

### **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. 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, Nicole Zibell representing the Chamber of Commerce, and Corey Bartlett from Ritzville United.

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

Mayor Yaeger asked if there were any corrections or additions to the consent agenda. Council Member Mike Schrag made a motion to accept the consent agenda for November 18, 2025, in the amount of \$189,629.98 for payables. Council Member Brooke Scheel 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. Creating Transportation Benefit District Amendment Public Hearing, Ordinance No.**

**2198**-Mayor Yaeger opened the Public Hearing for establishing the Transportation Benefit District Amendment at 7:03pm. This hearing was to allow the public to comment on the amendment. The mayor asked if there were any written comments received by 5:00pm today and there were no comments received. He asked if there were any questions or comments from the audience or the council members and there were none. With no further testimony, the public hearing for the establishing for the Creating of the Transportation Benefit District Amendment was closed at 7:05pm. Council Member Brooke Scheel made a motion to approve Ordinance No 2198 an ordinance of the City of Ritzville amending Ordinance 2196 entitled establishing a Transportation Benefit District, specifying the boundaries for the Transportation Benefit District, specifying the transportation improvements to be funded by the Transportation Benefit District, and providing for severability and establishing an effective date due to an unpublished notice. Council Member Michelle Plumb seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

#### **B. Transportation Benefit District Tax Amendment, Ordinance No. 2199-** Mayor Yaeger read the brief description of the Ordinance. Council Member Mike Schrag made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2199 an ordinance of the City of Ritzville amending Ordinance No. 2197 entitled "imposing an additional sales and use tax of one-tenth of one percent within the boundaries of the Ritzville Transportation Benefit District for the purpose of financing costs associated with transportation improvements in the district identified herein as authorized by RCW 36.73.040; establishing severability and effective date" due to an unpublished notice. Council Member Jessica Quinn seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

- C. Setting the Assumption of the Rights, Powers, Functions, and Obligations of a Transportation Benefit District Public Hearing, Ordinance No. 2200**-Mayor Yaeger stated this is establishing a public hearing for December 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm. Council Member Brooke Scheel made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 2200 an ordinance of the City of Ritzville amending Ordinance 2190 "Declaring the City Council's intent to conduct a public hearing concerning the assumption of the rights, powers, functions, and obligations of a Transportation Benefit District, and setting the date, time, and place for said hearing" due to an unpublished notice. Council Member Jen Verhey seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.
- D. 2026 Ad Valorem Property Tax Public Hearing, Ordinance No. 2202**-Mayor Yaeger opened the public hearing for the Ad Valorem tax at 7:12pm. The hearing was to allow the public the opportunity to comment on the ordinance that establishes the ad valorem taxes for 2026. The mayor asked if there were any written comments received by 5:00pm today and there were no comments received. Council Member Michelle Plumb stated in Section 1 it shows \$1.97 that needs to be changed because we can only do 1%. Council Member Brooke Scheel also said the ordinance number at the bottom needs to be changed to 2202. With no further testimony the public hearing for the ad valorem taxes public hearing was closed at 7:17pm. Council Member Mike Schrag made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 2202 an ordinance of the City Council of the City of Ritzville fixing the amount to be provided by valorem taxes upon property in 2026, with the noted changes made to the ordinance by Council Members Plumb and Scheel. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.
- E. 2026 Preliminary Budget & Fees Public Hearing**-Mayor Yaeger opened the public hearing for the 2026 preliminary Budget & Fees at 7:18pm. The hearing was to allow the public to comment on the preliminary budget. The mayor asked if there were any written comments received by 5:00pm today and there were no comments received. Council Member Michelle Plumb asked if any of the proposed development fees were put in the budget on the fee schedule. Community Development Director Tom Reese stated that was one of the things he wanted to push into next year and Council Member and Finance Committee Member Dennis Chamberlain agreed with him. Finance Committee Member Jen Verhey stated there were only certain fees that are comparable to the county so the committee wants to look at the ones where there are no county comps and have Tom do some more research on what those fees should be. Council Member Brooke Scheel asked if the Community Heart and Soul project is in the budget and how the city was going to manage the project. Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt stated Tom Reese is setting up a meeting with Innovia Foundation to get those details figured out. Council Member Scheel stated she feels there should be hiring another staff member in July that can do some of the grant work. She also asked for clarification on the Comp Plan update fees. Tom Reese stated it is a two-year grant from Department of Commerce, where there is \$10,000 in the first year and \$10,000 for the second year. The council also debated on how to handle policies in the budget document, with a suggestion to separate them into an attachment rather than integrating them into the main text. They agreed to address this issue by March 30<sup>th</sup> or April 30<sup>th</sup> at the first

council workshop to avoid delays in the budget process. With no further testimony the public hearing for the 2026 Preliminary Budget & Fees was closed at 7:33pm.

- F. Ritzville Chamber Street Closure Request, Outdoor Holiday Market Event-Council** Member Brooke Scheel stated she would just close off Railroad and Washington at 8:00am instead of doing it in phases. Chamber representative Nichole Ziebell stated the concern was that the Eagles were going to have their breakfast with Santa on that same morning. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain made a motion to approve the request as presented for the Winterfest events on December 13<sup>th</sup>. Council Member Brooke Scheel stated she would second the motion with a modification of closing Main Ave from Columbia instead of Division, to Adams St for the Parade. Motion passed 7-0.
- G. In Car and Body Worn Cameras Purchase-Police Department-Chief Suniga** stated after an exhausting search they have selected Utility for the in-car and body worn cameras based on the equipment and services they are going to provide. Council Member Brooke Scheel asked if there would be any conflict with MAC services. Chief Suniga stated there wouldn't be any conflicts as he spoke to them about using this vendor with their system. Chief Suniga stated they looked at Axon as they have the biggest market share in the area and offer a lot of options, but you pay for it. They also looked at Getac as a solution and their hardware is great, but their back-end software redaction wasn't there yet. It wasn't where they felt it could reliably do that service. Utility has a few extra features that Axon doesn't have like a camera registry. The current system, which is no longer supported by Axon, lacks integration between in-car and body cameras, requiring officers to manually download footage. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain made a motion to approve the five-year lease for \$110,160 for Utility's in-car and body worn cameras. Council Member Jessica Quinn seconded the motion. Council Member Brooke Scheel abstained. Motion passed 6-1-0.
- H. Server Grant Funding and Timeline-Police Department-Chief Suniga** stated he submitted the server grant back in August or September. The city's current server will not be supported after next year, and looked at the cost of replacement, and it is about \$11,000 today. Chief Suniga then adjusted the grant request because he knew it would be next year. He just received the email stating that if the city can execute it in the timeline, then they will award the grant with some money that hasn't been spent. They just need to get tentative approval from the City that we are willing to accept the grant money. If City says yes, they will draft up their grant proposal and Chief Suniga will bring it back to council for approval. The consensus from the council was to move forward on the grant, and Chief Suniga will let them know the City is wanting to move forward with the grant.

## DISCUSSION AGENDA

- A. Visitor Impact Grant Fund Applications Review-Council Member Brooke Scheel** stated after the council reviewed the 110 applications there were a few questions for the Ritzville Chamber and Ritzville United. The council wants to know what the Chamber's plans are to utilize the funds. Chamber representative Nicole Ziebell stated they would

like to go back to taking care of businesses and marketing. With the current resignation of their contract person, they will be getting that position filled with somebody new next year. Council Member Michelle Plumb suggested using AI platforms to track visitors. Council Member Scheel stated branding and the office space in the back are a couple things that have been brought up. Ziebell stated they may be interested in having someone there one or two days a week during the busy season for Ritzville, but they are still working on the details. Council Member Mike Schrag asked about membership, he stated it appears that there are low numbers. Ziebell stated there is low membership, but they want to really work on bringing those numbers up next year. Council Member Scheel had some concerns for Ritzville United around the Hometown Fourth of July events. There were questions about the late-night parade going through the residential area. Corey Bartlett stated, since that was proposed, they have had a lot of conversations with community members and other people about where they could have these events. Bartlett was able to get a hold of Western Display Fireworks Company out of Canby Oregon. The vendor is willing to provide the show on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July, which would be less expensive. He suggested doing the night parade on the traditional downtown parade route, then having the fireworks. The original location ideas were either the Fairgrounds, Lifecare Center or the High School. Now that has shifted a little bit, and they are looking at doing it behind Maverik. The reduced cost would be \$15,000 if they did it on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July.

**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 the committee looked at the 2025 budget position report to the end of October, and all the funds look in pretty good shape. There are a few funds that will need to be amended.
- **Health and Wellness**-Council Member Schrag stated they met a couple weeks ago and were fortunate to have Mayor Yaeger and Wheatland Waste owner Rick Koss there to answer some of the questions the committee had on free dump days next year. Koss let them know how Washtucna and Sprague have done in the past and the cost.
- **Public Safety**-No report.
- **Public Works**-No report.
- **Parks and Recreation**-No report.
- **Personnel Committee**-No report.

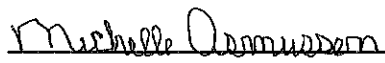
**DEPARTMENT UPDATES**

- A. **City Attorney**-Attorney John Kragt was excused.
- B. **Public Works**-Public Works Director Dave Breazeale stated the crew has been trying to get the leaves picked up before it freezes and snows. The Vactor truck broke down today as the fuel line burst, so the crew spent a little time fixing that. Breazeale wants to

get the city sign, and the golf course signs up before the end of the year. He also wants to get the toppers up and start putting up the Christmas lights.

- C. **Police Department**-Chief of Police Mike Suniga stated the officers have been dealing with some very complex and in-depth investigations so that has been keeping them busy. He talked to Kysar Mechanical about fixing the heat exchangers and they provide the date of December 11<sup>th</sup> for one of them to be fixed but they arrived already and they installed it today.
- D. **Fire**-Chief Joel Bell was excused.
- E. **Clerk/Treasurer**- Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt stated the official newspaper bid was published in the paper this week and due by December 11<sup>th</sup>. The request for fiber proposals was published as well and due by December 3<sup>rd</sup>. Flyckt is working on the final budget next.
- F. **Community Development**-Community Development Director Tom Reese stated he is working on a couple predevelopment reports for a retail space up on Galbreath Way around Starbucks and adjacent to the lot. Also, there is a potential new storage unit project being considered behind the nursery. Reese received the development agreement back with the revisions on the Grainery District, and he will meet with the mayor soon. A meeting will be set up to discuss the Innovia Heart & Soul Grant and the city's role.

**ADJOURNMENT**-With no further comments or business to come before the council, Mayor Yaeger adjourned the remote and in person meeting at 8:37pm.

  
Michelle Asmussen, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer