

OPENING OF COUNCIL MEETING

Mayor Pro-Tem Debbie Chapman opened the remote and in person council meeting at 7:02pm. The council members present were Michelle Plumb, Mike Schrag, Dennis Chamberlain, Dede Boyer, and Scott Yaeger. Staff members in attendance were Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt, Deputy Clerk Treasurer II Michelle Asmussen (Remote), City Police Chief Dave McCormick, and Public Works Director Dave Breazeale. City Attorney John Kragt, City Fire Chief Joel Bell and Council Member Marsha Smith were excused. Mayor Linda Kadlec was attending remotely. Also present were Barry Boyer, Linda Schrag, Jen Verhey, Jessica Quinn, Ben Varela, David Chapman, Karen Cady, Brian Bothum, and Dale Brown from the Cheney Free Press.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Pro-Tem Debbie Chapman asked if there were any corrections or additions to the consent agenda. Council Member Scott Yaeger stated he would like to make an addition to the discussion agenda on how we are going to fill Ward 3 at the end of the year. Council Member Mike Schrag made a motion to approve the agenda for November 21st, 2023 with the added agenda item. Council Member Dede Boyer seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

PUBLIC REQUESTS AND COMMENTS- Mayor Pro-Tem Chapman asked if there was anyone from the public who would like to comment. With no comments, Mayor Pro-Tem Chapman moved on.

ACTION AGENDA

- A. Ad Valorem Tax Public Hearing, Ordinance No. #2174-** Mayor Pro-Tem Chapman opened the public hearing for the Ad Valorem Tax at 7:03pm. The purpose of the hearing was for the City Council to hear and consider the pertinent facts relating to the 2024 Ad Valorem Taxes. The city is allotted a 1% increase of property tax from the previous year plus the levy rate on any new construction or annexation. The total amount that is allotted for 2024 is anticipated to be around \$373,606 or the maximum amount allowed by law. The Adam's County Assessors' office has provided this amount to the City Clerk for the 2024 budget year. Chapman asked if the council had any questions. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain asked if this included any new construction. Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt stated yes it did include new construction. Chapman asked if the public had any questions. With no further questions, the public hearing was closed at 7:04pm. Council Member Scott Yaeger made a motion to approve Ordinance No 2174 Ad Valorem Taxes upon property for 2024. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.
- B. 2024 Preliminary Budget Public Hearing-** Mayor Pro-Tem Debbie Chapman opened the public hearing for the 2024 City Budget and Fees at 7:05pm. The purpose of this hearing was for the City Council to hear and consider the pertinent facts relating to the preliminary budget. Overall, the 2024 budget impacts include:
- Minimum wage \$.54 increase to \$16.28/hour
 - Asuris health insurance 4% increase
 - Liability insurance 23.5% increase

- 3% COLA for all employees except Police Department Chief of Police and Officers was increase is \$500 per wage step.
- Updated Police Department Record Clerk's job description to include Administrative Assistant duties with a new wage line on the wage scale.
- Abatement line item added to the Current Expense fund in the amount of \$10,000 for property clean up.
- Community requests: Gritman Senior Center at \$3,000, ACDC at \$10,000 and RDDA at \$7,000.
- The \$2 million dollar Well #8 pump station project
- Continuance of the general sewer plan, city's comprehensive plan, and development codes updates and
- Waiting to hear about the grant applications submitted for streets, cemetery, and sewer projects.

Chapman asked if there were any comments or questions from the public or the council. Council Member Mike Schrag stated he thought one way to cut down on some of the cost for the liability insurance was to get rid of the Dodge Van that sits out in the parking lot and doesn't get driven, and its an eye sore. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain agreed. There were also some questions about mitigation about the wildfire that would help our insurance rates. Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt stated at the finance committee today they reviewed where the budget is at and knowing that our low-income survey is no longer going to be valid, we will need to do that survey again. The finance committee recommended putting the low-income survey update into the 106 local Covid recovery money. The city did not receive the WASDOT grant, and it was removed from the 103 fund. With no further discussion, Mayor Pro-Tem Chapman closed the public hearing for the 2024 Preliminary Budget at 7:27pm.

- C. Well #8 Rehabilitation Project Completion, Resolution No. 2023-20-** Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt stated the resolution is to release the retainage for the well project. Public Works Director Dave Breazeale stated this is just the drilling of Well #8 from Schneider Drilling Company, which they started in 2022. Council Member Scott Yaeger made a motion to approve Resolution No 2023-20 releasing the retainage to Schneider Drilling. Council Member Mike Schrag seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.
- D. Solar Plus Storage Planning RFP-** Council Member Michelle Plumb stated she and Michelle Keefer put out a request for proposals, which were due a week or two ago. The review committee met and selected Seinerger, as they are already doing the same work for about three or four other entities around the state in this same program. They are also committed to helping manage the grant. Council Dennis Chamberlain stated the committee is asking for council approval to move forward with a contract. There were four other proposals, which were very qualified, but this was the winner of the score cards. This is just for the feasibility study at \$77,430. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain made a motion to approve Seinerger as the contractor to move forward for contract for the next council meeting. Council Member Michelle Plumb seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

CITY OF RITZVILLE REMOTE/IN PERSON COUNCIL MEETING NOVEMBER 21ST, 2023
DISCUSSION AGENDA

- A. Ward 3 Council Member Position-**Council Member Scott Yaeger stated he has been thinking about trying to get ahead of the game filling the position as it will be vacant when he becomes Mayor next year. In the past there have been letters of interest, or the mayor provides nominations. Ward 3 boundaries are from Division over to Pacific, and it varies from Main Ave and goes up to 3rd Ave. Yaeger has talked to a couple of people in the ward that have some interest in possibly filling the council member position. Yaeger stated his preference would be to bring a few names to council and have the council move forward with one person. The council agreed to have Yaeger provide those who are interested to be discussed in the new year.

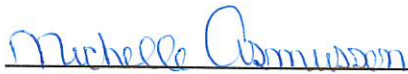
MAYOR UPDATES: Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt stated Mayor Kadlec is on the phone but asked if she could read something for her as it is easier than the mayor trying to read it over the phone. Flyckt read aloud a letter the mayor had written about her absence from council. She plans to work remotely and be at the meeting, on the phone, while the Mayor Pro-Tem runs the meetings. It is very important to her that she fulfills her term as mayor. She will be as close as a phone call away, if needed. Mayor Kadlec stated she wanted to send out a big thank you to Marsha Smith for all the care she has taken on the planters downtown. As Mayor Kadlec drives through downtown now, she sees all the flowers have been pulled and everything has been taken care of and they look very neat and clean.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

- A. Public Works-**Public Works Director Dave Breazeale stated he received a call from Verizon today and they want to come manage their tower on well #9. Breazeale said absolutely and bring bird deterrents for the antenna as it is causing a mess on the tank. He asked what kind of birds they were. Breazeale told him they were pigeons and he said they could probably do something about that. Breazeale told him he wasn't getting up on my tower until he did. Breazeale thinks we will actually get something done this time to prevent any future damage to our brand-new standpipe paint job. The plow truck, which needs to be replaced in another year or two, is getting where we had to tear the whole plate off the front of it and rebuild the whole thing. We are in the process of doing that, and we are almost done. Other than that, the crew is doing maintenance, leaf pickup, maintaining equipment, doing the oil changes and regular maintenance, while it's cold.
- B. Police Department-** Chief Dave McCormick stated they received a \$150 check from Wheatland Bank as a result of a fundraiser they had for 1st responders in the community, which they split up between the Police Department, Sheriff's Department and the EMT's. He is in the final stages of the background process of a potential candidate, and possibly has a date in mind when to bring him on board. At McCormick's last fire commissioner meeting, he requested that due to the circumstances with the city budget for 2024, that the commission consider suspending the building rent on the station for 2 bays the city rents. The commission agreed, so there will be a letter sent by their attorney telling the city that there won't be a billing for 2024 for the amount of \$3,400. Chief McCormick started meeting with the school for Shop with a Cop to get some names. They are currently a little short on money and have not received any donations so far this year.

C. **Clerk/Treasurer-** Clerk-Treasurer Flyckt stated we are now in winter billing, and the first average billing has gone out to customers. It has been going well and there have not been any big concerns from customers. The staff are going to start doing a simple newsletter that will go into the bills moving forward as we do get a lot of feedback from the community about how they don't get information from the city. It will just be a front and back newsletter with small bits of information about what is going on in the city with a place for the mayor to provide information too. City Hall will be closed on Thursday and Friday for the Thanksgiving Holiday. Those with garbage pickup on Thursday will be picked up on Friday. Flyckt is currently working on mayor transition tasks with the current and future mayor. The city's IT vendor looked at all of the computer desktops and the antivirus system needs to be updated. The mayor laptop also needs to be updated due to the current laptop being outdated and the need to connect with files remotely. The new mayor will also receive a cell phone and a new email address. Flyckt will update the budget with the actual numbers through November so some of the numbers might change. The one thing she realized after talking about the Solar project, it is currently not in the budget. A fund for fund will need to be created for that project. Next steps for the budget include the final budget public hearing at the next council meeting. There are two more council meetings to review and approve the budget.

ADJOURNMENT-With no further comments or business to come before the council, Mayor Pro-Tem Chapman adjourned the remote and in person meeting at 7:51pm.



Michelle Asmussen, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer II