

CLE ELUM CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES
OCTOBER 28, 2025
6:00 PM
 119 W FIRST STREET
 CLE ELUM, WA 98922

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

Roll Call

Present:

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

Staff Present:

Matthew Lundh — Mayor
 Rob Omans — City Administrator
 Debbie Lee — Clerk
 Colleda Monick — Planner
 Robin Newcomb — Finance Director
 Mathew Bailey — Public Works Director
 Rich Albo — Police Chief
 Ben Annen — HLA

- a. [October 28, 2025 Sign In Sheet](#)

2. Executive Session RCW 42.30.110(i) Potential Litigation

- 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 for 15 minutes and will return at 6:17 p.m. No action is expected following the Executive Session.

The Mayor later announced an extension of the Executive Session until 6:33 p.m.

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b. October 28, 2025, Executive Session Script

3. Public Comment – Limited to 5 Minutes

No public comments were made.

4. Announcements, Appointments, Awards & Recognition

5. Approval of Meeting Agenda

Councilmember Cook moved to add the November 3rd letter regarding the Bullfrog Overpass to the consent agenda.

Councilmember Ratliff would prefer the item to be on the regular agenda.

MOTION: Councilmember Cook made a motion to amend the agenda as presented by adding the November 3, 2025, letter regarding Bullfrog Overpass under New Business F; seconded by Councilmember Harper.

MOTION CARRIED: 7 yes 0 no.

MOTION: Councilmember Cook made a motion to approve the agenda as amended; seconded by Councilmember Williams.

MOTION CARRIED: 7 yes 0 no.

6. Consent Agenda

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

MOTION CARRIED: 7 yes 0 no.

a. October 14, 2025, Cle Elum Council Meeting Minutes

b. October 16, 2025, Cle Elum Special Transportation Benefit Board Meeting Minutes

c. October 28, 2025, Payables \$612,387.93

d. Progress Estimate #4 Second Street Roundabout Interwest Construction \$5,272.50

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- e. Progress Estimate #13 Downtown Revitalization Active Construction \$81,958.47

7. Department Head Reports

- a. Rob Omans, City Administrator

See attached report.

Councilmember Ratliff inquired as to who has been submitting Public Records Requests. Rob Omans, City Administrator, will begin including a monthly Public Records Request (PRR) report in future council packets.

- b. Colleda Monick — Planner

Colleda Monick — Planner, provided an update from the Climate Advisory Committee, noting that October utility bills will include a link to an anonymous survey to gather public feedback and encourage community engagement. The survey will also be available through the City's website and Facebook page.

- c. Mathew Bailey, Public Works Director

See attached report.

Mathew Bailey — Public Works Director reported that citizens did an excellent job conserving water and remained within the wellhead output range.

Councilmember Harper asked for an update on the City Heights sewer line related to the bond, which is about to expire. Public Works inspected the line last week and noted it was inspected three times last year. A one-year conditional use was granted after a few issues were identified and repaired at the time the issue was identified. The sewer line is currently in good condition.

- d. Rich Albo, Police Chief

See attached report.

8. Public Appearances – 15-Minute Limit

- a. Bullfrog Flats Park - Richard Rawlings, New Home Co.

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Colleda Monick, planner, provided helpful historical background on the project. The original 2002 proposal included 18 acres of park featuring a large lake and a private clubhouse. As the project evolved, plans were revised to better align with community preferences. The updated concept removes the lake and instead features a public park while maintaining the overall acreage for ballfields, sports courts, trails, and related amenities.

The developers aim to complete the project by October 30, 2027, though they are interested in finishing sooner since this serves as the entrance to the housing area. The updated and revised plan will be shared soon. It is still in the early stages and will require a land use review, but it will not go through a public hearing process. The Public Works Commission will review the information at its meeting on November 5, 2025, at 12:00 p.m., and Public Works will bring feedback to New Home Co. to assist in finalizing the plans.

Richard Rawlings, representing New Home Co., shared additional details. He noted that the company would like the park and trail amenities to coincide with the marketing and opening of the surrounding area. Much of the infrastructure, roads, etc. appears substantially complete, particularly in the first phase of the plats. New Home Co. owns all three phases, and the first three plats are scheduled to be recorded in November. Building permits will begin to be issued shortly thereafter. The roundabout is expected to be completed in the spring.

The design goal is to preserve as many trees as possible, offering a natural, filtered view into the park. The Bullfrog Flats community will include a private pool area, while the remaining park space will be public, featuring natural play materials located under the forest canopy.

Park Features Include:

- Approximately 15 private parking stalls along the park frontage, with an additional 10 proposed if needed.
- Parking is designed to blend naturally between trees, similar to a campground layout.
- Pickleball and volleyball courts, a berm, and three shelters with built-in BBQ areas and tables.
- Restrooms near the forest playground (approximately ½ acre in size).
- A 100-foot forest buffer to preserve natural space and minimize potential nuisances.
- A looped trail encircling the property that will eventually connect to the regional trail network.
- Approximately 15–16 private parking spaces and 54 public spaces.

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Council and staff expressed appreciation for the thoughtful approach to parking, access, and shelter placement, noting that the design provides convenient access for drop-off and elderly visitors and has a similar feel to Dawson Park.

Feedback and comments should be submitted to Mathew Bailey prior to the Public Works Commission meeting on November 5, 2025, at 12:00 p.m.

- b. Jordan Peterson, Downtown Association

See attached report.

9. **Business Requiring Public Hearings**

- a. 2026 Preliminary Budget - Robin Newcomb, Finance Director

The Public Hearing opened at 7:37 p.m. and closed at 7:43 p.m.

Robin Newcomb, Finance Director, provided an overview of the Preliminary Budget, noting that the Final Budget will be presented on November 25, 2025.

Public Comment:

- Lori Nevin expressed appreciation for the City's work on the budget and the continued support for the community. She was grateful that the draft budget includes a 2026 contribution for the Senior Center, which will provide meaningful assistance.
- Nora Kantwill asked whether this was the final hearing and confirmed that the council is not obligated to adopt the budget at the November 25, 2025, meeting. She also inquired about the utility tax rate and any potential increase. It was noted that the rate remains unchanged from previous years.

The budget must be adopted prior to the end of the year.

There were no council comments.

10. **Unfinished Business**

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11. New Business

- a. Ordinance 1712 - Budget Amendment #2 - Robin Newcomb, Finance Director

Robin Newcomb, Finance Director, reported on expenses from the general fund, noting City Heights garnishments and a leasehold tax that was charged to the city but later refunded. See the attached report for details.

Councilmember Cook noted that the City Heights expenses were paid from the General Fund and stated that a budget amendment was required.

MOTION: Councilmember Cook made a motion to approve Ordinance 1712; seconded by Councilmember Buechle - Curtis.

MOTION CARRIED: 7 yes 0 no.

- b. Kittitas County Public Facility Agreements 2025 Small Capital Projects - Ben Annen, HLA

Ben Annen, HLA, reported that both grants are through the same program. Cle Elum was able to capitalize on over half of the funds that had been set aside.

The resurfacing of the road to complete the Downtown Revitalization project was described as the “icing on the cake.” The project received \$714,000 from the County Block Grant, with an additional \$111,000 needed. A 0.09 grant opportunity arose, and the project was fully funded.

Annen also provided an update on the Railroad Street Rehabilitation and Truck Route project, which aims to divert commercial trucks off First Street to preserve the roadway. This project is double-funded: initial funding came from the Federal Highway Administration, and the additional funding will cover a portion of the 13% city match; there will still be some city match money that will need to be funded. The city still has time to pursue other funding opportunities.

Mayor Lundh noted that several projects (eight in total) were presented through a competitive process using a thoughtful, regional scoring approach. Cle Elum’s projects scored #2 and #3, reflecting the city’s strong effort in preparing high-quality applications. The awards also highlight the work of HLA on behalf of the city.

Steven Cook added that the quality of HLA’s work is difficult to overstate compared to the other applications submitted.

MOTION: Councilmember Harper made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign both the 2025 Distressed County Sales and Use Tax Infrastructure Improvement

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Program Agreements between Kittitas County and the city of Cle Elum relating to First Street & Oakes Avenue Resurfacing Project and Railroad Street Rehabilitation & Truck Route Project; seconded by Councilmember Cook.

MOTION CARRIED: 7 yes 0 no.

First Street & Oakes Avenue Resurfacing Project \$111,498.00

Railroad Street Rehabilitation & Truck Route Project \$98,502.00

- c. City Engineer Consultant Agreement HLA for Services 2026-2028 - Rob Omans, City Administrator

Rob Omans, City Administrator, reported that every three years, the city issues a Request for Qualifications (RFQ). For this cycle, years 2026–2028, the City received one submission from HLA. Per state guidelines, a selection committee reviewed and scored the application, and HLA was unanimously ranked the highest by the committee.

Mayor Lundh, Councilmembers Cook, and Bailey reached agreement on the recommendations, and the agreement was reviewed and approved by the city attorney.

Based on this, Omans recommended that the council engage HLA for a three-year term.

MOTION: Councilmember Cook made a motion to approve HLA as the City of Cle Elum's Engineer for the years 2026-2028; seconded by Councilmember Harper.

MOTION CARRIED: 7 yes 0 no.

- d. Resolution 2025-023 - City of Cle Elum Council Setting a Public Hearing Date to Consider the Proposed Assumption of the Transportation Benefit District - Colleda Monick, Planner

Colleda Monick referred to the staff report, noting that there is a public process to set the date and time for the public hearing, which simplifies the overall process. This approach eliminates the need for a separate meeting or a separate annual report. The public hearing is scheduled for November 25, 2025.

MOTION: Councilmember Harper made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-023 Setting a Public Hearing Date to Consider the Proposed Assumption of the Transportation Benefit District; seconded by Councilmember Cook.

MOTION CARRIED: 7 yes 0 no.

- e. Ordinance 1713 - Parking Code Update - Rich Albo, Police Chief

Chief Albo stated that a revised version of the ordinance is in front of each council member.

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The revision is proposed as an emergency ordinance due to pressing issues regarding parking, rather than waiting for the standard five-day period. The update addresses parking lots, alleyways, and other areas, allowing the city to properly impound or cite vehicles as needed.

Councilmember Cook noted that sections of the code may be too broad or too narrow, and do not reflect current conditions on Columbia or Second Street, where cars are often parked parallel, head-in, or facing the wrong direction. Chief Albo explained that the city would need two additional employees dedicated to being full-time parking enforcement to begin that level of enforcement. Currently, the police patrol based on complaints or if something is being obstructed, including issues that affect plowing. There are vehicles on Second and Third Street that currently obstruct sidewalks partially or completely. The revision was edited to be more flexible and would benefit from further discussion by the Public Safety Committee.

Councilmember Buechle - Curtis added that this is a good opportunity to review the code, gather community feedback, and prioritize needed changes.

MOTION: Councilmember Cook made a motion to approve Ordinance 1713 Parking Code Update; seconded by Councilmember Harper.

MOTION CARRIED: 7 yes 0 no.

- f. Interstate 90 Exit 80 Overpass Replacement and Future Corridor Planning Letter — Mayor Lundh

Transportation Leaders, Department of Transportation and other groups drafted this letter regarding the Interstate 90 Exit 80 Overpass Replacement and Future Corridor Planning.

Councilmember Ratliff noted that the city is impacted by the situation, describing it as a statewide emergency. A letter regarding the overpass was generated by the county after consultation with the Mayors of Cle Elum and Roslyn, requesting a modest pause to address ongoing issues first.

Mayor Lundh stated that severe problems have eased since the freeway reopened. He noted that this section of I-90 is being widened, and the city may need to consider future costs. There has been discussion regarding truck parking. When the pass is closed, there may be short-term opportunities to increase truck parking at the weigh station rather than simply restoring the bridge as it was. Mayor Lundh emphasized addressing growth challenges now, rather than waiting.

Mayor Lundh also noted that the situation qualifies as a state of emergency, which would not occur during a standard budget cycle. Other cities have already signed the letter. The Mayor acknowledged the comments. It was stated that there is a vacancy on the I-90 Steering Committee.

MOTION: Councilmember Cook made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign the letter; seconded by Councilmember Harper.

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MOTION CARRIED: 7 yes 0 no.

12. Report of Committees

a. Public Works & Community Development

No update at this time.

b. Public Safety & Health

Councilmember Buechle-Curtis reported that staff will be sending the draft Fire Code to the City Attorney soon. The Addressing Code is still under review by the attorney. During the meeting, discussion arose regarding the Parking Code, and it was noted that it should be reviewed more closely. City Clerk Debbie Lee will email the Public Safety and Health Committee to collect feedback.

c. Lodging Tax & Events

Councilmember Cook stated that for those considering a lodging tax application, the committee recommends submitting applications as soon as possible. The process involves committee recommendation followed by council approval.

Scoring for the consolidated tax awards is being finalized. The full meeting is scheduled for November 14, 2025, in Ellensburg.

d. General Government

Councilmember Harper reported that Jackie VonDongen, Code Enforcement, is taking on the task of Title 6, which is being revised in a more comprehensive rewrite and will be brought back to the committee for further review.

Councilmember Buechle-Curtis noted that Title 8 — Health & Safety will be reviewed by the Public Safety & Health Committee.

There was a robust discussion regarding mobile vendor fees.

Regarding the Señor Bones lease extension, staff noted that a longer lease would provide Señor Bones with considerable savings on purchases. A new lease is being drafted due to the change of the city attorneys, including language to keep up with inflation, which is under review. The Mayor expressed concern about him signing the lease before it is finalized.

MOTION: Councilmember Ratliff moved to approve the work of staff and consultants in

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advance of the lease finalization, allowing the Mayor to sign once the lease is ready and pending legal review.

MOTION: Councilmember Harper made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign the lease before being finalized by the attorney with a 3-year lease extension; seconded by Councilmember Ratliff.

A poll vote was requested:

Buechle-Curtis - nay

Ratliff - yes

Williams - nay

Harper - yes

Cook - nay

Weis - yes

Malek - nay

MOTION FAILED: 3 yes 4 no

- e. Coal Mines Trail

Their next meeting is on November 1, 2025.

13. Councilmember Comments - Limited to 5 Minutes

Bryan Elliott, Kittitas County Auditor, will present an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Economic Development. It will be addressed at the next meeting.

Councilmember Buechle - Curtis provided an update on the upcoming cold winter shelter, highlighting the increasing volunteer support and the need for strong community involvement.

Councilmember Malek noted that the number of e-bikes around town is increasing and suggested that the Public Safety Committee consider reviewing relevant city codes.

Councilmember Cook reminded applicants for the lodging tax grant to also have their applications reviewed and proofread to ensure the highest quality, which can make a significant difference in the scoring.

14. Mayor's Report

Mayor Lundh reminded the council that the Elected Officials Essentials training is required for anyone elected this year and must be completed every four years. He also encouraged officials to take Public Record Requests (PRR) training and Open Public Meeting Act (OPMA) training as a refresher. A session is scheduled for December 6, 2025, in Union Gap from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Those interested can notify the clerk for group registration.

Mayor Lundh also provided an update on the settlement conference with City Heights held last

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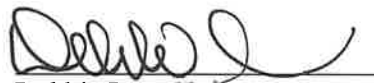
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Monday. He thanked Steven Harper, Steven Cook, Cassidy Buechle - Curtis, Rob Omans, Ben Annen, and Christina Wollman for attending. Noting that the team started at 6:00 a.m. and concluded at 1:30 a.m., with continued discussions the following day. The process is ongoing.

15. Adjourn

The Meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.


Matthew Lundh, Mayor


Debbie Lee, Clerk

