

**CLE ELUM PUBLIC WORKS & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE**

MINUTES

NOVEMBER 5, 2025

8:30 AM

119 W FIRST STREET
CLE ELUM, WA 98922

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Committee Members Present:

Steven Cook
Jerred Weis via zoom
Ken Ratliff

Staff Present:

Matthew Lundh - Mayor
Rob Omans - City Administrator
Debbie Lee - Clerk
Colleda Monick - Planner
Mathew Bailey - Public Works Director
Ed Mills - Fire Chief
Audrey Casassa - Utility Clerk

2. Unfinished Business

a. Flag Pole Park Proposal — Gary Berndt — Rotary

The committee passed on this topic to see if Gary Berndt would show up in person later.

b. UKC Baseball Further Discussion — (UPDATE)

Rob Omans, City Administrator, provided an update on the Upper Kittitas County (UKC) Baseball contract. Both parties' attorneys have been in discussion and met last week. The UKC Baseball's attorney has expressed concerns regarding certain language in the agreement. An update is expected at next month's meeting once those issues are clarified. Omans noted that the contract should be returned to the committee for further review.

Ken Ratliff offered comments on the agreement. He stated that if both parties are satisfied with the terms, he is comfortable with the contract. However, he noted several points of concern:

- Youth baseball is a volunteer organization, and the agreement contains heavy legal language.
- On page 2, under the grant section, and in the redlined portions, Ratliff requested that the park name remain "Memorial Park." It was referenced as "Memorial Park"

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initially, Steven Cook pointed out it was referenced later simply as “the park.” This is a common practice in most contracts on the first instance.

- On page 5, under concessions, the contract currently states “contracted for Youth Baseball.” Ratliff suggested revising this to “managed by Youth Baseball.”
- On page 6, section 2.9, the wording “accountable to its citizens” should be revised to “accountable to its residents.” Steven Cook stated that is how the city refers to people here. Ratliff emphasized that the city should recognize the volunteer nature of youth baseball and empower volunteer efforts rather than impose unnecessary restrictions.

Jerred Weis agreed, noting that the park relies heavily on volunteers. Since the city does not manage park operations, he expressed concern about imposing too many rules on the volunteer group that keeps the park functioning.

Steven Cook pointed out we have a responsibility to all residents to manage public parks.

c. Draft Storm Water Plan — Mathew Bailey — Public Works Director

Mathew Bailey, Public Works Director, presented the first draft of the Stormwater Plan prepared by HLA. He is currently reviewing the plan, with the primary issue identified being the stormwater rate mechanism (referenced in Table 4 of the draft). This mechanism outlines how the city would charge residents and businesses to fund the stormwater program. Both HLA and Bailey believe that either Option 4A or 4B would be the most equitable approach.

Ken Ratliff noted that infiltration of rainwater into the sewer plant has been a continuing issue, as some roofs drain directly into the sewer system. It was discussed whether this is a Public Works concern.

Mike Hiet of HLA clarified that addressing this issue would require a sewer system study, not a stormwater system study, since it falls outside the stormwater plan’s scope.

Ken Ratliff expressed disagreement with the report.

Discussion was had that the current study is focused solely on the stormwater system. Since many roof drains are connected to the sewer, issues would appear in the sewer outfall, not as part of a separate storm line.

Public Works could perform the smoke testing in-house, prioritizing the sewer mains known to collect the most groundwater. They are already inspecting lines during repairs, and illicit connections (e.g., parking lot or rooftop connections to the storm system) would be identified through this work. Bailey will prepare a cost estimate for that effort. He emphasized the need to provide adequate public notice prior to testing.

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Bailey stated that selecting a rate mechanism would allow HLA to refine the plan to one or two funding approaches, including estimated monthly costs per resident. Although the Stormwater Fund has been established, a rate has not yet been set. A more detailed version of the plan will include a yearly budget with specific projects and amortized costs over time.

Ratliff suggested placing the project on hold temporarily, citing the city's current financial situation. Bailey encouraged everyone to read the draft plan and submit questions or feedback.

Mike Heit explained that Option 4A places a greater share of cost on multifamily and commercial properties, while reducing the rate for residential users. The city is responsible for all road storm systems and detention ponds. Heit also noted that most stormwater within the Blue Fern area stays on-site, while residential areas contribute more load to the street stormwater system. Since all road users impact the stormwater system, Heit emphasized that every user should contribute equitably to funding. The final destination for the city's stormwater is the Hanson Ponds complex, where most runoff infiltrates into the ground.

As part of the city's Department of Ecology grant/loan, the stormwater plan has a defined timeline. While the deadline has been extended, there is currently no updated timeline available. The next meeting is scheduled for December 5, 2025. Heit stated that Ecology has a long review process, so submitting the report by December would be ideal. The preferred funding method could be revised later, but selecting one soon would strengthen the city's funding position. A low-interest loan would begin repayment after the review period, allowing the city to start building reserves in the stormwater fund.

Bailey recommended that the city identify a funding method in the report by early December and begin funding the stormwater account at the start of the new year. The fee could be included as a utility bill line item or through property tax, though the latter would take longer to implement.

The estimated annual operating budget for the stormwater program is approximately \$600,000 per year.

3. New Business

- a. [October 1, 2025 — Cle Elum Public Works & Community Development Committee Meeting Minutes](#)

MOTION: Committee Member Cook made a motion to approve October 1, 2025, Public Works & Community Development Meeting Minutes; seconded by Committee Member Weis.

MOTION CARRIED: 3 yes 0 no.

- b. [Request for Leak Adjustment — Shirley Petrich](#)

Audrey Casassa, Utility Clerk, presented a leak adjustment request and provided an attached summary sheet. She noted that the issue was reported on September 26, 2025, and repairs

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were completed on October 8, 2025.

MOTION: Committee Member Cook made a motion to approve Shirley Pretrich request for leak adjustment in the amount of \$493.27; seconded by Councilmember Weis.

MOTION CARRIED: 3 yes 0 no.

c. [Cle Elum Youth Art Project Overview — Shasta Marion — Cle Elum Visitor Center](#)

Jordan Peterson, Cle Elum Downtown Association, stated that Shasta of the Cle Elum Visitor Center will attend the December meeting to provide the scheduled presentation.

d. [Bullfrog Flats Park Amenities — Discussion — Mathew Bailey — Public Works Director](#)

The committee members reviewed the follow-up presentation from New Home Co., at the previous Council Meeting as this served as the city's opportunity to provide comments and feedback to the developer.

Ken Ratliff stated he believes the project would be a good addition to the community.

Steven Cook expressed reservations, specifically concerning the concept of a private area within a city park. Cook noted that if the public were allowed access to the proposed food truck space, it would be less of a concern.

Jerred Weis asked whether the private area shown in the original presentation (previously on a separate parcel) had been moved into the public portion of the park.

Colleda Monick, Planner, clarified that the plan includes 16 private parking stalls, 54 public parking stalls, as well as some street parking throughout the park. Monick stated she would need to clarify whether the private area would be subdivided and leased back to the city and noted that a clear distinction between public and private spaces would be necessary.

The concept of a private clubhouse was discussed, originally intended for HOA members only. Cook reiterated his objection, emphasizing that a city-owned neighborhood park should remain fully public.

Committee members agreed there are still unanswered questions regarding how a private portion would operate within city-owned property. Monick confirmed that the entire development site is city property, unlike other developments such as Suncadia.

Mathew Bailey, Public Works Director, shared feedback from Councilmember Buechle-Curtis regarding recreational features:

- The proposed sand volleyball court may face weather-related and maintenance challenges, particularly given the wooded environment. Public Works expressed concerns about upkeep (e.g., pine needles, debris, and animal issues). A basketball court or multi-use court might serve residents better year-round.

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- Pickleball courts could be designed as multi-use courts (e.g., for tennis or handball) to provide greater flexibility.
- Similar concerns were raised regarding the HOA-only space and food truck area, with staff recommending that the food truck area remain part of the public park. This change may require a code amendment.
- Buechle-Curtis also asked about the amphitheater concept shown in the first presentation, noting it had positive community benefits and questioning why it was removed.

Monick, stated that this is the council's opportunity to provide final feedback to New Home Co. before staff communicates back to the applicant. The item will not return to council unless it is determined that the proposed changes constitute a major modification requiring further review.

Monick will further investigate the private section and incorporate the council's feedback into the city's official response to New Home Co.

e. 2026 Garbage Rate Increase — Mathew Bailey — Public Works Director

Mathew Bailey, Public Works Director, presented a proposal for a garbage rate increase for 2026. The increase is necessary due to higher costs from Waste Management (WM) and the city's depleted solid waste reserves. Bailey recommended a 19% rate increase, explaining that this adjustment would allow the city to begin rebuilding reserves at approximately \$76,000 per year.

Bailey noted that Waste Management implemented a 13.2% increase this year and that county tipping fees also rose. The city's break-even point is approximately 15%, and the additional increase would help establish a financial cushion for unexpected mid-year Consumer Price Index (CPI) or inflation adjustments. CPI inflation is projected at 2–3% for the year, but Bailey emphasized that the city is playing catch-up from several years of operating at a deficit.

MOTION: Committee Member Cook made a motion to recommend the proposed 2026 garbage rate increase to keep pace with Waste Management's increases and begin rebuilding reserves to the council for consideration; seconded by Committee Member Weis.

MOTION CARRIED: 2 yes 1 no. (Committee Member Ratliff)

Weis noted that while rate increases are unfortunate for residents, costs continue to rise. The proposed increase would not build an excessive reserve but create a \$76,820 annual surplus to stabilize the fund. Weis questioned whether a tiered increase might be an alternative, given the \$1.1 million annual budget.

Ratliff opposed the motion, stating that building a reserve is not the purpose of the garbage fund and that he could not support the proposed rate increase. Mathew Bailey, Public Works Director, added that it is challenging preparing a two-year budget without knowing future Waste Management rate changes. After five years of operating at a deficit, this

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adjustment would put the city back on track, with any future rate increases expected to be modest and aligned with WM and CPI contract adjustments. Bailey noted the current Waste Management contract runs for two years.

f. 2026 Water Rates — Discussion — Mathew Bailey — Public Works Director

Mathew Bailey, Public Works Director, informed the committee that a 3% minimum rate increase for water and sewer utilities has already been codified for 2026. This adjustment is included in the upcoming budget and will go before the City Council as part of the regular budget process. No action was required, as this item was presented for information only.

MOTION: Committee Member Weis made a motion to recommend to the council an increase to both water and sewer rates for 2026 to 3%; seconded by Committee Member Cook.

MOTION CARRIED: 3 yes 0 no.

g. 2026 Sewer Rate — Discussion — Mathew Bailey — Public Works Director

4. Other Committee Comments

5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 a.m.


Ken Ratliff, Chair


Debbie Lee, Clerk