

### **OPENING OF COUNCIL MEETING**

Mayor Yaeger opened the remote and in person council meeting at 7:00pm. The council members present were Michelle Plumb, Dennis Chamberlain, Jen Verhey, Jessica Quinn, Brooke Scheel, Mike Schrag, and William Green. Staff members in attendance were Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt, Deputy Clerk Treasurer II Michelle Asmussen (remote), Public Works Director Dave Breazeale, Chief of Police Mike Suniga, and Community Development Director Tom Reese (remote). City Fire Chief Joel Bell and City Attorney John Kragt were excused. Also present were Linda Schrag, Brian Bothun, Rick from the Cheney Free Press, and Rod Larse.

### **ACCEPTANCE OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Yaeger asked if there were any corrections or additions to the consent agenda. Council Member Brooke Scheel stated she would like to add setting a quarterly workshop to the discussion agenda (item E). Council Member Mike Schrag made a motion to accept the consent agenda for October 21, 2025, in the amount of \$119,035.19 for payables and with the addition of item E under discussion agenda, adding quarterly workshops. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

**PUBLIC REQUESTS AND COMMENTS**-Mayor Yaeger asked if there was anyone from the public who would like to comment and with no comments the mayor moved on.

### **ACTION AGENDA**

**A. Show Cause Hearing: 408 E. Alder Ave**-Mayor Yaeger opened the show cause hearing for 408 E. Alder at 7:04pm. The purpose of the hearing was for the City Council to hear and consider the pertinent facts relating to show cause why a resolution should not be adopted, ordering the nuisance to be abated by the city or its designee with the costs of said abatement being charged against said landowner. Mayor Yaeger presented the resolution and pictures. Mayor Yaeger asked if there was anyone present on behalf of the property that would like to comment and there was no comment. Mayor Yaeger noted that the owner of the property was elderly, and his wife had recently passed away. Council Member Brooke Scheel suggested postponing to allow a personal conversation with the property owner given the circumstances. Council Member Michelle Plumb emphasized the need to consider the neighboring property values and community impact. It was noted that this had been an ongoing problem predating the recent life issues. Audience member Rod Larse stated he would like to make a comment before the resolution was passed as Michelle Plumb made a good point that the council represents other people in the neighborhood. It's very hard for someone to sell a home when a potential buyer drives half a block down and sees something like this. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain made a motion to authorize the City Clerk to proceed with the administrative abatement procedures to abate the public nuisance violation, which shall include passing Resolution No 2025-15, a resolution of the City of Ritzville declaring 408 E. Alder Ave to be a hazard and a menace to public health and providing for removal. Council Member Michelle Plumb seconded the motion. Council Member Brooke Scheel opposed. Motion passed 6-1. Mayor Yaeger closed the public hearing at 7:20pm.

- B. Personnel Policy Amendment, Resolution 2025-14-** Council Member Michelle Plumb stated that this be brought back in front of council. We heard some discussion last week in regards to certain aspects of it. Council Member Brooke Scheel made a motion to strike all changes except Section 12-2 (structure) and 12-3, amending to include 3 council members instead of 2. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain stated this is structured as a mayor's committee. Council Member Mike Schrag seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-1 with Council Member Michelle Plumb voting no.

## **DISCUSSION AGENDA**

- A. Transportation Benefit District Timeline Update-** Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt stated the City received notification from the newspaper that creating the transportation benefit district public hearing notice was not published in the newspaper. Once Flyckt found out, she sent the notification over to legal, the mayor and at that time the City had already sent the ordinances to the Department of Revenue. Legal let us know it could be considered invalid by the notice not being published. Instead of starting revenue in January the City will start receiving revenue in April. The process will start over again at the November 18<sup>th</sup> council meeting. Council Member Michelle Plumb made a motion to set a public hearing regarding creating a TBD and adoption of ordinances approving a .1% tax for November 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm. Council Member Brooke Scheel seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.
- B. Temporary Construction Water Rate-**Community Development Director Tom Reese stated the water rate is a discussion item and at the next council meeting there will be the ordinance that codifies the resolution that was passed at the last council meeting authorizing the construction bulk water rate at \$5 per 1,000 gallons.
- C. 2026 Draft Budget Update-**Mayor Yaeger presented notes from the budget workshop including various committee requests. Council Member Scheel requested clarification on the tree board's \$6,000 allocation breakdown. Scheel stated she had requested at the workshop, \$5,000 be added for an external audit that was not initially included in the budget. The council discussed city council chamber's microphone and speaker replacement needs and Chief Suniga noted he would like to test some other options before any major equipment purchases are made.
- D. 2025 Financial Quarter 3 (Jan-Sept) Report-**Clerk Treasurer Julie Flyckt stated the STCU CD investment has been added to the report. Right now, at the end of September there is \$9,745,155 in cash & investments and in December of last year there was around the same amount. The current expense fund is low at 56% for expenditure and right now we are at 75% of the budget, with one quarter left to go. This is great except the reality is being down on the number of police officers is contributing to the decrease in expenditures. The decrease is in turn increasing the fund balance in the current expense fund. Moving forward, the finance committee and Mayor are discussing how to decrease that fund balance in the preliminary budget. There will need to be a budget amendment for the city streets fund as revenue is at 116.7% to budget and the expenditures are at 111.6%. Overall, most funds are in line with the 2025 budget.

Council Member Brooke Scheel proposed hiring an additional staff member starting July of 2026 to support grants, community development, and provide backup for additional street knowledge. This could be paid for out of water, sewer, TBD, this law enforcement tax, and some current expense. She emphasized the need for proactive rather than reactive staffing. She also noted the heavy reliance on Michelle and Scott for their street expertise with no internal backup.

- E. Setting Quarterly Workshop**-The council discussed the frequency and timing of the workshops. They all agreed upon February, May, August, and October as the quarterly schedule. Clerk-Treasurer Flyckt suggested the workshops not being scheduled for the same week as the regular council meetings. The council discussed agenda format including staff updates, committee reports, and project discussions. It was decided that workshops were to be held on Fridays when possible and format to include staff projects and open roundtable discussions.

**MAYOR UPDATES**-Mayor Yaeger stated he has been busy working on the 2026 budget.

**COUNCIL COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

- **Licenses, Rules and Permits**-No report.
- **Finance and Employee Benefits**-Council Member Schrag stated there is one item on the fee schedule draft that he would like to put on a future agenda so that everybody can get a copy of it, as the Finance committee has requested to push changes to planning and development fees until next year.
- **Health and Wellness**-Council Member Schrag stated they haven't met but they have a meeting set for the 28<sup>th</sup> at 4:00pm.
- **Public Safety**-No report.
- **Public Works**-Council Member Michelle Plumb stated they met with Dave and the crew for the Welcome signs.
- **Parks and Recreation**-No report.
- **Personnel Committee**-No report.

**DEPARTMENT UPDATES**

- A. City Attorney**-Attorney John Kragt was excused.
- B. Public Works**-Public Works Director Dave Breazeale stated they are going to start changing water filters tomorrow. Breazeale has received an email request from Council Member Brooke Scheel about the ADA ramp at Adams House. The City did not do that design as it was done by a private contractor. The City has already cold patched it once. Breazeale currently does not have any cold patches so he will get some ordered. Breazeale talked to RPI about the striping down at the charging station. The crew is going to try to pressure wash it off the parking stripes.
- C. Police Department**-Chief of Police Mike Suniga stated they did a quick patrol room remodel. The department is testing and evaluating a new camera system, which so far has been working as promised. Chief Suniga reminded the council come December time

the department is going to be short staffed due to some admin responsibilities. He is also going through the training processes with Code Red, and he noticed that we don't have some of the modules. He reached out to Sandy Duffey at the County and she asked if I could give her a few more weeks. The department created a SharePoint site at the department for their key documents, schedule, and time off requests, which are now all digital instead of paper. The department also entered into a maintenance contract for their HVAC systems. The company came out a couple of weeks ago and noticed a couple of the heat exchangers were damaged.

**D. Fire**-Chief Joel Bell was excused.

**E. Clerk/Treasurer**-Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt stated she was going to be working on the preliminary budget for the next few weeks. The audit has been delayed a little due to illness, but it will be back on schedule tomorrow. Flyckt work with Tom Reese and Aren Murcar with SCJ Alliance to submit the quarterly SS4A report. Next steps will be follow up on the 110 applications.

**F. Community Development**-Community Development Director Tom Reese stated there have been a lot of people that have purchased lots or have been wanting to purchase lots and sub-divide. There have been some interesting questions regarding both infrastructure and zoning & planning. Reese continues to work with Kyle at ACDC to get another tenant in the old Starbucks building. The next Community Heart & Soul meeting is set for October 28<sup>th</sup>.

**G.**

**ADJOURNMENT**-With no further comments or business to come before the council, Mayor Yaeger adjourned the remote and in person meeting at 8:30pm.

  
Michelle Asmussen, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer