

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, Mike Schrag, William Green, and Brooke Scheel. Staff members in attendance were Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt, Deputy Clerk Treasurer II Michelle Asmussen(remote), Public Works Director Dave Breazeale, and City Attorney John Kragt. City Fire Chief Joel Bell was excused. Also present were Linda Schrag, Brian Bothun, Ben Varela, Derek & Susan Schafer, Matt Carlson and Steve Meye.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Yaeger asked if there were any corrections or additions to the consent agenda. Council Member Jessica Quinn stated under the Depot streaming cameras section of the minutes for September 3rd, she had mentioned during the meeting during that portion she would like the city to give notice on how there will be 24/7 live streaming on the internet and how the public will be notified. Council Member Mike Schrag moved to amend the agenda by having the council temporarily go into a 15-minute executive session just prior to action item C. Council Member Brooke Scheel seconded that motion. Mayor Yaeger asked for a raise of hands in favor. It was a unanimous 7-0 vote in favor. Item C has been added under Action Items- Executive Session. Council Member Brooke Scheel stated she would like to amend the agenda by relocating the action agenda to item 5C to 5D and inserting a new item 5C titled City of Ritzville Hiring Freeze and Assignment of Special Committee. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0. Council Member Michelle Plumb abstained from the vote. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain made a motion to approve the consent agenda as modified. Council Member Mike Schrag seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

PUBLIC REQUESTS AND COMMENTS- Mayor Yaeger asked if there were any comments from the public. With no comments made, the mayor moved on.

ACTION AGENDA

- A. Well 8R Change Order-** Ben Varela stated the last time he was at council he brought a change order from POW on well 8 pressure ratchet issue. That change order was about \$119,000. The decision was to approve the change order pending RD approval. There was back and forth with RD and the contractor negotiating the amount, and RD said they would kick in a portion. The contractor reduced costs to about \$69,000, and RD will approve \$25,000 for the fix. This means the city is responsible for \$44,000 for repairs. The change order reflects these new conditions. If approved, the work can start next Monday, and it will take about two weeks for the contractor to finish. The new pump startup date will be Wednesday, October 23rd. Council Member Brooke Scheel stated she knows the project had a hard stop date of September 30th, do we have a different hard date set now or are we just going without a set date? Ben stated we are just flying, and RD said not to worry about the set date as they will take care of it. Council Member Brooke Scheel made a motion to approve change order No. 3 between the City of Ritzville and POW for Well 8R in the amount of \$47,520. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

B. CenturyTel Franchise Agreement- Mayor Yaeger stated CenturyTel changed the representative on page 9 and the address on page 8. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain made a motion to approve Ordinance No 2181 a franchise agreement/ordinance CenturyTel of Washington D/B/A CenturyLink. An ordinance granting a franchise to CenturyTel of Washington, Inc D/B/A CenturyLink to operate and maintain a telecommunications system in the City of Ritzville, WA. Council Member Michelle Plumb seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

C. City of Ritzville Hiring Freeze and Assignment of Special Committee- Council Member Brooke Scheel stated she was going to start off by making a motion that the City of Ritzville implement an immediate hiring freeze including the current vacant position in the Clerk Treasurer's office with the exception of the appointment of the interim Chief. Additionally, she would like to appoint a 3-member special council committee whose members will be determined in agreement by the council starting with determining the chair. They will review the hiring processes and budgetary factors for both filled and vacant positions and will report back at the next regularly scheduled council meeting in consideration of RCW 35A. 11.020. Attorney John Kragt stated the RCW mentioned was for a second-class city and Ritzville is one of nine code cities so that RCW wouldn't apply. Council Member Scheel stated that the RCW could just be scratched off of her motion. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain stated he would be ok to sit on the committee but would feel comfortable having Council Member Michelle Plumb chair the committee and having Council Member Scheel on the committee as well. Council Member Scheel stated she feels there are a lot of varying views across the council, especially when it comes to the Chief of Police. Also making sure salaries match the qualifications and making sure the qualifications make sense. Making sure the city is staffed the way it needs to be staffed. Having some bigger picture thinking around how to model our staff in a way that makes sense. There may need to be consideration for splitting out the Clerk-Treasurer role into two separate positions. The purpose of this committee is to put something together, pause what we are doing so we aren't laying people off or making changes that are going to affect people from getting hired. This is the perfect time to address it with budget time coming up, do a deeper dive with department heads and previous budgets. The committee will meet and report back at the next council meeting. Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt stated the information they want is typically provided by the mayor and department heads. Council Dennis Chamberlain seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0. Council Member Chamberlain made a motion to appoint Council Member Plumb as chair for the committee with him and Council Member Scheel to fill the other two spots. Council Member Michelle Plumb seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

Executive Session-City Attorney John Kragt stated the council would go into an executive session for application of public employee (RCW 42.30.110 (1)(g)) for 15 minutes from 7:46pm-8:01pm. City Attorney came out of Executive Session and stated the session will be extended another 15 minutes, ending at 8:16pm. Mayor Yaeger called the council meeting back to order at 8:16pm.

D. Interim Chief of Police Agreement- Mayor Yaeger stated there is an employment agreement for interim Chief of Police between the City of Ritzville and William Benner. Mayor Yaeger requested moving forward in hiring William Benner as the City of Ritzville's interim Chief of Police for a six-month period. Council Member Michelle Plumb made a motion to approve the mayor signing the employment agreement with

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William Benner for the interim Chief of Police with the City of Ritzville for six months.
Council Member Brooke Scheel seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

- A. 2025 FY Projected Revenues-**Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt stated this is the time of year by state law the treasurer provides projected revenues to the council. The revenues are for shared state, local, and city taxes. On the shared revenue state taxes, the estimates are based on MRSC's 2025 State Shared Revenue Estimator and prior revenue history. The highlighted cells are based on revenue history only as the estimator doesn't provide that information. There is very little change overall, with the city receiving 8% of the state tax. The local taxes are split between three different funds: current expense, cemetery and streets. The state lodging tax is down 31% due to a hotel that was paying into the 110 funds, no longer met the lodging tax requirement as they were doing month to month rentals. After that was corrected with the state, the city did not receive any revenue for a month.
- B. 2025 Draft Budget-** Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt stated the draft is information for the council to have for the workshop. There are a few minor edits that the finance committee provided that she will be correcting and bringing to the workshop. At this point it is the mayor's budget and the opportunity with the workshop is to listen to the department heads and the mayor in terms of how these numbers are presented as of now. The next task after the workshop is the preliminary budget, which is due by November 1st by state law, and at that point it becomes the council's budget. There will be four council meetings at that point to review the budget and adopt it by the end of the year. Flyckt gave a big thank you to Mayor Yaeger, for all of the work he put into this budget.

CORRESPONDENCE: 2025 budget requests were provided in the packet form RDDA and the Ritzville Chamber.

MAYOR UPDATES: Mayor Yaeger stated on the 6th Ave project they were on a stand still for about a week. They were waiting for Winkler Construction to come in and start pouring the concrete. They started doing that last week, but the city has not received an updated schedule as to when the ADA ramps will start to be put in. There hasn't been much movement on 1st Avenue as Coppenhaver Construction has been busy up at Maverik. As a sub-contractor, Maverik is also using Coppenhaver to fix the concrete they tore up on the north side of the street up there. The city does not have a written schedule from them, but they know if they don't make their deadline they are going to be charged for damages. Once the city receives the schedule that shows when Winkler is going to be here pouring, then Mayor Yaeger will be agreeable on allowing them to open up the other side prior to that so they can pour all within that same time.

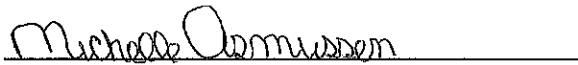
DEPARTMENT UPDATES

- A. City Attorney-** John Kragt had no report.
- B. Public Works-**Public Works Director Dave Breazeale stated they are just getting ready for winter. The irrigation has been knocked back to twice a week. This week or next

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week it will be down to once a week or turn it off completely since it is getting colder out. The sprinklers will be blown out in the next couple weeks. There is a line on 4th street that backed up again and the first time it backed up the city had to pay a large insurance amount to the property owner for repairs. It will need to be addressed in the next few days to get it figured out. Mayor Yaeger stated all the windows at city hall are finished. The windows at the golf course have all been installed except for the one in the basement because there is an issue with wires running through it.

- C. **Clerk/Treasurer**-Clerk Treasurer Julie Flyckt stated she was going to report that she had three interviews set up for Monday for the Deputy Clerk Treasurer I position but she will have to regroup with the mayor regarding staffing due to the hiring freeze.

ADJOURNMENT-With no further comments or business to come before the council, Mayor Yaeger adjourned the remote and in person meeting at 8:33pm.


Michelle Asmussen, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer II