OPENING OF COUNCIL MEETING

Mayor Yaeger opened the remote/in person council meeting at 7:00 p.m. The council members present were Eric Ottmar, Jessica Quinn, Brooke Scheel (remote), Jen Verhey, Dennis Chamberlain, 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, Chief of Police Mike Suniga, City Attorney John Kragt, and Community Development Director Tom Reese. City Fire Chief Joel Bell was excused. Also present were Hannah Harrington, Michelle Plumb, Daniel Cowger from Varela (remote), and Rod Larse. (Council Member Brooke Scheel stated because she was participating remotely, she would only vote on motions she considered important).

ACCEPTANCE OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Yaeger asked if there were any corrections or additions to the consent agenda. Council Member Mike Schrag moved to accept the consent agenda for October 6, 2026, with payables in the amount of $76,780.10 and Payroll in the amount of $143,721.44. Council Member Jen Verhey seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0, with Council Member Brooke Scheel abstaining.

PUBLIC REQUESTS AND COMMENTS

Mayor Yaeger asked if there was anyone from the public who would like to comment. Michelle Plumb commented about the chicken ordinance not including the approval from neighbors as an application requirement.

POLICE OFFICER OATH OF OFFICE

A. **Reserve Officer Graham**
   Chief Mike Suniga administered the oath of office to Reserve Officer Graham.

ACTION AGENDA

A. **General Sewer Plan Presentation - Varela Engineering -** Daniel Cowger of Varela Engineering presented the City's General Sewer Plan update. The plan evaluates the condition, capacity, and anticipated needs of the City's wastewater collection system over the next 20-year planning period. The previous plan had not been updated for approximately 23 years. The updated plan was approved by the Washington State Department of Ecology in late 2025 and identifies recommended system improvements, including associated estimated costs summarized in the plan's improvement tables. The Council discussed the importance of maintaining a current sewer plan to guide future infrastructure planning and support applications for funding through the Department of Ecology. The plan provides a framework for identifying system needs and prioritizing improvements over the coming years. The agenda included a presentation and public comment on the General Sewer Plan.

B. **Community Trick-or-Treat Street Closure-Fall Fest -** The Council considered the requested temporary street closure for the community trick-or-treat event scheduled for Friday, October 30, 2026. The approved closure covers Main Avenue between Columbia and Adams Streets from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Division Street will remain open to traffic. The closure will provide a designated area for the community event and its associated trick-or-treat activities. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain made a motion to approve the closure of Main Ave from Columbia to Adams Street leaving Division Street open, from 12 p.m. – 6 p.m. on October 30th for Community Trick-or-Treat. Council Member Mike Schrag seconded the motion.
   Motion passed 6-0, with Council Member Brooke Scheel abstaining.

C. **2027 SCP Scrub Seal Project—TIB Agreement -** The Council reviewed the proposed 2027 Small City Preservation (SCP) street project funded through the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB). The project will use chip seal and scrub seal treatments on designated streets to preserve pavement and extend the service life of the City's street infrastructure. The Council also

identified additional street segments for possible future consideration. Funding includes an $869,249 TIB grant and a local City match of approximately $45,751. Council Member Brooke Scheel made a motion to approve the mayor signing the TIB Fuel Tax Agreement for Project number 2-E-845 (010)-1 for the Statewide Seal Coat Program in the amount of $869,249. Council Member Eric Ottmar seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

D. **Golf Course Clubhouse Roof Project 2026-Award** - Mayor Yaeger presented recommendations for awarding the contract for the Ritzville Golf Course Clubhouse Roof Project 2026. The recommended award was to DG Contracting LLC for a base bid of $42,035.40, plus applicable unit prices for sheeting and gutters. The gutter alternate was discussed at a rate of $15 per linear foot. The project was expected to remain within the $45,000 budget allocated from Fund 301 Capital Improvement Fund. The roofing work is required to be completed by December 11, 2026. Council Member Jessica Quinn made a motion to approve awarding the Ritzville Golf Course Clubhouse Roof Project 2026 to DG Contracting LLC under the presented bid of $42,035.40 plus the pricing terms for the gutters. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0, with Council Member Brooke Scheel abstaining.

E. **Daily Deposits Exceptions Policy-Resolution 2026-07 -** The Council considered Resolution 2026-07, establishing a process for exceptions to the daily deposit requirements of public funds collected at City Hall and the golf course. The policy addresses situations in which daily deposits cannot be completed as required under RCW 43.09.240. The resolution establishes a process for documenting circumstances when a required daily deposit cannot occur, providing a record of the exception and the reason for it. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2026-07, a resolution of the City of Ritzville establishing a process for exceptions to daily deposits of public money under RCW 43.09.240. Council Member Jessica Quinn seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0, with Council Member Brooke Scheel abstaining.

F. **GMA Periodic Update Grant Agreement-Washington State Department of Commerce** - Community Development Director Tom Reese presented the interagency agreement with Growth Management Services for the city's periodic update, for the second phase. This is part of the $20,000 grant received. Council Member Jen Verhey made a motion to approve the mayor to sign the interagency agreement between the City of Ritzville and Growth Management Services Contract Number 27-63114-005. Council Member Mike Schrag seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0, with Council Member Brooke Scheel abstaining.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

A. **Adding Section 1.58.60 to Authorize an Additional One Tenth of One Percent Sales and Use tax for Criminal Justice Purposes-Draft Ordinance 2209 -** The Council discussed proposed draft Ordinance 2209, which would add Section 1.58.60 to authorize an additional one-tenth of one percent sales and use tax for criminal justice purposes. The discussion focused on the need for additional information regarding the proposal and its implications before the Council decides. Council Member Brooke Scheel raised questions and requested further clarification. Further consideration was deferred pending additional information from the City Attorney.

B. **Keeping Animals Chapter 5.12 Amendment-Draft Ordinance 2210 -** The Council reviewed proposed amendments to Chapter 5.12, concerning the keeping of animals, including the requirements for keeping chickens within the city. Discussion addressed permit requirements, enclosure standards, setbacks, and the concerns of neighboring property owners. Public comments and Council discussion identified areas where the draft ordinance needed clarification, particularly regarding whether neighbor approval would be required and how distances would be measured. The proposed revisions include removing the three-foot property line requirement; clarifying that the 10-foot separation requirement is measured from dwellings rather than property lines; specifying that the chicken permit fee will be established through the

City's fee schedule; clarifying that the permit will be perpetual; and further defining permitting and enclosure requirements. The discussion also addressed the need to keep chickens within enclosed runs, consistent with the general approach to containing animals within appropriate enclosures. Staff will coordinate with the Police Chief and Community Development Director Tom Reese to finalize the permitting and structure requirements. The draft ordinance will be revised by the city's attorney's office to address the outstanding concerns and clarifications before further Council consideration.

C. **2027 Projected Revenue** – Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt presented the City's projected revenue for 2027, explaining that the estimates are preliminary and will be adjusted as additional financial information becomes available. The Council reviewed revenue projections, including sales tax, license revenues, and state tax revenues. Some revenue categories showed comparable figures or modest decreases compared with prior estimates. The discussion also considered the effect of the transportation benefit district tax, which was projected to contribute to an overall increase of approximately 11% in state tax revenues. The anticipated revenue increase was discussed in connection with the City's planned 2027 street preservation project and the need to provide a local match for grant-funded improvements. Staff will incorporate September revenue figures into the draft budget and continue updating the projections as more information becomes available.

D. **2027 Draft Budget**- Julie Flyckt presented the preliminary 2027 draft budget and reviewed projected revenues, financial conditions, and upcoming budget priorities. The Council discussed revenue challenges, including lower sales tax and license revenues. Several financial and operational priorities were discussed:

- **Water system planning:** The City's water system plan update is overdue. The Council discussed obtaining an updated cost estimate and considering the possible use of reserves to fund the work.
- **Investments:** Increasing the City's investments through the Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP) was identified as an additional revenue item added to the budget.
- **Street preservation:** The projected transportation benefit district tax revenue and available grant funding were discussed in relation to the local match required for the 2027 street preservation project.
- **Golf course clubhouse:** Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt will work on the Visitor Impact Grant application for the golf clubhouse to reduce Current Expense expenditures.
- **Budget revisions:** Staff will incorporate September revenue figures and the changes discussed by the Finance Committee into the next draft.

CORRESPONDENCE – There was no correspondence.

REPORTS

A. **Mayor Updates** – No report.

B. **Council Committees Updates:**

- **License, Rules, and Permits** – No report.
- **Finance and Employee Benefits** – Financial projections, revenue estimates, and the 2027 draft budget were discussed under the designated agenda items. Follow-up work will include revising the budget and preparing a memorandum outlining the changes.
- **Health and Wellness** – No report.
- **Public Safety** – No report.
- **Public Works** – No report.
- **Parks and Recreation** – No report.
- **Personnel Committee** – Mayor Yaeger reported the answers to the questions from Associated Industries were sent back to them for the personnel handbook update.

C. **City Attorney** – John Kragt reported they will be opening their new office on the 12th and having an open house to welcome Hannah Harrington to the community.

D. **Public Works** – Director Dave Breazeale reported that POW was on-site at the sewer project and that Avista was scheduled to relocate the gas lines on October 26th. The F-550 experienced mechanical issues and was towed to the Tri-Cities at a cost of $1,100 and a diagnostic report had not yet been received. Crew Member Nick began reading meters this week and may continue through the winter, weather permitting, to improve the accuracy of usage estimates. Public Works repaired a water-line break at 10th Avenue and Washington Street that had caused pooling at 10th Avenue and Jefferson Street. A dam survey was completed, including an inspection of the lagoons to make sure they were not going to burst and cause flooding. The Washington State Department of Health also conducted a survey the previous week and found no issues. The stop sign on Division Street was restored. Crack sealing of the airport taxiway began October 5th and was completed October 6th.

E. **Police** – Police Chief Mike Suniga reported that activity had remained steady during the previous two weeks. The department completed emergency vehicle operations course (EVOC) training, participated in the homecoming parade, and conducted rifle training, although the rifle training was cut short by a severe windstorm. The department was preparing to participate in the high school career fair. Chief Suniga advised the community not to be alarmed by a military helicopter expected in the area at approximately 8:00 a.m. He noted that October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

F. **Fire** – Chief Joel Bell was excused.

G. **Clerk-Treasurer** – Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt continues to provide documentation for the 2025 fiscal audit. She will also continue working on the City's communication platform research with the committee to review options and costs.

H. **Community Development** – Director Tom Reese will continue working with SCJ Alliance on the transition to the on-call planning consultant arrangement. He will also prepare a pre-development package identifying development opportunities in Ritzville. In coordination with the Police Chief and other staff, he will assist in finalizing permitting and structure requirements for the proposed chicken ordinance amendments.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further comments or business to come before the council, Mayor Yaeger adjourned the remote and in-person meeting at 8:28 p.m.

Michelle Asmussen, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer

Julie Flyckt, Clerk-Treasurer