

**CLE ELUM SPECIAL MEETING**  
**MINUTES**  
**OCTOBER 8, 2025**  
**8:00 AM**  
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  
Steven Harper  
Steven Cook  
Audrey Malek

**Absent:**

Jerred Weis

**MOTION: Councilmember Harper made a motion to excuse Councilmember Weis; seconded by Councilmember Cook.**

**MOTION CARRIED: 6 yes 0 no.**

**Staff Present:**

Matthew Lundh - Mayor  
Rob Omans - City Administrator  
Debbie Lee - Clerk  
Mathew Bailey - Public Works Director

**2. Executive Session RCW 42.30.110(1)(i)**

- a. (i) To discuss with legal counsel representing the agency matters relating to agency enforcement actions, or to discuss with legal counsel representing the agency litigation or potential litigation to which the agency, the governing body, or a member acting in an official capacity is, or is likely to become, a party.

The Council entered Executive Session at 8:02 a.m. for a duration of 30 minutes to discuss confidential matters. It was noted that the Council was expected to take action following the conclusion of the Executive Session. The Council returned to open session at 8:32 a.m.

**3. Public Comment - Limited To 5 Minutes**

**4. New Business**

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- a. Ordinance 1706 Authorizing the City to Restrict Water Use in Times of Water Shortage - Mathew Bailey, Public Works Director

Mathew Bailey, Public Works Director, presented an emergency ordinance authorizing the mayor to enact and enforce internal water conservation measures within commercial or residential properties. Currently, the city code only permits enforcement of outdoor water use restrictions. Mathew Bailey explained that the city has a buffer of 200,000 gallons per day based on well capacity. Should conditions worsen, the ordinance would enable the city to impose additional restrictions on indoor water use as necessary. Mathew Bailey asked if there were any questions regarding the language or intent of the proposed order.

Councilmember Ratliff inquired about the impact of voluntary compliance on overall water usage. Mathew Bailey responded that voluntary measures have reduced water demand by approximately one million gallons per day, down from a previous peak of 1.9 million gallons per day. He noted the city's wells can produce a maximum of 1.2 million gallons per day. A significant decrease in water usage is anticipated in November.

Mathew Bailey clarified that golf courses are not included in this ordinance as they use irrigation water, not treated water, and are currently shut off. Additionally, current usage totals do not include projected contributions from the South Cle Elum well, which has not yet been activated but could contribute up to 200,000 gallons per day. The city is currently not drawing water from the river and is doing everything possible to stay below the 1.2 million gallons per day threshold, including careful reservoir management and strategic use of available water sources.

Concerns were raised about what would happen if the city exceeds that threshold. Mathew Bailey stated that going over the limit could violate the curtailment order, potentially requiring the city to draw from the Yakima River. While the exact penalties are unclear, they could include monetary fines and possible damages to those from whom water is diverted. There were questions about whether the city could initiate a 90% flow instead of 100% and reduce distribution, but Mathew Bailey explained that operational reservoir levels are already limited to about four feet above fire storage and auxiliary reserves. Additionally, a minimum of 35 psi must be maintained for proper residential water pressure to prevent backflow and contamination, which limits the ability to restrict flow further.

**MOTION: Council Member Buechle-Curtis made a motion to approve Ordinance 1706; seconded by Councilmember Cook.**

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 yes 1 no (Councilmember Ratliff)**

Councilmember Harper expressed appreciation for the ordinance's intent but noted it shifts decision-making authority to the executive branch. He added that a supermajority of the council (five out of seven members) would be required to convene a session to override any decisions which serve as a check and balance.

Councilmember Ratliff expressed concern about the seriousness of the situation, noting that

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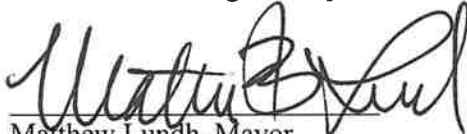
the reservoirs are nearly empty. Councilmember Ratliff voiced his support for representative governance and stated he could not support the ordinance. However, he expressed trust in both Mayor Lundh and Mayor Pro Tem Harper to make decisions when necessary. Councilmember Ratliff offered a friendly amendment that proposed changing the ordinance to allow a simple majority of a quorum to override decisions. The city attorney advised that such a change would not be legally permissible and explained the process for overriding a mayoral veto, noting that the mayor retains veto power.

The council engaged in a broader discussion about due process and governance structure. In closing, council members and staff were thanked for their dedication and contributions to managing the city's water challenges.

5. **Other Committee Comments**

6. **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 a.m.

  
Matthew Lundh, Mayor

  
Debbie Lee, Clerk

