

**CLE ELUM CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES
NOVEMBER 25, 2025
6:00 PM
119 W FIRST STREET
CLE ELUM, WA 98922**

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

Council Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

Matthew Lundh - Mayor
Rob Omans - City Administrator
Debbie Lee - Clerk
Colleda Monick - Planner
Mathew Bailey - Public Works Director
Rich Albo - Police Chief
Jakob Michael - HLA
Robin Newcomb - Finance Director via zoom

- a. November 25, 2025 Sign In Sheet

2. Public Comment – Limited to 5 Minutes per Speaker

Jered Sluman outlined the progress and vision for establishing a Martial Arts studio in Cle Elum and expressed interest in offering training to community members. He also asked the Council to consider allowing gyms within the downtown district.

3. Announcements, Appointments, Awards, and Recognition

- a. 2025 Paul P. Pangrazi Award — Bev Gonyea

Mayor Lundh presented the 2025 Paul Pangrazi Award to Bev Gonyea, noting that she is highly deserving of the honor and recognizing her as an incredibly positive presence in the community.

- b. Small Business Saturday Proclamation — Mayor Lundh

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Mayor Lundh read the proclamation declaring Small Business Saturday and presented it to the Downtown Association representatives, Jordan Peterson and Kaylee Thompson.

4. Approval of Meeting Agenda

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

MOTION CARRIED: 7 yes 0 no.

5. Consent Agenda

MOTION: Councilmember Cook made a motion to approve the minutes with a small edit to the special meeting minutes on page 5, item 10, regarding the discussion of proposed/presented garbage rates; seconded by Councilmember Williams.

MOTION CARRIED: 7 yes 0 no.

- a. Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes — November 10, 2025
- b. Council Meeting Minutes — November 10, 2025
- c. Special Meeting Minutes — November 14, 2025
- d. Payables — November 10, 2025 — \$815,431.13
- e. Office of the Washington State Auditor — Accountability Audit Engagement Letter

6. Department Head Reports

- a. Rob Omans — City Administrator

See attached report.

October Budget Position Report

- b. Colleda Monick — Planner

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See attached report.

c. [Mathew Bailey — Public Works Director](#)

See attached report.

d. [Rich Albo — Police Chief](#)

See attached report.

Discussion was held regarding the Flock cameras and existing protocols, noting that initial guidelines were established when the cameras were installed and that additional protocols will be developed as needed.

7. Public Appearances – 15-Minute Limit per Speaker

a. [Jordan Peterson — Downtown Association](#)

See attached report.

Data from Placer Labs was reviewed, noting that the cell phone tracking metrics are set for various areas in town and can be adjusted as needed.

Councilmember Williams mentioned that there were still some ladders at Flag Pole Park.

It was also reported that Plaid Friday is being promoted to encourage a small-town downtown atmosphere leading up to Small Business Saturday, and a coupon book is available for the event.

b. [Visitor Center Updates — Jordan Peterson](#)

See attached report.

8. Business Requiring Public Hearings

a. [2026 Final Budget — Robin Newcomb — Finance Director](#)

Mayor Lundh read the public hearing script and explained the public hearing process.

Robin Newcomb, Finance Director, presented her report, which is attached.

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Councilmember Harper clarified that the removal of an additional police officer reflected the elimination of a projected addition to the budget, not a reduction to the existing force.

The public hearing opened at 7:00 p.m. and closed at 7:01 p.m.

- b. City of Cle Elum Council Assuming the Transportation Benefit District — Colleda Monick — Planner

Colleda Monick, Planner, provided an overview as detailed in the attached report.

The public hearing opened at 7:04 p.m. and closed at 7:05 p.m. with no public comments.

- c. Emergency Moratorium on the Sale and Distribution of Kratom Within the City of Cle Elum — Curtis Chambers — City Attorney

Curtis Chambers, City Attorney, provided an overview regarding the topic of kratom. On October 14, 2025, in accordance with Ordinance 1707 concerning public health and safety for the sale of kratom, the city held a public hearing. Materials related to the effects of kratom were presented (see attached report).

The public hearing opened at 7:08 p.m. and closed at 7:14 p.m.

Councilmember Cook shared additional research, noting that the World Health Organization recognizes health implications associated with kratom. While morphine and cocaine are also plant-based, kratom is banned in Australia and parts of Southeast Asia. Councilmember Cook expressed personal support for a moratorium on its sale until regulations are developed.

Councilmember Buechle-Curtis emphasized community concerns, highlighting the harmful effects of substances and asserting that public health and safety should take precedence over financial considerations, noting that kratom is currently unregulated in Washington, including age restrictions.

Councilmember Harper underscored the health and safety implications, referencing experiences with cannabis to illustrate that financial gains should not outweigh public safety.

Discussion followed regarding potential state restrictions, noting that municipalities may be more restrictive without preempting state authority. Preference was expressed to address the issue during the February legislative session. However, concern was raised that a delay could leave the city without protections, making it more comfortable to adopt an ordinance immediately. An additional ordinance could later be created to address any conflicts or appeals.

MOTION: Councilmember Harper made a motion to authorize the Mayor to draft an Ordinance banning the sale of Kratom within the city limits; seconded by Councilmember Williams.

MOTION : 4 yes 3 no. (Councilmembers Buechle-Curtis, Malek, and Cook)

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POLL VOTE:

Buechle-Curtis - no
Ratliff - yes
Williams - yes
Harper - yes
Cook - no
Weis - yes
Malek - no

9. Unfinished Business

10. New Business

- a. Ordinance 1711 — 2026 Final Budget — Robin Newcomb — Finance Director

MOTION: Councilmember Harper made a motion to approve Ordinance 1711–2026 Final Budget; seconded by Councilmember Cook.

MOTION CARRIED: 7 yes 0 no.

- b. Ordinance 1715 — 2025 Budget Amendment #3 — Robin Newcomb — Finance Director

Robin Newcomb, Finance Director, provided an update, with details included in the attached staff report.

MOTION: Councilmember Harper made a motion to approve Ordinance 1715–2025 Budget Amendment #3; seconded by Councilmember Cook.

MOTION CARRIED: 7 yes 0 no.

- c. Ordinance 1716 — Cle Elum Transportation Benefit District Assumption — Colleda Monick — Planner

MOTION: Councilmember Harper made a motion to approve Ordinance 1716 - Cle Elum Transportation Benefit District Assumption; seconded by Councilmember Cook.

MOTION CARRIED: 7 yes 0 no.

- d. Cle Elum Alleyway CIPP and Sewer Main Improvement — Bid Summary and Recommendation of Award — Jakob Michael — HLA

Jakob Michael from HLA reported that Clear in Place Pipe (CIPP) a trench-less technology, can be used to repair the sewer pipe without excavation. He recommended awarding the project to P&A Civil, the apparent low bidder, at the beginning of next year. The contractor is currently engaged in another project, and material costs were also noted as considerations.

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MOTION: Councilmember Harper made a motion to award the Cle Elum Alleyway CIPP & Sewer Main Improvement Project to P& A Civil; seconded by Councilmember Williams.

MOTION CARRIED: 7 yes 0 no.

- e. N. Montgomery Avenue Watermain Improvements — Bid Summary and Recommendation of Award — Jakob Michael — HLA

The project involves replacing 240 feet of pipeline on Montgomery Avenue, addressing a city maintenance issue. It was recommended to award the project to Flo Line, the low bidder, after checking references due to the significant difference in bid amounts. The contractor received high recommendations from other areas for completing projects on time and delivering quality work.

MOTION: Councilmember Harper made a motion to award the N. Montgomery Avenue Water Main Improvements project to Flo Line; seconded by Councilmember Cook.

MOTION CARRIED: 7 yes 0 no.

- f. Second Street Pathway — Transportation Improvement Board — Supplement for Extending Expiration Date — Jakob Michael — HLA

Jakob Michael with HLA recommended extending the expiration date for the project due to pending litigation, noting that an extension through 2025 is not feasible. He proposed extending it to the end of 2026 to allow for the completion of construction services.

MOTION: Councilmember Harper made a motion to approve the extension of the expiration date for Second Street Pathway; seconded by Councilmember Cook.

MOTION CARRIED: 7 yes 0 no.

- g. Upper Kittitas County Basketball Club Mountain Madness — 2025 Lodging Tax Application — Steven Cook — Councilmember

MOTION: Councilmember Cook made a motion to approve the Upper Kittitas County Basketball Club Mountain Madness - 2025 Lodging Tax Application; seconded by Councilmember Ratliff.

MOTION CARRIED: 7 yes 0 no.

Councilmember Ratliff acknowledged and expressed appreciation for the 70-plus team's participation in the tournament.

- h. Christmas Lights — Public Works Building — Cle Elum Downtown Association — 2025 Lodging Tax Application — Steven Cook — Councilmember

The funding for the lights comes from the lodging tax. The actual bill ended up being slightly higher than the additionally awarded supplement. This was due to the lighting of the Public Works Building.

MOTION: Councilmember Harper made a motion to approve the additional amount

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for the Holiday Lighting due to lighting of the Public Works Building; seconded by Councilmember Cook.

MOTION CARRIED: 7 yes 0 no

11. Report of Committees

a. Public Works & Community Development

No update.

b. Public Safety & Health

The committee is beginning to review Title 8, focusing on health and safety, false alarms, television and radio antennas, and junkyards as priorities. Additionally, the topic of e-bikes is under consideration, with ongoing research into how other communities are addressing related issues.

c. Lodging Tax & Events

The Consolidated Lodging Tax committee met last week and distributed awards, in a process that was more collaborative than in previous years. It served as a good reminder to pay careful attention to the paperwork involved. Each year, the Chamber hosts a workshop to highlight any changes to the lodging tax and explains the scored application process.

d. General Government

The December 25, 2025, meeting was canceled.

e. Coal Mines Trail

There will not be any meeting until January.

12. Councilmember Comments - Limited to 5 Minutes

COG met last Wednesday, though Steven Cook missed a portion of the meeting. Discussions included seeking information on the 2026 EMS budget.

Regarding the Economic Development Partnership, all but one community has not yet signed on, and the partnership will be hiring an executive director soon.

Councilmember Buechle-Curtis extended Thanksgiving greetings.

Councilmember Cook stated that the County certified the election results.

13. Mayor's Report

The Mayor provided updates on housing and index movement and attended the National League of

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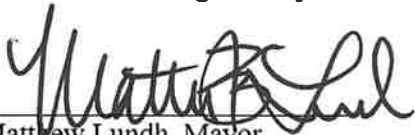
Cities Summit, with accommodations covered by AWC. The summit was a valuable opportunity to interact with other elected officials from across the country, engage in discussions, and build relationships to better understand different perspectives.

Additionally, elected officials are required to update their training every four years through the Elected Officials Essentials program.

City Action Days are scheduled for January 21 and 22 in Lacey, offering strong programming and opportunities to meet with legislators, with Councilmember Cook and Councilmember Buechle - Curtis already signed up to attend.

14. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.


Matthew Lundh, Mayor
Debbie Lee, Clerk