

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, City Attorney John Kragt, Chief of Police Mike Suniga, and Community Development Director Tom Reese. City Fire Chief Joel Bell was excused. Also present were Linda Schrag, Brian Bothun, Rick from the Cheney Free Press, Rod Larse, Dee Dee & Barry Boyer, Dave English, Shelly Kramer, Ted Schuland, Amber Hunt, and Brian Casciato.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Yaeger asked if there were any corrections or additions to the consent agenda. Council Member Ky Beck-Gmeiner noted a correction on page two of the minutes stating the HVAC system cost should be \$14,185.69 instead of \$14,185.49. Council Member Mike Schrag made a motion to accept the consent agenda for March 17th, 2026, with payables in the amount of \$136,775.76 and the noted correction in the minutes. Council Member Jen Verhey seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

RECOGNITION-Mayor Yaeger recognized Council Member Brooke Scheel for earning a Certificate of Municipal Leadership from the Association of Washington Cities.

PUBLIC REQUESTS AND COMMENTS-Multiple residents expressed opposition to becoming a sanctuary city, citing concerns about federal law enforcement, and the potential loss of federal grants.

ACTION AGENDA

- A. 6th Police Officer Financial Analysis**- Mayor Yaeger reported that the financial analysis for a potential sixth police officer was reviewed by the Finance Committee and presented to Council. The analysis outlined projected costs, available grant funding, and long-term funding considerations. Council discussion focused on the sustainability of adding a sixth officer position. While grant funding may be available for up to three years, ongoing funding beyond that period would rely heavily on continued sales tax growth, which may not meet the projected 3-4% annual increase required to sustain the position. Council also noted that existing projections indicate a potential shortfall in funding for current staffing levels in future years. Several Council Members expressed concerns regarding the completeness of cost estimates, noting that additional expenses such as vehicle costs, fuel, insurance, and equipment replacement may not be fully reflected. There was also discussion regarding potential funding mechanisms, including public safety sales tax options and pending state legislation that may impact local funding authority. Council Member Brooke Scheel emphasized that the decision to hire an additional officer should be considered separately from identifying specific funding sources. Council Member Mike Schrag made a motion to postpone the decision on the 6th police officer until the next council meeting on April 7th. Council Member Brooke Scheel seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.
- B. ESHB 2015 Public Safety Funding Program Grant Application**-The City Council discussed postponing consideration of House Bill 2015 and public safety funding sales tax until the May 29th council workshop. Council Member Jen Verhey made a motion to postpone items B & C to either another council meeting or a workshop to discuss further and more in-depth, the House Bill 2015 and the Public Safety Funding Tax. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain seconded the motion. Council Member Jen Verhey amended her motion to state at the workshop on May 29th at 1:00pm. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain seconded the amendment. Motion carried 7-0.

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- C. Public Safety Funding Program Sales and Use Tax**-The City Council postponed the discussion to the May 29th council workshop.
- D. Employee Handbook Agreement-Associated Industries**-Mayor Yaeger reported the City received a proposal from Associated Industries for \$2,750 to update the city's personnel policies. They also provided pricing for updating the job descriptions and employee evaluation process, but the personnel committee wants to move forward with the handbook only at this time. The Personnel Committee asked for councils' approval to move forward with the agreement on the handbook update. Council Member Brooke Scheel made a motion to approve the agreement with Associated Industries in the amount of \$2,750 for them to redo the Employee Handbook. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0. Council Member Mike Schrag was out of the room during the motion process.

DISCUSSION AGENDA-No items.

CORRESPONDENCE-No items.

MAYOR UPDATES-No report.

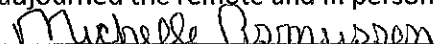
COUNCIL COMMITTEE UPDATES:

- **License, Rules, and Permits**-No report.
- **Finance and Employee Benefits**-No report.
- **Health and Wellness**-No report.
- **Public Safety**-No report.
- **Public Works**-No report.
- **Parks and Recreation**-The committee is meeting this Thursday.
- **Personnel Committee**-Mayor Yaeger reported the committee has a meeting set for March 31st at 3:45pm.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

- A. City Attorney**-Attorney John Kragt stated his office is three months into prosecuting for the city, and he remembered why they didn't like doing it before.
- B. Public Works**-Director Dave Breazeale reported he has a couple of employees out sick and another employee out on medical leave. The crew are addressing plugged sewers, broken water mains, and the normal old infrastructure issues.
- C. Police Department**-Police Chief Mike Suniga reported as of last Saturday they now have three officers providing 24-hour coverage instead of two. He is actively working on hiring a Police Sergeant.
- D. Fire**-Chief Joel Bell excused.
- E. Clerk-Treasurer**-Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt reported she is working with the City's engineer consultant Varela & Associates on the new EPA funding that the city received and working on the SS4A grant reimbursement. The 2024 audit continues, and she is waiting for the final corrections from the auditor. She is also working on the 2025 annual financial report which is due by the end of May.
- F. Community Development**-Community Development Director Tom Reese stated he is primarily leaning into the DNR grant and the City received the certificate of insurance so we can send it back to the state and execute the contract. He is also working with a couple of new retail locations.

ADJOURNMENT-With no further comments or business to come before the council, Mayor Yaeger adjourned the remote and in person meeting at 8:42pm.



Michelle Asmussen, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer



Julie Flyckt, Clerk-Treasurer