

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 Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt, Deputy Clerk Treasurer II Michelle Asmussen (remote), Public Works Director Dave Breazeale, Interim Police Chief Bill Benner, and City Attorney John Kragt. City Fire Chief Joel Bell was excused. Also present were Linda Schrag, Ben Varela from Varela & Associates, Bernie Williams, and Derek & Susan Schafer.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Yaeger asked if there were any corrections or additions to the consent agenda. Council Member Brooke Scheel stated she had requested to discuss committee reports under item 4 last council meeting. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain made a motion to approve the consent agenda for November 5th, 2024, with the addition of Committee reports under Discussion Agenda. Council Member Brooke Scheel 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. Bernie Williams from 1109 Hickory Ave stated he and his wife have been residents of Ritzville for about nine years. He requested an update on actions that are being taken on nuisance properties by council members on the two specific ones that he shared for parcel no. 19325230601210 and 310 N Whittlesey Street. Williams stated the two properties pose immediate and serious threats to public safety as their attractiveness of them. There are five children, all under the age of ten in the neighborhood. They live 50 yards from these properties, and he feels it poses a serious threat to their life and safety. Williams believes they have already been deemed nuisance properties by this council. Williams made poster boards to show the nuisance properties and left them with the council.

ACTION AGENDA

- A. **Well 8R Pay Estimate #9-POW Contracting-**Ben Varela stated the contractor installed the check valve put on the Well 8 pump and the start up was completed a couple weeks ago, and everything is working fine. The change order was for an amount not to exceed \$69,000 and the change order came lower at about \$60,000. POW took all of their costs off on the change order in order to lower the cost. They said since it is below their original estimate they are requesting to pick up their costs too, which were about \$7,300. Their costs added to the change order are a little over \$67,000 which is still below the original order amount. Varela told them he would bring it to the council and see how the council wants to proceed. The total pay estimate cost, including the change order, is \$324,530.96. Council Member Michelle Plumb made a motion to approve pay estimate #9 for well 8R Pump Station to POW Contracting in the amount of \$324,530.96. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain seconded the motion. Council Member Mike Schrag opposed. Motion passed 6-1.
- B. **General Sewer Plan Approval to Bid Sewer Cleaning and Inspection-**Mayor Yaeger stated as part of the general sewer plan is to contract to clean, and video inspect portions of the sewer collection system. The cost will be paid with funding the city has received. The provided maps show priority 1 (red) and priority 2 (blue) and the north side of Main and the South side on the other map. Public Works Director Dave Breazeale stated it is basically for the main lines and then the problem sewer lines at residences' houses. Council Member Michelle Plumb asked if Varela has gone through approving the grant award for this project. Varela stated this was started in 2023 with the USDA funding. Mayor Yaeger stated this scope of work will finish up the remainder of the plan to identify the lines that will need to be replaced. Mayor Yaeger stated council will need to approve moving forward with the bid sewer main cleaning and CCTV Inspection work. Council Member Brooke Scheel made a motion to approve Varela to go out to

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bid for the sewer main cleaning and CCTV inspection work. Council Member Jen Verhey seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

- C. **6th Ave Sidewalk Project Change Orders 1, 2, and 3-Ardurra-** Mayor Yaeger stated change orders are for the additional work for the 6th Ave sidewalk project. Change order #1 is for an additional tree stump removal, change order #2 is for changing out line on fire hydrant line & fittings, and change order #3 is for the ADA ramp as it needed a transition panel because it was too steep (these limits were shown on the plan). Council Member Michelle Plumb made a motion to approve 6th Ave Sidewalk Change Order Numbers 1, 2, and 3, totaling \$6,364.29. Council Member Mike Schrag seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.
- D. **6th Ave Sidewalk Project Pay Estimate #1- Gonzalez Underground-** Mayor Yaeger stated the \$223,184.06 pay estimate includes the change orders 1-3. Council Member Mike Schrag made a motion to approve the contractor's application for payment no. 1 in the amount of \$223,184.06 including the change orders 1-3, to Gonzalez Underground LLC. Council Member Jessica Quinn seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.
- E. **Special Council Committee Hiring Freeze Amendment-**Council Member Michelle Plumb stated the committee felt it was important to give the council all the information on what we discussed and what they are trying to work through by providing a report in their packets that goes over the outcome of their first meeting. They met again last Friday for six hours going over the job description and other aspects of what they are trying to accomplish. The committee would like the council to consider the organizational chart, job description, and through the budget set wages and Mayor Scott Yaeger executes them. Council Member Plumb stated they would like to modify the organizational chart to eliminate the currently vacant second Deputy Clerk 1 position and add a new Department Head Position for community development. Once that is done, they would remove the hiring freeze and allow a part time records clerk to be funded through March 30th, 2025. The committee also requests the council to review the job description. Along those lines they would request the council to modify the budget to include the new department head wages for moving things around because it all comes out of current expense and have that presented by the first meeting in December. Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt stated to put it in the budget, a salary needs to be determined. If this change also includes creating a new department, then there are additional costs to having that department, which will also need to be in the budget. Mayor Yaeger stated he does not feel the hybrid position is going to work, at least not a full-time position, and felt there are things that he needs to discuss with the committee. Council Member Brooke Scheel stated it was listed as optional in the job description, and she thinks the committee agrees that all the time wouldn't work because this is a relationship business. Flyckt stated what happens if that person is not here, as people come in to do permit. Does that mean the clerk department would have to do permits, with one less employee? Dennis Chamberlain stated yes, the staff would still be entering the permit and there would be an administrative fee charged for that portion and that is all the further the staff must go. The council felt that by implementing the new position this would take extra work off the clerk staff, which would open time for someone to put in the initial permit. Council Member Scheel stated part of the other conversations they have had also is retargeting customer habits. Right now, there is a customer habit where they show up to the counter to pay their bill, and they are doing all these things that can be done online. All these things should be done as automated processes and currently the city is not charging for those services. Council Member Scheel felt they do need to reduce the burden on the Clerk-Treasurer's load. Council Member Michelle Plumb made a motion to eliminate the currently vacant second deputy clerk treasurer 1 position, add a new department head position for a community development director, remove the hiring freeze, allow for a part time records clerk to be funded through March 30th, 2025

THE CITY OF RITZVILLE REMOTE/IN PERSON COUNCIL MEETING NOVEMBER 5TH, 2024 approval of the submitted job description, and modified budget to include the new department head wages to be accessible no later then the 1st meeting in December 12/3. Council Member Brooke Scheel seconded the motion. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain amended the motion to have this completed by November 27, 2024, instead of December 3rd. Council Member Michelle Plumb seconded the amended motion. Motion passed 7-0. The mayor called for a vote on the original motion made by Michelle Plumb and seconded by Brooke Scheel. Motion passed 7-0.

- F. **Police Department Temporary Annual Leave Buyout Request**-Mayor Yaeger stated it was brought to his attention there are only two full time working officers for the City of Ritzville, and they are working three days on and two days off. On the days they are working they are on call for 14 hours and on duty for 10 hours, which does not leave any time to use annual leave. Mayor Yaeger requested temporary approval for a temporary annual leave buyout for the City of Ritzville Police Department, due to the vacancies with the Police Chief and one officer. The temporary period will be from November 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025, which totals 8 months. Right now, the current Personnel Policy does not allow for any annual leave buyout, which is in paragraph 3 of rule 7-5. Mayor Yaeger proposed hourly pay or 1 hour to 1 hour where the employee will be allowed to use this buy-out for annual leave accrued more than the employee's annual leave earned for a 1 year and 4-month period. Right now, there is only one officer that can benefit from this temporary change, because he is up against the max number of hours earned. Dennis Chamberlain stated at the finance committee, they were all under the consensus that this would be the right thing to do for the officers. Council Member Jen Verhey made a motion to approve the mayor's request to do the buy-out for the officers and put a temporary void on paragraph 3 of rule 7-5 that restricts the buy-out of annual leave for the period of Nov 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025. Council Member Mike Schrag seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

- A. **2025 Preliminary Budget**-Mayor Yaeger and Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt provided a memo with the recent updates to the preliminary budget and those updates were discussed with the finance committee. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain pointed out on the second page of the memo there is a correction for the beautification fund amount from \$4,500 to \$5,400. Council Member Jen Verhey stated one of the things she was noticing under the 003 Law & Justice Fund with the professional services where it lists a grant writer, the new community development position may absorb that amount. Mayor Yaeger stated it needs to be somebody that knows the Law & Justice grant. Council Member Chamberlain stated on page 43 of the preliminary budget summary, 404 sanitation retainage fund there was an error. The beginning fund plus \$2.00 should carry over to the end balance. The fund itself is correct, it is just on this one sheet it was incorrect. Council Member Brooke Scheel wanted to know what the proper channel was if they had questions on the budget but did not sit on the finance committee. Flyckt stated the council can set up a special council meeting but it would need to be either the 13th or the 14th due to the holidays. The council decided to set a special workshop on November 14th at 4:00pm to go over the budget.
- B. **Committee Reports**-Council Member Michelle Plumb stated what she was told a prior Mayor had created all these committees, so the council didn't have to spend hours on it doing things. So, if they aren't getting updates that basically nullifies the entire point of having committees. So, you either have a longer council meeting or you let council have those updates. Mayor Yaeger stated to the committee chairs should give the updates. The agreement was to start fresh in 2025 with this on the 2025 agenda.

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CORRESPONDENCE:

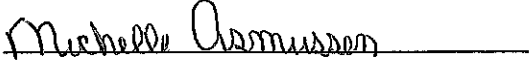
- A. Special Council Committee Hiring Freeze Concerns-Rane Schaub, Les Schwab
- B. City Hall and Building/Planning-Tom Carlson, Developer
- C. Environmental and Safety Hazards from Neighbor's Property-Bernie Williams, Property Owner
- D. Staffing/Budget Discussion-Tom Reese, Grainery District Project Manager

MAYOR UPDATES: Mayor Yaeger stated he is requesting that all council members and council committees work through the department heads when they need help from their employees. It seems that it can interrupt some of the workday business so can you please respect that.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

- A. **City Attorney:** John Kragt stated if the council has legal questions, the council can ask him.
- B. **Public Works-**Public Works Director Dave Breazeale stated the crew has been taking care of sewer lines, valves, and two water breaks from the last two weeks. They will also be doing leaf pick up in the next month.
- C. **Police-** Interim Chief Bill Benner stated there have been 62 calls since the last council meeting, two were burglaries, three thefts, a couple vehicle prowls so people out there at nighttime. We are still moving our game cameras around to catch pictures of those people out at night. The new replacement car is done and ready. The Adams County Sheriff's Office report for the bomb threat incident is now up to 248 pages so there is a lot of paperwork that goes into all the warrants that have been accumulated and all the interviews that have been done. We are bringing it down to a nearly finished project. Another student threat popped up Friday so they will start with that one.
- D. **Clerk/Treasurer-**Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt stated she is working on two sign permits, an accessory structure permit that just came in, and staff are creating bills this week, and she is working on the preliminary budget. Dave McCormick's retirement party has been set for Friday November 15th at 2:00pm at the Wheat Growers.

ADJOURNMENT-With no further comments or business to come before the council, Mayor Yaeger adjourned the remote and in person meeting at 9:00pm.


Michelle Asmussen, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer II-