

**CLE ELUM CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 9, 2025
6:00 PM
119 W FIRST STREET
CLE ELUM, WA 98922**

1. Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, and Roll Call

Cassidy Buechle-Curtis-present
Ken Ratliff - present
Beth Williams - present via zoom
Steven Harper - present
Jerred Weis - absent
Steven Cook - present
Audrey Malek - present

Matthew Lundh - Mayor
Rob Omans - City Administrator
Debbie Lee - Clerk
Colleda Monick - Planner
William La Rue - Water/Wastewater Manager
Mathew Bailey - Public Works Director
Ed Mills - Fire Chief
Rich Albo — Police Chief

MOTION: Councilmember Harper made a motion to excuse the absence of Councilmember Weis; seconded by Councilmember Cook.

MOTION CARRIED: 6 yes 0 no.

2. Public Comment – Limited to 5 Minutes

a. September 9, 2025, Sign In Sheet

John "Jack" Carlson stated that the Senior Center provides resources and a refuge for citizens. He is happy that the Senior Center is available for him.

Cherie Tourangean is speaking on behalf of the Friends of Deer Meadows, and they have filed an appeal against Wildwood Development. They stated the process was not followed.

Jered Sluman would like to see a martial arts gym located in Cle Elum. He also has concerns about the security at the local school.

3. Announcements, Appointments, Awards & Recognition

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- a. 2025 National Senior Center Month Proclamation — Matthew Lundh, Mayor

Mayor Lundh read aloud the 2025 National Senior Center Month Proclamation and presented it to Lori Nevin, the director of the Senior Center. Mayor Lundh encouraged everyone to visit the senior center.

4. Approval of Meeting Agenda

MOTION: Councilmember Harper made a motion to amend the agenda as presented by adding Coal Mines Trail under Report of Committees and removing item 10 d Resolution 2025-018 from the agenda; seconded by Councilmember Cook.

MOTION CARRIED: 6 yes 0 no.

5. Consent Agenda

MOTION: Councilmember Harper made a motion to approve the consent agenda; seconded by Councilmember Cook.

MOTION CARRIED: 6 yes 0 no.

- a. August 12, 2025, City Council Meeting Minutes
- b. August 26, 2025, Payables \$344,027.59
- c. September 9, 2025, Payables \$205,358.42
- d. September 5, 2025, Payroll Vouchers \$344,533.93

6. Department Head Reports

- a. Rob Omans, City Administrator

See attached report.

- b. Colleda Monick, Planner

See attached report.

Colleda explained the Wildwood Development application process.

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Whole Health pharmacy is moving into the old Cle Elum pharmacy. This takes time with state licensing requirements.

c. Mathew Bailey, Public Works Director

See attached report.

Mathew met with Bullfrog Flats Apartment builders and had a pre-construction meeting. They are planning on doing the sewer and water tie-ins in the next few weeks.

The council had concerns about why the striping did not happen sooner. It was explained that their schedule was full and there was a small weather delay.

Councilmember Cook thanked Mathew Bailey for the tour of Bullfrog Flats.

d. Rich Albo, Police Chief

See attached report.

Councilmember Harper asked if there was a policy for flying police drones. Chief Albo explained that they are working on having a policy in place prior to flying the drones.

e. Ed Mills, Fire Chief

See attached report.

Chief Mills gave a slide-show presentation of the Lower Sugar Loaf fire in Chelan County that Jacob and Kaylee were on.

Mayor Lundh thanked them for their efforts.

f. William LaRue, Water/Wastewater Manager

See attached report.

Councilmember Ratliff noted that there is less influent this year than last year from looking at the report.

7. **Public Appearances – 15-Minute Limit**

a. Economic Development Interlocal Agreement Presentation — Cory Wright, County Commissioner

See attached reports.

Rob Ogburn, County Commissioner Cory Wright, Brian Elliot and Heidi Baron all spoke regarding the Economic Development Interlocal Agreement. They discussed how creating

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capacity and managing growth and partnership with the communities is critical to success. In the future, the city will be asked to sign a letter committing to working together on economic development.

b. Kittitas Community Recreation Center Update — Paul Kantwill & Gary Berndt

Paul Kantwill is part of the leadership of the Upper Kittitas County Recreation Center Alliance. This project has been worked on for more than five years. The Alliance has enjoyed the city's support of this project and are grateful. There has been a lot of public and political support. This is a shovel-ready project. The Alliance is giving this update because the mechanism that was proposed previously by which they would fund and build the center has changed. Discussion was had that they would adopt a partial-county Public Facilities District. The plan was endorsed by state representatives. Their support did not run out but time did. Because of this, the committee amended their strategy and are now using existing legislative structures to fund the construction of the Recreation Center. They are proposing the immediate formation of a County-wide Public Facilities District and the subsequent formation of a Metropolitan Parks District. The PFD would create a municipal corporation and independent taxing authority to fund the operations of the Center and would require no changes to the law. The MPD when created, would allow for raising the revenue to construct the facility. This approach is legally sound, and the Alliance has consulted with the state's greatest municipal law experts, who agree. Currently, they have the support of Roslyn and South Cle Elum. They have been working closely with the City of Ellensburg and the Council voted unanimously in support of a motion approving the continuance of partnership discussions to explore development of a County-wide Public Facilities District to fund recreational facilities in Ellensburg and Cle Elum/Roslyn. Ellensburg has only talked about needing a field house and swimming pool.

c. County Lodging Tax Advisory Committee Small Capital Grant RFP - Jessica Karraker

Jessica Karraker was looking for feedback regarding the County Lodging Tax Advisory Committee Small Capital Grant process. The committee is talking about having some funds available outside the normal session and only offer to communities who did not receive funds previously. The City of Cle Elum could potentially be ineligible since the Horse Park and the UKC Rec Center have received funding.

Councilmember Williams inquired if this would be available to business owners who have had to remove their awnings for the Downtown Revitalization Project. These funds are only available for capital projects. They are exploring some grant options for tourists and businesses as well.

8. Business Requiring Public Hearings

a. Vaping & Smoking Paraphernalia Retail Emergency Moratorium — Colleda Monick, Planner

The public hearing opened at 7:41 p.m. and closed at 8:04 p.m.

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Jessica Cranefield is opposed to having the vape shop across from the teen center.

Catherine Crowley is a volunteer at the teen center. She feels this teen center is good for the community and building a healthier community and is opposed to the proposed location.

Lori Nevin volunteers at the teen center and has seen young people from grade school through high school. She has seen many finish school and contribute to the community and does not want to see this type of business in Cle Elum.

Henry Abdel has 30 vape shops and follows all state laws. He wants the community to know that he respects the community and wants to be a good neighbor.

Ethan Bator stated he believes the location exposes people to vaping and smoking paraphernalia.

Dawn Bass believes that the signs and lights across from the teen center will make it more intriguing for the kids that attend the center.

Tiffany Hawkins stated she is a parent and a mental health therapist and believes this business does not belong in Cle Elum.

Councilmember Buechle Curtis wanted to thank the public for all of their comments and has concerns about the regulation of kratom.

Councilmember Ratliff appreciated all the public comments.

Councilmember Harper stated the council will continue to enforce the current resolution and is seeking legal advice, so the citizens are informed.

The public hearing will continue on September 23, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

9. **Unfinished Business**

10. **New Business**

- a. Cle Elum Property Lease Agreement with Kuney Construction — Mathew Bailey, Public Works Director

Mathew Bailey informed the council that this is similar to the previous lease Kuney had signed, but this is a smaller area and will only be needed for 2 months and will be storing beauty bark and topsoil. He recommends the council approve the Mayor to sign the lease.

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Discussion was had about how bright the lights were during the last lease. Did they need electricity? Was the property cleaned up after the first use? Mathew stated that they do not need electricity and this is a short lease as they are finishing up the project and the last lease they returned the property in better shape than when they started.

MOTION: Councilmember Harper made a motion to table the lease agreement with Kuney Construction; seconded by None.

MOTION FAILED: 0 yes 0 no.

MOTION: Councilmember Ratliff made a motion to have the Mayor sign the lease agreement with the changes of adding an end date of November 15, 2025; seconded by Councilmember Williams.

MOTION PASSED: 4 yes 2 no.

Councilmember Harper would like a poll vote:

Councilmember Buechle-Curtis — yes

Councilmember Ratliff — yes

Councilmember Williams — yes

Councilmember Harper — no

Councilmember Cook - no

Councilmember Malek — yes

b. Water & Wastewater Contract/Staffing — Mathew Bailey, Public Works Director

Mathew Bailey has discussed this with the Public Works & Community Development Committee, and he recommends the Council not to renew the Veolia contract that ends in December 2025. He recommends that the City of Cle Elum take back the management of the water and wastewater facilities. There are job descriptions on the next agenda item and the city will start that process, so there is time to get things completed prior to the new year. There will be some training with the new employees prior to the contract ending. 4 full-time positions will be advertised.

Discussion was had that this was something that was doable and would save the city about \$280,000 per year.

MOTION: Councilmember Harper made a motion to approve both items under New Business A & B to not renew the Veolia Contract that ends in December and develop an in-house management transition plan and approve the job descriptions; seconded by Councilmember Malek.

MOTION CARRIED: 6 yes 0 no.

c. Water, Wastewater, Operations Manager, Job Descriptions Discussion — Mathew Bailey, Public Works Director

Approved with one motion on item B. under New Business.

d. Resolution 2025-018 Establishing An Advisory Committee for Planned City Park Bullfrog Flats Development — Steven Cook, Councilmember

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Removed from the agenda.

11. Report of Committees

a. Public Works & Community Development

Councilmember Ratliff reported that the council has just approved some of the topics that were heard at the last Public Works & Community Development Committee meeting. Gary Berndt presented a proposal regarding Flag Pole park and how Cle Elum Rotary would like to take over some of the upkeep. He will talk with other Rotary members and come back with a plan. The UKC Baseball agreement is not quite ready but very close. Lastly, there was a customer who had concerns about their utility bill and the classification of the new sewer rates and wanted to know the options for lowering his billing.

The committee is also discussing adding a stormwater fee to the utility bills, possibly adding \$10 for residential users and commercial users would be based on the amount of ERU's.

b. Public Safety & Health

Councilmember Buechle-Curtis reported that Public Works and the Volunteer Fire Department are still working on a plan to inspect the fire hydrants.

c. Lodging Tax & Events

Councilmember Cook reported that there is a Lodging Tax & Events Committee meeting tomorrow and they are working on Event Permitting.

d. General Government

Councilmember Harper apologized for the delay in coordinating the updates to the code with city legal. There should be information available by the next meeting.

e. Coal Mines Trail

Councilmember Malek reported that there will be a meeting on September 30, 2025, from 5:00–7:00 p.m. at the Roslyn Masonic Lodge to discuss the interpretive signs that will be placed along the Coal Mines Trail and encourages everyone to attend. For the City of Cle Elum, they want to install the sign along the back of the park structure at the trailhead.

The Coal Mines Trail committee also wanted to apply for a T-Mobile grant to help cover the cost of the drinking fountain installation. They will need an estimate for this. The committee is also requesting a letter of support for this grant from the City of Cle Elum.

12. Councilmember Comments - Limited to 5 Minutes

Councilmember Harper talked with a Trailside representative regarding the placement of the sandwich board signs, and he clarified the proper placement with him.

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Councilmember Harper wanted to reconsider his previous motion regarding approving the absence of Councilmember Weis.

MOTION: Councilmember Harper made a motion to rescind his earlier motion to excuse Councilmember Weis; seconded by Councilmember Cook.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 yes 1 no (Councilmember Ratliff)

MOTION: Councilmember Harper made a motion to not excuse the absence of Councilmember Weis; seconded by Councilmember Cook.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 yes 1 no (Councilmember Ratliff)

Discussion was had about the benefits of zoom and the consequences of having three unexcused absences from council meetings. Consideration of calling in is helpful, and Zoom is always available.

13. Mayor's Report

Mayor Lundh reported on COG grants and how they have been reorganized from previous years. HLA assisted the city with writing 2 grant applications submitted to COG, and they scored #2 and #3 and the city was awarded both grants. These grants are for resurfacing First & Oaks and upgrading Railroad Ave and creating a truck route.

There is a 9/11 Remembrance located at District 7 firehouse at 9:00 a.m.

The Pangrazi award is now open for nominations until September 25, 2025. The General Government is the committee that oversees this award.

There is a Committee of the Whole meeting tomorrow at 6:00 p.m. to discuss the preliminary 2026 budget. This meeting is open to the public.

A settlement conference is scheduled for October 21, 2025. This is a mediation with the judge regarding the City Heights bankruptcy.

14. Executive Session RCW 42.30.110(g)

- a. RCW 42.30.110(g) To evaluate the qualifications of an applicant for public employment or to review the performance of a public employee.
- b. Executive Session Script

The council went into Executive Session to discuss RCW 42.30.110(g) at 9:15 p.m. for 10 minutes. The council returned at 9:25 p.m. and extended the session for another 10 minutes.

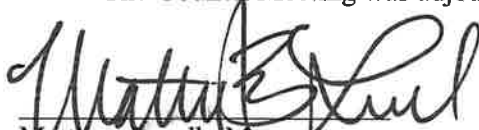
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The council returned from Executive Session at 9:35 p.m. with no decision made.

15. Adjourn

The Council Meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.



Matthew Lundh, Mayor



Debbie Lee, Clerk

