

**OPENING OF COUNCIL MEETING**

Mayor Linda Kadlec opened the remote and in person council meeting at 7:00pm. Council members present were Michelle Plumb, Marsha Smith, Mike Schrag, Dennis Chamberlain, Dede Boyer, Debbie Chapman, and Scott Yaeger. Staff members in attendance were Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt, Deputy Clerk Treasurer II Michelle Asmussen, City Police Chief David McCormick, Public Works Director Dave Breazeale, and City Attorney John Kragt. City Fire Chief Joel Bell was excused. Also present were Barry Boyer, Chauna Carlson, Andrew Carlson, John Rankin, Corey Bartlett, Diane Spain, Pete Spain, Lisa Brody, Ann Holland, Miss Lind Ritzville Madison Bartlett, Ben Varela, Jeff Kissler, and Dale Brown from the Cheney Free Press.

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Linda Kadlec 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 March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Council Member Dede Boyer seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

**PUBLIC REQUESTS AND COMMENTS-** As part of public comments, the new Miss Lind Ritzville Madison Bartlett presented on why she wants to represent the community.

- A. Miss Lind Ritzville Presentation-** Madison Bartlett started off by saying she was honored to be representing the communities of Lind and Ritzville. She was 8 years old when her and her family moved to Ritzville, she has made a lot of childhood memories over the years that she will never forget. Her family owns Gigamedics in downtown Ritzville and she has had the opportunity to work in the family business over the past 8 years. She serves as ASB President at Washtucna High School and played trumpet in the LRSW Pep Band since 7<sup>th</sup> grade. She also serves in FBLA as the secretary where she keeps track of events and take important notes at meetings. In FFA she serves as the Vice President, so she leads meetings when the President is absent. Band is her favorite, playing many instruments, doing honor jazz band, University of Montana All Star Band, Spring Honor Band and has played in the Oom Pas and Mas for the Odessa Deutschesfest. She is hoping to pursue an education as a High School Band Director at either EWU, WSU, or Whitworth University. She hopes to be a good role model and leader for the community.
- B. Open Comments-** John Rankin wanted to give everyone an update on the neon sign. It went out to Matt Kubik's house, and Rankin now has it in his shop. It will need to be sanded and painted. Rankin's goal is to have it put back up the first week of May. Last summer out by Napa the two posts from the old Dare sign that were installed in the mid-80s' were broken in the last week from the wind. Rankin asked council if they want to pull those out and put a couple new 10' posts in or put in something more permanent with a base on it, we have talked about that before? Rankin will work with Dave Breazeale to figure something out. We are also at a point where we can order the curtain for the movie theater and the guy from Stagecraft came over today from Seattle to look at it.

Lisa Brody who lives at 407 S. Jefferson stated she was at the meeting to discuss the Spain's residential & commercial utility bills. She stated she was more then quailified to look the bills over and she did forensic accounting for the past two years on both. What I have seen there is no historical accounting for the Ritzville Utilities where someone can go and get their old bills. In my own personal experience, I ended up with too much of a

credit, so I asked why. When I called, they said they would have to look into it, and they said yes it was a mistake. I called again a few months later and they were saying I owed double. Every month I pay with my credit card at the beginning of the month every single month. Mayor Kadlec stated she was going to stop her at that point as we are in negotiations and have had two meetings already on this matter. Council is really not the place to take this certain situation at this point. Lisa asked why people are continuing to get late fees without explanation, when we get our bills there is nothing that says pay by said date or you will encounter a fee. Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt stated it does state that on the late notices that go out as it is per the city code. Lisa stated, I think there are a lot of people that have had these same issues but pay it just because they don't want to deal with it. Diane Spain stated last May of 2022 she received a bill, came in to pay, thought she was paid up then received a \$1,200 bill the next month. The city stated they forgot to bill me for a whole year, and I still had my water on and still had garbage, it was actually November to April that we weren't billed. At that time, I carried a \$600 credit all those months but whenever they decided to bill me this money, the \$1,200, no one gave me that credit. I have had two meetings with the mayor and Julie, and the bill keeps acquiring late fees. I have been dealing with this for over a year and have been told it is what it is that's what you owe.

Ann Holland commented her son paid his October bill with his debit card; he then gets a shut off notice. He comes down to city hall and shows it to them and they tell him it's a computer glitch. Holland paid their December bill, and they are on SS and showed them documentation that it was paid, their response was, it wasn't paid figure it out. Brought bank documentation down, they said sorry it wasn't paid, my shut off notice says if it isn't paid it will be shut off. I don't have money to pay if my pipes freeze up, so we made a double payment. Finally, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of last month it was found but it was because of a 3<sup>rd</sup> party. And the water bills go up when they are on estimate reads, they can't do that. They need to figure this stuff out and be respectful when customers come in. Pete Spain stated one minute there are \$700 in late fees, then they are removed, does Julie have the power to just take the fees off and on at her leisure? I have a Broadway house I bought in August I hadn't paid any water bills on it and then a pipe broke. That happened at the first part of November, so I called and had the water turned off and terminated all the services. When I went to meet with the mayor, Sam said we owed a water bill on it, from the time I bought it to current. Tuesday, we get a bill for the last three months and a shut off notice. I asked for the Public Records Requests for 2021 bills, and they can't come up with anything, I think they are just saying that because they lost it. Mayor Kadlec stated to have everyone who commented to write down their names and telephone numbers with Michelle and we will get something scheduled and let you know.

#### **ACTION AGENDA**

##### **A. Police Department Computer Equipment Surplus, Resolution 2023-03- Chief**

McCormick stated he has asked Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt to prepare a resolution to dispose of some computer towers that are old and obsolete. Some of them date back to somewhere in the late 90s' and we have just had them sitting around the office and they need to go. The hard drives and memory sticks have been taken out of them and they are being disposed of according to the state records retentions schedule. There is

no value to these towers except what scrap would be and they might weigh 5-10lbs a piece. Council Member Dede Boyer made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-03. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

- B. Police Department Vehicle Surplus, Resolution 2023-04-**Chief McCormick stated the patrol car is the last of the Crown Vics and when the two recruits that were going to the Academy were driving the vehicle back and forth to get the last little bit of wear and tear out of it. One day somebody stopped them in Spokane and told them their rear axles were hanging out of the back of the car and it's going to fall off. The car had to be towed back to Ritzville. In order to have it sold at Booker Auction it will need to be trailered down there and Chief McCormick has inconvenienced the public works guys several times in the last few years by having to have one of their guys load the vehicles on a trailer to get them to Moses Lake or Spokane. Chief McCormick want to dispose of it in a way that costs the least amount of money. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-04. Council Member Mike Schrag seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.
- C. Show Cause Hearing: 704 W. 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Resolution 2023-05-** Mayor Kadlec opened the Show Cause hearing for 704 W. 1<sup>st</sup> Ave at 7:40pm. The purpose of the hearing was for the City Council to hear and consider the pertinent facts relating to show cause why a resolution should not be adopted, ordering the nuisance be abated by the city or its designee with the costs of said abatement being charged against the said landowner. The show cause was for 704 W. 1<sup>st</sup> Ave and the property owner is Pete Spain and Diane Rochelle. Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt stated attached to the resolution there are pictures of the property that were taken on January 17<sup>th</sup>, where the conditions were a nuisance with wood debris and scrap piles that are a fire hazard. There were numerous complaints about this property and the city followed up on the complaints received. A notice showing there is a nuisance and that there was a show cause hearing on March 7<sup>th</sup> was mailed to the property owner. The current condition as of March 3<sup>rd</sup>, the property owner had removed the wood pile, and the debris and scrap piles still remain. Property owner Pete Spain stated he never received a letter stating there was a hearing and he saw it posted at the courthouse. He stated he had striped the red wood down and he wasn't going to throw it away as it was good wood. A lot of the debris is because there was snow everywhere and he couldn't clean it up. He is milling up the firewood and since it is a commercial property, he should be able to mill up the wood if he wanted to. He got the refrigeration units from the grocery store, and he can get \$450 a piece when he strips them out and works on it when gets time. Spain stated when he looks at this stuff, he sees money and not an eyesore. They have talked about putting a fence up, but it takes money. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain asked Pete how long it would take him to get a fence up. Spain stated he could have one up in three months. Council Member Scott Yaeger asked when he could have all of the refrigeration unit cut up and gone. Spain said he could have those gone within a month. Attorney John Kragt let council members know that since the passing of the nuisance ordinance there is not an extension option, you either have to declare it a nuisance or not a nuisance. You can say it's not a nuisance tonight and then you can start the process all over again. Mayor Kadlec stated the council can now chose to either (1) authorize the city clerk to proceed with the administrative abatement procedures to abate the public nuisance violation, which shall include passing of resolution or (2) the city council shall direct the city clerk not to proceed if they find that there is no public nuisance violation, or the city has not

proceeded according to the nuisance chapter. Council Member Michelle Plumb made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2023-05. Council Member Marsha Smith seconded the motion. Council Member Mike Schrag approved. Council Members Scott Yaeger, Dennis Chamberlain, Dede Boyer, and Debbie Chapman opposed. Motion failed 3-4.

- D. Local Recovery Funds: One Time Revenue Allocation-Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt** stated she has been working with the finance committee on the one-time revenue replacement for the Local Recovery Funds, known as ARPA funds. Flyckt has been encouraging the council to take the one-time revenue replacement for the amount of funds the city received in the amount of amount is \$462, 161. For reporting purposes, the city can do the one-time revenue replacement and it stays in the fund that is already set up. There are some projects the council has allocated to that fund already and some other items the council has approved moving forward. The money can be used for government services. City financial consultant Tara Dunford stated this is truly administrative streamlining as it streamlines the reporting the city will do to the treasurer only. The city can use the money for any valid city expenditure. Anything they city could do with general fund money can be done with the ARPA money. It is going to cut down on audit costs as the auditors are going to look and say the city claimed standard revenue replacement. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain stated it was his hope that the council does not take this to a motion and a vote tonight. One of the questions he had is if we take this money in as a money replacement, at that point, normally city/government rules say it could only be used for existing government services project, correct? Dunford stated she just wanted to back up and clarify that this is truly administrative streamlining as it streamlines the reporting the city will do to the treasurer only. The city can use the money for any valid city expenditure. Anything the city could do with general fund money can be done with the ARPA money. Anything that is in the ARPA funding rules that originally came out, you can still do if you claim revenue replacement. It does not change how you spend the money; it doesn't change how involved the city council can be in determining how you spend the money; it simply changes how Flyckt does the reporting to the treasurer. It simply says we are going to say we are going to take the standard revenue replacement. It is going to cut down on audit costs as the auditors are going to look and say the city claimed standard revenue replacement, they are auditing your city expenses just like they would any other expenses, you don't have to provide project detailed reports, its going to streamline reporting. Dennis stated, you are saying allowable city expense, that word is worrying me. Dunford stated anything you can spend property tax money on you can spend ARPA money on. Dennis stated ARPA funds lets us do a fair amount more with the monies and he just wanted to make sure we do not put it in the general fund and then not be able to use it in the fashion that the latest treasury rules allow us to use it. Tara stated the ARPA funds don't actually give you more leeway than you already have, they may give you specific examples in how to inspire creativity, but there is nothing in there that the city wouldn't otherwise be able to do. Council Member Scott Yaeger made a motion to approve the one-time revenue replacement in the amount of \$462,161 for the Coronavirus local recovery fund. Council Member Dede Boyer seconded the motion. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain opposed. Motion passed 6-1.

- E. **Adams County Bridge Letter of Support**-Council Member Scott Yaeger stated the city is going to see a lot of these letters of support as everyone is sending a letter of support for the congressional directed spending applications/requests, which are due by this Friday. It is support only with no financial obligation involved. Council Member Scott Yaeger made a motion to approve the mayor to sign the letter of support for the Adams County Bridge #415-3 Booker Rd Bridge Project. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.
- F. **Sewer Collection System Letter of Support**-Ben Varela with Varela & Associates stated the letter of support is for congressionally spending through McMorris-Rodgers' office and Maria Cantwell's office for the snaky sewer project. Council Member Scott Yaeger added this is federal money so they require a 20% match, so if the city gets 2.4 million for the project the match would be \$500,000. Varela stated the city can put in an application to CDBG requesting the match funding. The money has to be obligated within twelve months of receiving it. Council Member Scott Yaeger made a motion to approve the mayor to sign letters of support for the sewer collection system improvement project for the City of Ritzville. Council Member Dennis Chamberlain seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0. Council Member Yaeger stated there may be more letters of support requests sent to the city and to give approval to the mayor to sign them. Council Member Scott Yaeger made a motion to approve the mayor to sign support letters for projects that she thinks the city should support. Council Member Mike Schrag seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

**DISCUSSION AGENDA**

- A. **Distribution System Project Bids**-Ben Varela with Varela & Associates stated the distribution system project, which is part of the RD water funding, is finally ready to go out to bid. The bid package has been approved by RD. Public Works Director Dave Breazeale and Varela went back and forth on the design quite a few times and made a few changes, but it is generally the same project that's been floating around for the last year or so. The project includes about 5,000 feet of new water main and a dozen or so valve replacements at various intersections throughout town. Some of this project is remaining from the 2012 project that Halme did from bid schedules that were not awarded at that time. The estimated cost is going to be around 2 million, but the way things are I wouldn't be surprised if it is closer to 2.5 million. The potential schedule is starting the end of May or early June for construction and continue through the summer into September.
- B. **Crack Seal Base and Alternate Bids**-Council Member Scott Yaeger stated he continues to work with TIB, because they have some maintenance money. The city submitted a crack seal project last August to TIB and it was not selected as they were kind of confused where the project was even though there was a map. Yaeger started feeding them some data and they like the project at about \$100,000. The city received a quote from Quality Paving who has done work for the city in the past, and TIB thought that was alright. Then TIB wanted the city to go out for official bids and they were due last Thursday at 1:00pm. When Yaeger and Breazeale were going through the bid specifications, Breazeale asked about the crack seal for where the curb and asphalt meet. Since it was not included so they had to go back and refigure, and now there is a base bid and an alternate. The bid request went to six different contractors from the MRSC small works roster, and three bids were submitted to the city. BCV, Inc. out of

Wenatchee is the lowest bid. Until TIB makes their determination there is not an official bid tab yet. The TIB board meets March 24<sup>th</sup>, and the city will be notified after that date if they will find one or both bids.

**CORRESPONDENCE AND MAYOR UPDATES:** There was no correspondence or Mayor updates.

**DEPARTMENT UPDATES**

- A. City Attorney-** John Kragt stated he didn't have much just working on a few different things and hasn't heard if the License & Rules Committee has met with Mike Connelly yet on any of those updates on the trouble house on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.
  - B. Public Works-** Public Works Director Dave Breazeale stated the Club house is abated finally it is now being putting back together. It took a lot longer than he thought it would. The well #8 is cased and they are going to start pumping next week.
  - C. Police Department-**Chief Dave McCormick stated he didn't have anything else to cover for the evening unless anyone had any questions.
  - D. Clerk/Treasurer-** Clerk-Treasurer Julie Flyckt stated the final draft of the hazard mitigation plan has gone out for open comment. Once the open comment period is complete, then it goes to Washington EMD and also to FEMA for review. The Wayfinding sign request for qualifications for the Weber entrance sign is closing on March 15<sup>th</sup>. Flyckt and Tara Dunford met with the state auditors, and they are getting ready to close out the audit. There may be some exit items, which is stating there are some areas to work on. Once they send over the exit report, Flyckt will provide it to the finance committee. This week Flyckt is doing training with Springbrook. This is her 6<sup>th</sup> time doing the financial annual report, but this is the 1<sup>st</sup> year Flyckt will be doing it out of the new Springbrook system. Flyckt updated the council on the comments about the utility bills. As council knows, there were a lot of issues with the Vision system and the city is now using Springbrook and it is a better system. There were some prior staffing issues that were thrown into the mix with the transition to new vendors. Tonight, there were three different examples that had all different variables as what occurred with their utility accounts. There is an account that got inactivated because the wrong account got inactivated, when they sold a different property, and they did not get billed for a year. Another variable is in the past the city has done estimated billing, which is typically the \$148.18 for most households. In the new system the city can do average billing, which will do an average usage of what has been billed in the past for the months billed in the new system. On the bill it will show the meter numbers going up each month based on the average during the time a meter is not being read. There is one winter month, where the system defaulted to the estimated rate, so it went back to the base rate. So, it was doing the average rate, then it went to the base rate then it went to the average rate again the following month. It caused confusion as customers' bills went up one month and down the next. If at the end of the average billing cycle the meter read is higher than the actual read, the system will adjust, and a credit will be issued in the system. The city is letting customers know they can be added to a list to review their bill after the first meter read is completed in April.
- 10. ADJOURNMENT-**With no further comments or business to come before the council, Mayor Linda Kadlec adjourned the remote and in person meeting at 8:35pm.



Michelle Asmussen, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer II