

CLE ELUM COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MINUTES
OCTOBER 1, 2025
5:00 PM
 119 W FIRST STREET
 CLE ELUM, WA 98922

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

Present:

Cassidy Buechle-Curtis
 Ken Ratliff
 Beth Williams via zoom
 Steven Harper
 Steven Cook

Absent:

Audrey Malek
 Jerred Weis

Staff Present:

Matthew Lundh - Mayor
 Rob Omans - City Administrator
 Debbie Lee - City Clerk
 Ed Mills - Fire Chief
 Rich Albo - Police Chief
 Jane Agar - Library Director

2. New Business

- a. September 10, 2025, Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Councilmember Cook made a motion to approve the September 10, 2025, Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes; seconded by Councilmember Harper.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 yes 0 no.

- b. 2026 Preliminary Budget Review

General Budget Overview:

- All changes from the last committee meeting have been incorporated.
- The General Fund shows an excess of \$4,861.
- Page 22 comments relate to the Transportation Benefit District (TBD) sales tax.

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- Both TBD and Public Safety Sales Tax are included in the 2026 budget.

Public Safety and Animal Control Contract:

- The current Roslyn Animal Control contract was noted as a significant line item.
- With no current animal control officer, there has been a \$25,000 reduction in the police service contract.
- The committee discussed whether officers are receiving fewer calls and noted that proactive control is not occurring as before.
- Although the priority has not changed, the duties have—with more focus now on code enforcement and parking.
- Mayor Adams and Mayor Lundh will revisit the Roslyn contract early next year to discuss potential modifications.
- Animal control pertains only to domestic animals; wild animals fall under Fish & Wildlife jurisdiction.
- The long-term goal remains to re-establish animal control, but staffing priorities are focused on police coverage.

Code Enforcement and Parking:

- Roslyn has requested more enforcement related to paid parking.
- A portion of staff time is dedicated to code enforcement, and responsibilities are divided into:
 - City ROW (Right-of-Way): Handled by police.
 - Outside City ROW: Handled by Jackie VanDongen, Code Enforcement

Budget Philosophy & Future Planning:

- Mayor Lundh emphasized caution in allocating funds to future facilities without firm timelines. Mayor Lundh recommends an annual evaluation rather than committing funds prematurely.

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- Public Utility District may assist in funding a future facility.
- Discussion included concern over discretionary spending and sustaining long-term costs, particularly in light of potential impacts from pending bankruptcy mediation in October.

Senior Center Funding:

- The initial proposal to fund the Senior Center at \$10,000 annually was raised to \$12,000, with Councilmember Harper advocating for the increase.
- Some concern was expressed about the timing of the increase given budget constraints, but the amount is reflected in the current budget.
- Mayor Lundh expressed the importance of maintaining commitments to the Senior Center to avoid disrupting their planning and operations.

Director Raises & Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLA):

- Councilmember Buechle-Curtis expressed hesitation over the proposed 5% raises for department directors, especially before the bankruptcy is resolved. Councilmember Buechle-Curtis noted that this hesitation is not a reflection of performance, but a cautionary approach.
- Councilmember Williams clarified that department head wages are not negotiated in union contracts, but that the intent is to keep director wages aligned with staff increases.
- Discussion of national vs. local COLA trends:
 - WA State COLA is currently at 2.8%.
 - The national inflation average is ~2.5-2.7%.
 - Some members recommended adjusting the raise to 3% to balance fairness and fiscal responsibility.
- Chief Albo and other department heads stressed that retaining employees is more cost-effective than rehiring and retraining. Chief Albo emphasized that employees are the city's most valuable asset.

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MOTION: Councilmember Harper made a motion to adjust the proposed COLA from 5% to 3% for non-represented staff; seconded by Councilmember Ratliff.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 yes 0 no.

- Adjustments will be made in the budget, with savings placed in the reserve line for bankruptcy planning.

Budget Line Item – Equipment:

- Page 11, Line 522.23.005:
 - \$10,000 allocated to build a mobile-use pump trailer.
 - Councilmember Ratliff emphasized this is an essential piece of equipment, particularly for wildland and brush fire response.
 - Components include a pump from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), a hose, trailer, and labor.
 - Councilmember Ratliff suggested reducing it to \$5,800, depending on final equipment needs.

Staffing & Position Creation:

The budget reflects plans to hire a planner, with funding already included.

- Discussion on creating new in-house positions such as assistant city administrator and water/sewer staff being in house would reduce reliance on contractors and result in cost savings.
- Discussion of the need for an assistant city administrator, particularly with the influx of new homes in Bullfrog Flats, would help free up time for Rob Omans, City Administrator, to handle inspections and broader city needs.
- The budget also reflects an increase in street maintenance funding due to ice and snow removal and purchase of snow melt for new sidewalks.
- Several 2026 street fund projects are included, though recent COG awards are not yet reflected in the budget.

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Grants & COG Updates:

- Council Of Government (COG) funding has been approved and is now in the contracting phase between municipalities.
- A new 1/10 sales tax will be on the October 14, 2025, council agenda.

Stormwater Fund & Planning:

- Continued work is planned for the Stormwater Fund.

Final Budget Process & Timeline:

- Councilmember Harper asked if one more study session would be scheduled if tightening is needed.
- Staff confirmed that future meetings could accommodate additional adjustments.

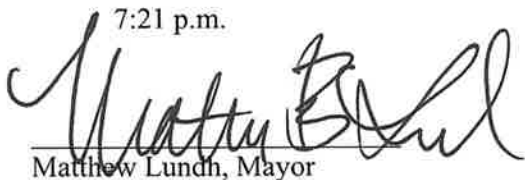
Budget Adoption Timeline:

- October 14, 2025: Property Tax, TBD, Public Safety Sales Tax discussions
- October 28, 2025: Preliminary Budget Hearing
- November 25, 2025: Final Budget Hearing and Adoption

3. Other Committee Comments

4. Adjourn

7:21 p.m.


Matthew Lundh, Mayor


Debbie Lee, Clerk

