

THE CITY OF RITZVILLE REMOTE/IN PERSON COUNCIL MEETING FEBRUARY 18TH, 2025

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, Jessica Quinn, Mike Schrag, and Brooke Scheel. Staff members in attendance were Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt, Deputy Clerk Treasurer II Michelle Asmussen (remote), City Attorney John Kragt, and Interim Police Chief Bill Benner. City Fire Chief Joel Bell and Public Works Director Dave Breazeale were excused. Also present were Linda Schrag, Brian Bothun, 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 approve the consent agenda for February 18th, 2025. 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, Mayor Yaeger moved on.

ACTION AGENDA

- A. **Police Department Sidearms Purchase**-Mayor Yaeger stated there was \$10,000 in last year's budget. The police department did not purchase anything last year, so we rolled it into 2025's budget. The city received two complete bids, one partial and one no bid. Right now, the low bid is from MJs Boomsticks which is a local business, and the next lowest bid was from Sharpshooting Range & Gun Shop. The bid was for six handguns, including sights, lights & holsters, ammo for practice & duty, and trade in value of \$200 per gun for seven guns. Council Member Jessica Quinn asked if everything was the same on all bids for guns & ammo. It was brought up that the only difference between the high and low bids is the sales tax as Spokane has a higher rate. Council Member Brooke Scheel stated she had a question on the procurement process in the city's policies as it has come up several times. She asked if the bid was posted publicly for people to apply, did we just seek quotes, what is the process for procurement on something like this? The procurement policy is very unclear, it's hard to seek clarity, and there isn't one subject expert in this room on it so therefore the policy needs to be relooked for through our attorney so that everybody is on the same page as to what that should look like and that we are fair and equitable when procuring contracts & services. Mayor Yaeger stated we received quotes from suppliers. Council Member Mike Schrag made a motion to approve the bid of \$9,497.20 from MJs Boomsticks. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.
- B. **Renewal of Wheatland Waste Garbage Contract**-Mayor Yaeger stated there are green and red highlights on the contract. The green are the changes he made for his notes, and the red is from the health and wellness committee. These are changes that were made from the discussion with Wheatland Waste, the committee and Mayor Yaeger. Council Member Mike Schrag stated, we had three different meetings and had good discussions. As far as the committee is concerned there were only minor changes needed. On page 7 the billing dates were changed since the billing dates will be from the 1st of the month to the end of the month and not the 16th of the month. Also, the residential collection schedule changed for June 15th through September 15th, whereas the contractor may begin collection at 6:00am in consideration for rising temperatures thus ensuring the workday ends earlier and reducing possible heat related health issues for the workers. The cardboard recycling program downtown was losing money so that changed to \$200 a month to make sure he was at least breaking even. As far as the Wheatland Waste fee, it has always been based on the CPI (consumer price index) each year. If the CPI is 0% then

THE CITY OF RITZVILLE REMOTE/IN PERSON COUNCIL MEETING FEBRUARY 18TH, 2025

Wheatland Waste receives a zero increase for the year. Mayor Yaeger stated the sanitation rates charged to customers went up based on the CPI and the garbage rates were not raised for many years. At this time the revenue did not match the expenses, so an increase was needed. Council Member Mike Schrag made a motion to approve the mayor to sign the Restated City of Ritzville Garbage Contract with Wheatland Waste Systems for the next 10 years. Council Member Jen Verhey seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

- A. Transportation Benefit District Sales Tax**-Council Member Michelle Plumb stated she wanted to bring this information to the council to look over to see if it's something they want to move forward with down the road. There are quite a few communities doing this such as Moses Lake, Wenatchee, East Wenatchee, and Airway Heights. The city can do a 1% councilmanic, which means the council can approve the 1% sales tax, or you can take it to the voters and kick it up to .3%. Council Member Plumb provided a revenue breakdown through the sales tax, which means visitors, to help with street maintenance and repair. There is a timeline as to how it must be implemented, but the council has some time to think about it. There will need to be an ordinance to establish a transportation benefit district and then do the sales tax. After the discussion the council was mostly in favor of getting an ordinance together for organizing a transportation benefit district.

CORRESPONDENCE:

- A. Personnel Committee Minutes-February 13, 2025, were provided in the council packet.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE UPDATES

- A. **License, Rules and Permits**-Julie Flyckt stated she did get an update from Aren from SCJ Alliance that the latest Development Code changes from the License & Rules Committee will be sent by Thursday. Flyckt is hoping to get it to the Planning Commission by their next meeting, which is March 12th. There will be a traffic impact fee that will go along with the development code too, but it will be in a separate section, so it doesn't get morphed into that huge update for review. There is a draft TIF ordinance for Mayor Yaeger and Flyckt to review. The ordinance has already been drafted, and the fee schedule has been updated in preparation for the council's review.
- B. **Finance and Employee Benefits**-Council Member Mike Schrag stated they met this afternoon and spoke quickly about the side arm purchase. They spent 99% of their time looking at the investments in the LGIP and divided out some tasks for the three members to go to the different banks and look at CD rates.
- C. **Health and Wellness**-No report as it was covered during the meeting.
- D. **Public Safety**-Dennis Chamberlain stated they toured the Police Department building and looked at some maintenance. Most of the committee had not been through the building and that was very interesting, and enjoyable to speak with Bill. The committee has also been working on some dispatch options. Council Member Brooke Scheel stated the city dispatch bill went from \$15,000 to \$150,000 so she had a conversation with the Othello Police Department about their dispatch services. When you are looking at the county numbers, she would like to get a better look at that because Othello doesn't get charged anything for that. So that means that the numbers are only being split between the county and the City of Ritzville because Othello, Lind and Washtucna aren't paying anything. I reached out to MACC; it would save us well over \$100,000 a year using them for dispatch. They are integrating AI into what they do,

THE CITY OF RITZVILLE REMOTE/IN PERSON COUNCIL MEETING FEBRUARY 18TH, 2025

and it is working out well. Our next step would be to go and take a tour and check it out and see what it is like.


- E. **Public Works**-Michelle Plumb stated there is a Safe Streets 4 All kickoff on Thursday. She got some alarming emails from AWC saying check in on your grants, so she checked in on this city rant and because this one has an executed contract, it is fine. We are trying to get a meeting together for the first week in March for the TIB complete streets.
- F. **Parks and Recreation**-No report.
- G. **Personnel Committee**-Michelle Plumb stated the minutes were provided in the packet, including the employee proposal, which has been in front of the council before. Council Member Scheel was kind enough to put together an alternative which the city employees will be shown and given the opportunity to give feedback on. Council Member Scheel stated she would like to formerly request that two more council members be added to the committee. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain stated one of the things license & rules would like to get is updating the administrative code. Council Member Chamberlain contacted MRSC to find out if the police department's policies had to be approved by the council as well. He said they didn't answer that directly, but they said what is happening in Ritzville is typical in small towns. Mayor Yaeger stated Lexipol has its own set of policies for the police department that the police department follows.
- H. **Special Council Committee**-Council Member Michelle Plumb made a motion to disband the Special Council Committee. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

MAYOR UPDATES-Mayor Yaeger stated he has a couple things on his list. There are two finalist candidates for Chief of Police that meet the job description requirements. He is working on setting up interviews with the two candidates and establishing an interview panel made up of five community members, the city attorney and himself. The interviews may be set up for next week. As of the 14th, there are eight applicants for the Community Development Director position. The interview reviewed the initial six and narrowed it down to four as a couple applicants didn't have the qualifications the city desired. Now they will review the two applicants received today.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

- A. **City Attorney**-Attorney John Kragt stated he is still working on reviewing the garbage contract.
- B. **Public Works**-No report. Public Works Director Dave Breazeale was excused.
- C. **Police**-Interim Chief Bill Benner stated he has been working on the firearms and ammunition deal. The call volume has increased, and there have been 73 new calls since the last meeting. The department seems to spend a lot of time up at the freeway interchange, and he does not think that it is going to change anytime soon.
- D. **Clerk/Treasurer**-Clerk Treasurer Julie Flyckt stated there is an increase in traffic at city hall due to dog tag renewals. Flyckt will be on vacation February 26th-March 11th and a lot of her time is getting everything ready to go for the next council and planning commission meetings. The city has received notifications from grant funders that the completed agreements will still be funded. The Department of Natural Resources is one of the agreements that was not complete and will not be funded at this time.

ADJOURNMENT-With no further comments or business to come before the council, Mayor Yaeger adjourned the remote and in person meeting at 8:13pm.


Michelle Asmussen, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer II-