, hazard notices, etc. To reach the utility department, contact [utilityclerk@cityofkalama.com](mailto:utilityclerk@cityofkalama.com) or [360-673-4554](tel:360-673-4554).



## What's Happening at the Library?

### "The Gathering Place"

Adult drop-in gathering  
Wednesdays, 1-3 pm

### Adult Chair Yoga

Thursdays, 11 am  
City Council Chamber  
Call Library to register (required)

### Medicare Info

Unbiased Medicare Advice from a  
SHIBA representative  
Call Library for appointment



Contact the library: [360 673 4568](tel:3606734568) or  
[librarian@cityofkalama.com](mailto:librarian@cityofkalama.com)

## FOLK & Storytime

FOLK will hold their Book and Basket Sale on Friday and Saturday, November 11th and 12th from 10:00am to 4:00pm at the Library. The Friends of the Library at Kalama welcome you to stop by and find some treasures, including ideas for Christmas!

Join us for Storytime at the Kalama Library in November! "Creepy Crawly Bugs" will be fun for us all on Wednesday, November 1st. "It's a Small World" will be our theme on Wednesday, November 15th. Join us at 10:30am each time for songs, rhymes, stories, and lots of fun with your preschoolers. We can't wait to see you!



## 2024 City Budget: How Does it Impact You?

Each year the City staff and elected officials collaborate to develop a city budget that is fiscally responsible and provides for the continuity of services for the citizens of Kalama. This process is thorough and involves many perspectives. The City government is technically a “business” and faces the same inflationary effects as private businesses and citizens. There are many more restrictions on City funds because they are operating with taxpayer money. Like any other business, the City must consider how to cover inflationary increases in wages, materials, services, and supplies.

The City’s maximum increase to property taxes, according to law, is 1% annually. When inflation rates range from 3% to 8.5% or more, the maximum 1% increase doesn’t meet the revenue needs. Other tax revenues are not eligible for inflationary increases and the largest of these, the sales taxes, are usually impacted by the economic climate.

City staff’s recommendation: allow the maximum annual 1% levy rate increase plus any banked capacity for consideration by the Council.

Utility rates are expected to cover the costs of operating and maintaining the systems required for safe drinking water and disposal of sanitary waste. This must include building reserves to meet the future needs of aging systems. An annual, minimal inflationary increase in the rates is a fiscally responsible way to provide for these functions.

### Utility Rate Proposal for 2024:

- Increase to the usage rate for water and sewer
- A \$0.70 increase to the stormwater utility fees [per equivalent residential unit (ERU)]

Result: For most households, this means an increase of approximately 2.9% to 3.4% to a monthly bill. The level of increase will vary, and the customer can control how much water is used. **There are no proposed increases to the billing “base fees”.**

Other fees are reviewed annually by staff, who strive to cover the cost of providing each service with the fees. Community Building fees have been the same for 15 years (last updated in 2008).

City staff invites the public to review budget materials, which are available in the budget hearing Council packets, and attend the public hearings to participate in the budget process. Staff’s job is to provide sound, fiscally responsible advice to the Council for the development of the annual budget. It is necessary to look at the needs of the entire community, and decide what is needed to maintain service levels or develop new services to meet the quality-of-life expectations of the citizens.

## November Parks & Recreation

**November classes** with Judy Bain: **Drum 4 Fun!** \$5 per class—paid monthly (Tues OR Thurs only = \$20, All classes = \$40)  
**Tuesdays & Thursdays from 10am-11am**

Location: 216 Elm Street, Kalama, WA 98625  
at the **Kalama Community Building**

Bring your water. Equipment is provided. Bring a check to class, or register here:

<https://www.invoicecloud.com/portal> Need more info?

Contact Emily Moore:

[communityrelations@cityofkalama.com](mailto:communityrelations@cityofkalama.com) or [360-673-4908](tel:360-673-4908)

### Public Hearings: 2024 Budget

- November 2nd
- November 16th

Note:

These public hearings could be continued to the first Council meeting in December.

### Location:

Meetings are held @ 7:00pm at 320 N 1st Street, Kalama



Classes:

- Nov. 7
- Nov. 9
- Nov. 14
- Nov. 16
- Nov. 21
- Nov. 28
- Nov. 30



# November Events

Tues, November 7, 2023	Election Day! Your Vote Counts!
Fri, November 10, 2023	Veteran's Day (observed), City offices & library closed
Thurs & Fri, Nov. 23 & 24, 2023	Thanksgiving holiday (observed); City offices & library closed
Sat, November 25, 2023	Mountain Timber Market- grand opening (254 Hendrickson Dr.)
Sat, December 2, 2023	Parade of lighted floats, shopping event (downtown @ 4-6pm, parade starts @ 5pm)

## Meeting Info

- City Council : 1st & 3rd Thursdays @ 7pm
  - Planning Commission: 2nd Thursday @ 6pm
  - Civil Service Commission: 4th Thursday @ 5:30pm
  - Library Board: 3rd Wednesday @ 5:15pm (bi-monthly beginning January 19th)
  - Parks & Rec: 2nd Tuesday @ 5:30pm
- Meeting Location: 320 N 1st St, Kalama, WA 98625 (and via Zoom, click [Agenda](#) for info)

## Contact Us

- Public Works 360-673-3706
  - (emergency) 360-703-0168
- Police (office) 360-673-2165
  - (emergency) 911
  - (non emergency) Cowlitz County dispatch 360-577-3098 and press 3
- City Hall 360-673-4562
- Library 360-673-4568
- Building/Planning 360-673-5211
- Utility Billing 360-673-4554
- Community Building 360-673-4908

## Helpful Contacts

- City of Kalama - Main ---- 360-673-4562
- Comcast ---- 888-226-2278
- Cowlitz County Assessor ---- 360-577-3010
- Cowlitz Bldg & Planning ---- 360-577-3052
- Cowlitz PUD ---- 360-423-2210
- Fire District #5 (office) ---- 360-673-2222
- Kalama Post Office ---- 360-673-3567
- Kalama Telephone Co. ---- 360-673-2755
- Labor & Industries (L&I) ---- 360-575-6923
- Utilities Locate ---- 800-424-5555
- Waste Control ---- 360-425-4302



We are on [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)!

