

# THE CITY OF RITZVILLE REMOTE/IN PERSON COUNCIL MEETING DECEMBER 2, 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 (remote), Jen Verhey, Jessica Quinn, Brooke Scheel, Mike Schrag, (William Green outgoing council member) and newly elected Ky Beck-Gmeiner. 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, and Community Development Director Tom Reese. City Fire Chief Joel Bell and Chief of Police Mike Suniga were excused. Also present were Linda Schrag, Brian Bothun, Rick from the Cheney Free Press, William Green and Rod Larse.

## ACCEPTANCE OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Yaeger asked if there were any corrections or additions to the consent agenda. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain stated he would like to add under the discussion agenda, item C. Development. Council Member Mike Schrag made a motion to accept the consent agenda for December 2, 2025, in the amount of \$64,935.47 for payables and \$103,198.44 for Payroll, and to add an item C Development to the Discussion Agenda. Council Member Brooke Scheel seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

## RECOGNITION

- A. **Council Member William Green**- Mayor Yaeger stated he was filling his remaining term when he became mayor. Council Member Green was gracious enough to accept Mayor Yaeger's recommendation to the council. Mayor Yaeger expressed his appreciation for Green stepping up and being part of the council. Because he was filling an expiring term, the City recognized him and then he stepped down for the newly elected council member. William was presented with a certificate for his term on the council by Mayor Yaeger.

## OATH OF OFFICE SHORT TERM POSITIONS

Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt administered the oath of office for the two newly elected council ward members:

- A. Council Ward 3-Brooke Scheel- Read and signed their Oath of Office
- B. Council Ward 5-Ky Beck-Gmeiner- Read and signed their Oath of Office

**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. **GMA Periodic Update Grant FY 2026-Department of Commerce-Community Development** Director Tom Reese stated the grant is for the city's comprehensive plan periodic update as a requirement of the growth management act. As a partially planning city, there are only a few areas that will need to be updated. The agreement provides \$20,000 grant in a \$10,000 per year increment to update a few sections of the Comp Plan. The updates include critical areas such as resource lands and updating another section called the emergency shelter transitional housing chapter. It will be on a reimbursement of \$10,000 a year for 2 years. At the next council meeting

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Reese will have the scope of work for consideration from SCJ Alliance. Council Member Brooke Scheel made a motion to approve the mayor to approve the agreement between Washington State Department of Commerce, the City of Ritzville and the mayor to execute the \$10,000 for 2026. Council Member Jen Verhey seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

## DISCUSSION AGENDA

- A. 2026 Final Budget**-Mayor Yaeger stated in the budget there was an additional \$200,000 added for the De Minimus cost for the Tree Board DNR project. There is an additional \$3,000 added to the capital Improvement program for the Burrough's Home repairs for the sofit and caulk, and purchasing plants. The 401-water fund beginning balance was adjusted due to a correction in 2024 FY, same with the 408-sewer fund. The \$50,000 for the sewer auger was removed from the budget as that project is way more than anticipated and the City will need to find some grant funding or some kind of fund mechanism. On the 2026 wage scale the Deputy Clerk Treasurer II wage line was updated from step 7 to 6 as there are no longer 7 steps. Mayor Yaeger noted the current budget topics are the fee schedule and increasing the planning development fees. This topic item will be on the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2026 council agenda workshop. The finance committee stated not moving the financial policies from the budget document and there may be more discussion at their next meeting. Council Member Scheel requested adding grant writing as an expense to assist with grant management. The final budget Public Hearing is set for December 16<sup>th</sup> then the budget adoption will occur after the hearing.
- B. Visitor Impact 110 Fund Award Review**-Council Member Brooke Scheel stated the committee went through and scored all the applications and dropped the high scores and low scores for each one. The committee's recommendation is to approve the requests as they were submitted with the exception of Ritzville United. That request will be earmarked until they can put a solid plan together for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July event and bring it back for final approval. There is an award sheet the committee developed, and it is basically an award agreement with the expectations of the funds, when the funds need to be used by, provide valid receipts and invoices, supporting documents as well as board minutes. There is also another attachment that provides a list of supporting documentation that will meet those requirements. The last page is a reimbursement request form.
- C. Development**-Council Member Dennis Chamberlain stated without saying too much, he thinks it is time to reaffirm the council's commitment to growth and development, namely Grainland Acres project. He has concerns and wants to see that it keeps moving forward and not delayed. Chamberlain stated he had a disturbing phone call before council. Council Member Brooke Scheel stated she feels there has been a lot of communication breakdowns. This isn't the only developer that we have had issues with in getting things done. The question is what we need to do to better support developers and make sure they get the support from the City. Council Member Scheel stated putting together a committee to work with the developers to keep things better on track. Mayor Yaeger stated he did not read the email this afternoon because he hadn't checked his computer since lunch and it came in later. He will check the email and have

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a discussion with Community Development Director Tom Reese. Mayor Yaeger stated that he, Public Works Director Dave Breazeale, and Tom Reese were in the meeting with the Grainery District (Grainland Acres) developers, so it was hard to believe there had been some communication breakdown. Reese stated this is exactly the process of doing a development agreement, as it's the give and take between the developer, city, and council and it goes back and forth. The developer's agreement was stamped with draft and a request to the developers was stated to review and provide feedback back to those who attended the meeting.

**MAYOR UPDATES**-Mayor Yaeger stated he has been working with City Attorney John Kragt to replace the Prosecuting Attorney position as the current attorney will be done at the end of December. Kragt stated his attorney's office will provide the prosecuting services on an interim process after the last docket on Tuesday. Kragt has an associate that is very capable of doing this short term. Kragt stated trying to find part time prosecutors is almost impossible right now. Mayor Yaeger stated he asked the City's current Prosecutor if he knew of anyone that might be interested and he had checked around as well, and nobody had shown any interest.

### **COUNCIL COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

- **Licenses, Rules and Permits**- Meeting on Friday.
- **Finance and Employee Benefits**-No Report.
- **Health and Wellness**- No Report.
- **Public Safety**- Meeting on Thursday at 3:30pm.
- **Public Works**-No report.
- **Parks and Recreation**-No report.
- **Personnel Committee**-No report.

### **DEPARTMENT UPDATES**

- City Attorney**-Attorney John Kragt stated when his office used to provide prosecuting services, the City staff helped with the file work. He believes the current prosecutor Michael Addams has taken all that in-house so Kragt wants to understand how that works but balancing not having a bunch of attorney time doing filing if it can be done less expensively by City staff.
- Public Works**-Public Works Director Dave Breazeale stated the guys set up the new Christmas tree yesterday and spent about 3 or 4 hours fluffing it. The tree will be decorated tomorrow. The crew will be putting up the garland and wreaths for the downtown poles this year. Crew Member Kevin Schaefer installed the new salter/spreader on the new dump truck and got it wired today. Crew Member Justin Ziebell is going to finish sweeping tomorrow.
- Police Department**-Chief of Police Mike Suniga was excused.
- Fire**-Chief Joel Bell was excused.
- Clerk/Treasurer**- Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt stated the fiber services request for proposals are due tomorrow and then Mayor Yaeger, Chief Suniga and herself will

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review those on Friday. Flyckt is preparing the 2026 final budget, 2025 budget amendment and reviewing agreements that will need to be renewed for 2026.

**F. Community Development**-Community Development Director Tom Reese had no report.

**ADJOURNMENT**-With no further comments or business to come before the council, Mayor Yaeger adjourned the remote and in person meeting at 8:02pm.

Michelle Asmussen  
Michelle Asmussen, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer