

**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, William Green (remote), Jessica Quinn, Mike Schrag, and Brooke Scheel. Staff members in attendance were Deputy Clerk Treasurer II Michelle Asmussen, Public Works Director Dave Breazeale, and Interim Polic Chief Bill Benner. City Fire Chief Joel Bell, Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt, and City Attorney John Kragt were excused. Also present were Linda Schrag, Derek & Susan Schafer, Brian Bothun, Angel Garza, Kyle Niehenke, Amy Galbreath, Greg Galbreath, Dale Galbreath, and Rick from the Cheney Free Press.

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Yaeger asked if there were any corrections or additions to the consent agenda. Council Member Brooke Scheel made a motion to approve the consent agenda for January 7th, 2025. 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. With no comments made, Mayor Yaeger moved on.

**ACTION AGENDA**

**A. General Sewer Plan Collection System Cleaning and TV Inspection Project Bid Award-**

This project is being funded by the department of Ecology. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain made a motion to accept the bid from Big Sky Industrial for the Collection System Cleaning and TV Inspection Project in the amount of \$71,903.70. Council Member Mike Schrag seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

**B. Financial Accounting and Financial Reporting Services Agreement-Tara Dunford-**

Mayor Yaeger stated we have done this for a couple years now. On the second page, this is not to exceed 25 hours or \$4,875. Council Member Brooke Scheel stated she felt there should be some sort of a contract in place and not just an agreement where there isn't even a place for Tara to sign. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain made a motion to authorize the mayor to sign the agreement with Tara Dunford, CPA, not to exceed 25 hours or \$4,875. Council Member Jen Verhey seconded the motion. Council Member Brooke Scheel opposed. Motion passed 6-1.

**C. Letter of Intent to Annex-Grainery District-**Mayor Yaeger stated the notice of intent, the map, and some descriptions were provided for the council to review. Property Owner Derek Schafer stated basically the southern portion is for storm water. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain stated we have an ordinance that I haven't seen. But if we look at the annexation proceedings letter that's here, the first paragraph down at the bottom says and further requests a comprehensive plan designation for Ownership 1, 48.72 acres, as a General Commercial Zone (C-2), where do we go from here. Mayor Yaeger directed the council to the process and timeline document that states the steps are initiation of the 60 Percent Petition Annexation by submitting a letter of intention to the City Council, then meeting on the Annexation Proposal. After the city council is notified of the proposed annexation, the council is to set a date (within 60 days after filing notice) for meeting initiating parties. The meeting day will be a city council meeting day. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain made a motion to set a meeting with

Derek & Susan Schafer to commence annexation proceedings on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

Council Member Mike Schrag seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

## **DISCUSSION AGENDA**

### **A. Traffic Impact Fee, System Development Charges and Development Code Update-**

Mayor Yaeger stated there are several correspondence items in the council packets. Dale Galbreath, representing Galbreath Land & Livestock stated he put a couple different items in the packets and some of the information council has seen before, but maybe some of the new council members haven't seen it. About 25 years ago they started developing Galbreath Way, Circle K, Starbucks, Chevron, etc. Then they were approached by Love's that they wanted to purchase some ground across from I-90. In order to get utilities over there they had to get permits from the state of Washington and make three boars underneath I-90 to get service on that side of the freeway. One of the most recent developments is the three new homes they built there. They have had correspondence with the builder that built the three homes, as well as a partner in the hotel, that has corresponded with them frequently. Galbreath told him last week they were brainstorming about building, and the first thing he asked is if the city council has done anything about their fees. Galbreath told him no, but they are going to address the fees at the city council meeting. He said if they don't make any movement to encourage growth they are putting a moratorium on any future growth in Ritzville. Galbreath tried to outline all the establishments they have put in on Galbreath Way. He did not address the permit fees, or the sewer hook ups as he was more concerned about what is coming down the line on traffic impact fees. Derek Schafer pulled together information from other cities to show the total burden of the fee structure. On the list are several small cities and then several larger cities. Schafer stated the larger cities are more expensive because those cities have already experienced substantial amounts of growth, and the fees are a way to slow down that growth. When there is a need to throttle something back then there is an increase in the fee structure, and it seems like Ritzville has done that in reverse as the high fees have throttled the city's growth. If you compare those figures, Ritzville is in the restrictive zone for building. Derek Schafer introduced Angel Garza who is a member of the Othello City Council and a builder in Othello and other communities. The Schafers are trying to encourage him to build in Ritzville, but it's a tough pull trying to get him to build the same house here and charge \$20,000 more per home. Garza stated he is a home builder and has been building in Othello for 12 years, in Quincy for about 8 years and will be breaking ground in Moses Lake. The permits were about \$3,500 when they first started and as growth happened the permits are now between \$6,500 and \$7,500 per home for a 1,500 to 2,000 square foot home. Adding a \$20,000 fee on top of those permit rates is a risk. Garza would like to build a relationship with Susan & Derek Schafer, but at \$20,000 per home there would not be enough money to make it. Amy Galbreath wanted to know where the figures for the city came from. Mayor Yaeger stated it was from the system development charge report that was done in 2015. Mayor Yaeger stated he spoke with the city's contracted engineer, Varela, and they are working on updating the report with the existing ERUs' for existing customers. The numbers will probably be higher so the council will need to make the decision to reduce the charges. Council Member Michelle Plumb stated there are a lot of things the new council members should be aware of such as reductions for low-income housing, and a transportation benefit district, which is a sales tax that could

be utilized instead of doing the traffic impact fee, so then visitors are paying for the transportation improvements. The City of Camas does a square footage limitation for their park fees, so there are a lot of ways you can approach growth. Public Works Director Dave Breazeale stated there is also a late comers fee from Loves and Galbreath that gets tacked on for property owners building across I-90. Adams County Development Director Kyle Niehenke stated he has lived here for ten years and what they have all said is accurate. At the development conferences, the first thing developers want to know is how many new houses have been built in the last year, and he provides that information for Othello but for Ritzville he focuses on traffic counts. Developers love the land base, the affordable lifestyles and utilities that are offered in Ritzville, but then they see the cost for housing and that's the end of the conversation.

**B. Ritzville City Code Title 1-Administration-License and Rules Committee-Council**

Member Dennis Chamberlain stated they need to have the conversation about the administrative code as the License and Rules Committee has had a lot on their plate including updating the administrative Code. This has been on the License & Rules agenda for many years, and they have done some work on it. Chamberlain mentioned having an ethics code and updating the old codes. Realistically, it will take time to update and may not come from the committee to council until at least June. We can do it without staff for the most part. Council Member Brooke Scheel stated she had a couple questions as to the barriers of getting it done and is it just time to get it updated. Scheel asked if the Personnel Committee should draft up some of the stuff and submit it to License & rules for a joint process.

**C. 110 Fund Tourism Applications-Mayor Yaeger** stated the applications were provided to the council in November and there needs to be a recommendation as to which applications will be funded. Mayor Yaeger asked if the council would have any problems with the mayor coming up with recommendations and providing those recommendations at the next meeting. The council can take it home, go over it and then can talk about it at the next meeting. Council Member Brooke Scheel stated there was a lot of community concern brought to her regarding some of this funding as far as physical accountability. Scheel stated she thinks there can be some higher expectations set on these organizations, so we are protecting ourselves and being mindful that these organizations are spending the money accordingly. Council Member Jen Verhey stated they did have some discussion at the Finance Committee meeting today about funding and where the money goes. Community Member Amy Galbreath asked if she could make a comment as her hotel pays a big portion of the 110 funds. She stated those funds are intended to put heads in beds of hotels and to help promote things like the Blues Fest where a lot of people come in and stay in hotels. She stated out of all of the applications she could see maybe the fair and rodeo would do that.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Letters from Derek and Susan Schafer, Dale Galbreath, and Adams County Development Council's Director Kyle Niehenke regarding the city's system development charges and traffic impact fee were provided in the council packets.

**COUNCIL COMMITTEE UPDATES**

**A. License, Rules and Permits-Council Member Dennis Chamberlain** stated they have already discussed the development code and chapter 10, water charges billing and collections, is currently being reviewed by staff.

THE CITY OF RITZVILLE REMOTE/IN PERSON COUNCIL MEETING JANUARY 7TH, 2025


- B. Finance and Employee Benefits-**Council Member Mike Schrag stated the committee approved the vouchers, discussed the water and sewer system development charges, and discussed the request for a three-year golf course contract.
- C. Health and Wellness-**Council Member Mike Schrag stated they need to get going on the new sanitation contract with Wheatland Waste.
- D. Public Safety-**Council Member Brooke Scheel stated the only thing that came up was advertising for the Police Chief Position because the temporary contract will expire in May or June. Mayor Yaeger stated WASPC usually takes care of the advertising and changes whatever needs to be changed. Scheel stated it would be nice to see some social media advertising. The other thing that came up was the requirement of the city officers to live within the City of Ritzville. Mayor Yaeger stated the advertisement was updated to allow up to 30 miles away.
- E. Public Works-**Council Member Michelle Plumb stated the city was awarded the SS4A grant and the committee is now working on paperwork.
- F. Parks and Recreation-** Council Member Michelle Plumb stated they met on Friday to talk about the golf course manager and club house contracts, and there are some changes they would like to include. Mayor Yaeger stated he got the contracts back from Attorney John Kragt and he was agreeable with the changes and so was Jesse Bowman the contracts will be in the next council meeting packet.
- G. Personnel Committee-** Council Member Michelle Plumb stated they have their next meeting on January 15<sup>th</sup>.

**MAYOR UPDATES-**Mayor Yaeger stated he is up to 20 projects right now unless he has missed any.

**DEPARTMENT UPDATES**

- A. City Attorney-**John Kragt was excused.
- B. Public Works-**Public Works Director Dave Breazeale stated they fixed the Depot line that has been leaking and found a very easily accessible way to do it. The Well 8R is online and passed all the sample inspections and the city received approval from the state to put it online. The Welcome to Ritzville sign is still without power. An electrician has looked at it multiple times. Initially the electrician thought it was not working due to the installation, then he said it was on the city side, and it continued to go back and forth. Breazeale has not heard anything back from him since then.
- C. Police-**Interim Chief Bill Benner stated it's been a very hectic few weeks. There has been an influx of homeless people, not just ones that are looking for tents to stay in, but individuals with real mental problems. The agencies that assist are more than willing to help Monday through Friday 8am-5pm but when there are problems, they are not available. Also, there has been an increase in domestic violence calls over the last two weeks and it may be due to the holidays. Chief Benner has contacted every agency that he can think of to generate some police officer applications, but nothing looks really promising yet.
- D. Clerk/Treasurer-**Clerk Treasurer Julie Flyckt was excused.

**ADJOURNMENT-**With no further comments or business to come before the council, Mayor Yaeger adjourned the remote and in person meeting at 8:41pm.

  
Michelle Asmussen, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer II