

OPENING OF COUNCIL MEETING

Mayor Yaeger opened the remote and in person council meeting at 7:00pm. The council members present were Eric Ottmar, Dennis Chamberlain, Jen Verhey, Jessica Quinn, Brooke Scheel, Ky Beck-Gmeiner, and Mike Schrag. Staff members in attendance were Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt, Deputy Clerk Treasurer II Michelle Asmussen (remote), Public Works Director Dave Breazeale, and Chief of Police Mike Suniga. City Fire Chief Joel Bell, Community Development Director Tom Reese, 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 Mike Schrag made a motion to accept the consent agenda as presented for February 17th, 2026, with payables in the amount of \$139,019.61. 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, he moved on.

ACTION AGENDA

A. Washington State Military Department State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program

Agreement-Chief Suniga spoke to council a few months ago about a cyber security grant, and this agreement is a follow up additional as they have money they need to spend and the police department has a server project that is ready to be approved. Chief Suniga provided a formal server quote from Adams County IT in the amount of \$11,000 and \$500 written in the grant for their time and efforts to install it. The funding will be reimbursement for the server and services to install it. Council Member Brooke Scheel made a motion to approve the grant agreement between the Washinton Military Department and the City of Ritzville. Council Member Jen Verhey seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

B. Police Sergeant Job Description Approval-Mayor Yaeger stated the personnel committee has reviewed the police sergeant job description twice, and Chief Suniga and Mayor Yaeger have reviewed it four times. The job description is ready to move forward for council to approve. Chief Suniga stated they are looking for someone with the qualifications that could step in and take over for him if needed. We want to make sure that the sergeant can step in tomorrow and make those clear competent decisions based on their training and experience. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain made a motion to approve the Police Sergeant job description. Council Member Brooke Scheel seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

C. Cemetery Niche Purchase-Wilbur Precast, Inc.-Mayor Yaeger stated purchasing the niche was discussed during budget time and the cost has gone up about \$2,000. The niche is budgeted for \$30,000 out of the cemetery reserve fund. Council Member Brooke Scheel made a motion to approve the Precast Cemetery Niche purchase for \$27,278 from Wilbert Precast. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

D. Public Works Truck Purchase-Mayor Yaeger reported the public works truck was budgeted for \$68,000. The quote is a little more due to adding a snowplow. Mayor Yaeger requested to increase the cost to \$71,000. Council Member Brooke Scheel made a motion to approve the purchase of the 2026 Ford F-250 4WD with plow, from Bud Clary for \$71,000. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

- E. Police Department HVAC Replacement**-In the 2026 budget there is \$20,000 allocated in the capital improvement fund for the replacement of the old 1970s York 3-ton unit that is on the police department's roof. Chief Suniga received three bids before the budget was approved, and has received updated bids from Kysar, Basin and Angell Heating & Air. Kysar came in a little bit under the other two bids. Chief Suniga stated there are two units that were not working due to the heat exchange. Council Member Jen Verhey made a motion to approve awarding the HVAC unit replacement to Kysar Mechanical for the replacement of the York 3-ton HVAC system at the police department, in the amount of \$14,185.49. Council Member Mike Schrag seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.
- F. Human Resources Services**-Mayor Yaeger stated the personnel committee discussed searching for human resources services after looking at the city's job descriptions. The committee requested Council Member Brooke Scheel to research companies that will provide updating personnel policy, job descriptions, and developing an employee evaluation process. Council Member Scheel stated she spoke to one of the law attorneys she has a relationship with and they recommended Associated Industries. After reviewing two other companies, Council Member Scheel stated Associated Industries (AI) can offer the best face value for the city. Their annual membership fee is \$3,203, which covers unlimited HR advising and unlimited legal advising. They don't do litigation, but they will help with legal questions. AI also provides templates, forms, and discounts on training. Council Members Jen Verhey and Scheel held a Zoom call with Sarah from AI and asked questions about time constraints and discussed the level of expertise the city will need. They work with a lot of different companies and boards in Spokane. Council Member Verhey stated AI said they could have the personnel policy updates turned around in six to eight weeks. All the projects are priced out, but any law changes or updates with Labor and Industries, AI will automatically upload those in live time to the city's personnel policies online. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain wanted to know if this company was also there for the employees if they had concerns or needed someone to voice concerns to or go to for help. Council Member Scheel stated this is more for the Supervisors, as employees usually go to their supervisor first before an HR person. Council Member Verhey said ideally the goal is to get an employee handbook and policies put together and within those policies there will be clear expectations for every single employee and what is needed. The evaluation process would be the second piece. There would be evaluations both for employees and supervisors, hopefully that mitigates a lot of potential issues where there is a clear process to go through. Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt stated the cost can be cost allocated with about \$5,300 to current expense, \$2,000 to water, \$1,000 to sanitation and \$1,300 to sewer. Council Member Brooke Scheel made a motion to allocate \$10,000 for human resources services and approve the \$3,203 for the membership and she will send over the contracts/scope of work to bring back to the council. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

DISCUSSION AGENDA-No discussion items.

CORRESPONDENCE-Planning Commissioner John Rankin provided his letter of resignation from the planning commission.

MAYOR UPDATES-Mayor Scott Yaeger stated he has been working with Community Development Director Tom Reese, Public Works Director Dave Breazeale, and Ardurra on the Traffic Impact Fee. Ardurra provided correspondence today and has a couple of questions as the table need to be updated.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE UPDATES:


- **Licenses, Rules, and Permits**-No report.
- **Finance and Employee Benefits**: No report.
- **Health and Wellness**-The committee met and are still trying to finalize dates and plans for the Spring Clean up day.
- **Public Safety**-No report.
- **Public Works**-No report.
- **Parks and Recreation**-There is a meeting set for this Thursday.
- **Personnel Committee**-Items were discussed on the agenda and another meeting is scheduled.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

- City Attorney**-Attorney John Kragt excused.
- Public Works**-Director Dave Breazeale thanked the council for approving the new director's truck as the current one is 18 years old and getting tired. On Saturday fiber was installed, but the police department building hasn't been done yet. The fiber company told Breazeale it would take two hours, but it took about ten hours. There was a light pole knocked down on Adams Street by the alleyway as someone didn't put their car in park. The crew is continuing with completing the maintenance on the vehicles. Breazeale went to a meeting on Tuesday in Moses Lake with Grant County, Ephrata, Quincy, and Moses Lake to look at the pre-fab roundabouts. He is not sure how feasible they will be on Hwy 261, but they are made of hard plastic and have 50-year longevity. The complete installation includes a 10-day contract for \$200,000.
- Police Department**-Police Chief Mike Suniga reported the camera system is up and running, with some minor hiccups, but their IT support has been phenomenal. Most of the time when the help ticket is submitted they get a 30-minute response and within two hours it is fixed. There are about 20 people that have registered their cameras with the police's registry system. It is simple to register where they scan the QR code and fill out some information on how the police department can contact them. It then auto populates on the map where those cameras are and provides contact. The attorney general's office reached out to all law enforcement agencies about a refrigeration grant. The refrigeration is needed for sexual assault kits. There are new guidelines where the police department must maintain the kits for 25 years if it is a solvable case and if it is not solved it is much longer than that. There is a community member that wants to clean his property up but does not have the funds. Chief Suniga placed a call to the Ministerial Association for some help. He asked the health & wellness committee to start looking at a funding mechanism to help people that want to do clean up but may not have the funds to do it. The department has been working a lot on vehicle maintenance, looking at some of the vehicles that haven't been used and looking at them to make sure they are safe.
- Fire**-Chief Joel Bell excused.
- Clerk/Treasurer**-Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt reported the city's IT service provider Data Pro will be onsite tomorrow to make sure the fiber installed is complete. The city's back up server has been going on and off, and we want to make sure it is running correctly. Once she knows all locations are on fiber and everything is running as it should, Flyckt will start cancelling the other services. Flyckt is also starting to work with Data Pro on a technology audit. Through the SAO office they do a free cyber-attack assessment on technology. The Springbrook Conference last week went really well and we learned some tips and tricks in the system. The auditor was here last Friday and this may be the last time she will be here on site.

F. Community Development-Community Development Director Tom Reese excused.

ADJOURNMENT-With no further comments or business to come before the council, Mayor Yaeger adjourned the remote and in person meeting at 7:58pm.



Michelle Asmussen, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer II