

CLE ELUM GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

NOVEMBER 26, 2025

8:30 AM

119 W FIRST STREET

CLE ELUM, WA 98922

1. Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance

Committee Member's Present:

Steven Harper

Jerred Weis via zoom

Audrey Malek via zoom

Staff Present:

Debbie Lee - Clerk

Rob Omans - City Administrator

2. Unfinished Business

a. Animal Incident Form

The Public Safety & Health Committee has taken over this matter and is currently reviewing it while we wait for their recommendations.

b. CEMC Title 6 Animals — (Update)

The Public Safety & Health Committee has taken over this matter and is currently reviewing it while we wait for their recommendations.

c. Mobile Vendor Fee — Discussion

Steven Harper proposed a fee of \$60.00 for originals and renewals. The committee agreed to table this item until the next meeting.

3. New Business

a. General Government Committee — Meeting Minutes — October 22, 2025

MOTION: Committee Member Malek made a motion to approve the General Government Committee Meeting minutes; seconded by Committee Member Weis.

MOTION CARRIED: 3 yes 0 no.

b. Planning Director Job Description

Steven Harper explained that the goal is to hire a Planning Director and asked whether there were any objections to the proposed job description or additional comments. There were

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questions about whether the city had previously attempted to hire for this role without success and asked if there had been any consideration of jointly filling the position with Ellensburg. Harper noted that while there may someday be opportunities to share a planner for collaborative projects, Cle Elum currently needs a planner dedicated solely to the city. He expressed his support for the position, which is already included in the budget.

Rob Omans, City Administrator, clarified that the council creates the position, but the administration is responsible for hiring. He noted that in the past, the planner position had remained open for years, and attempts to hire a planning technician produced minimal results. He suggested that aiming for a Planning Director may attract more qualified candidates. Omans also stated that if the position is filled, the city would no longer rely on HLA's planner services, though those services could still be used for support if needed.

MOTION: Committee member Weis made a motion to approve the job description and present it to the council for consideration; seconded by Committee Member Harper.

MOTION CARRIED: 3 yes 0 no.

c. Assistant City Administrator Job Description

This topic was previously discussed during the budget session. Rob Omans, City Administrator provided a brief overview, noting that Blue Fern is expected to build 60 new homes and that the anticipated increase in revenue has been included in the budget. He explained that he would be heavily occupied with inspections as well as his duties as City Administrator. Rob stated that having an assistant would allow for the redistribution of responsibilities, including shifting human resources tasks currently handled by Robin Newcomb, Finance Director. Omans emphasized the value of hiring a polished professional who can effectively communicate through social media and interact with the public, which would benefit the city and better serve its constituents. The hiring process will include a one-month advertising period, followed by three rounds of interviews.

MOTION: Committee Member Weis made a motion to approve the Assistant City Administrator job description and recommend it to the council for approval; seconded by Committee Member Malek.

MOTION CARRIED: 3 yes 0 no.

d. William LaRue's Employment Contract

Rob Omans, City Administrator, explained that the city will be hiring four employees to operate the water and sewer plants. Three of the positions will be union, while William LaRue will serve in a non-union role with an employment contract. Omans noted that William LaRue has consistently served the city well and has been a strong, reliable employee, adding that he has played an important role in preparing the plant to be turned back over to city operations.

MOTION: Committee Member Malek made a motion to approve the employment contract and recommend it to the council for consideration; seconded by Committee Member Weis.

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MOTION CARRIED: 3 yes 0 no.

e. [2026 Salary Ordinance](#)

Steven Harper addressed the codification of the budget that was passed the previous night. He noted that non-union employees did not receive the same pay increase as union employees; however, he believes they are still adequately compensated compared to other areas and does not view this outcome as unfair.

MOTION: Committee Member Harper made a motion to approve the 2026 Salary Ordinance and recommend it to the council for approval; seconded by Committee Member Weis.

MOTION CARRIED: 3 yes 0 no.

f. [Señor Bones New 5 - Year Lease](#)

Rob Omans, City Administrator, explained that the contract had been sent to legal for review, and the agreement was subsequently rewritten. One issue that arose was the drive-thru window, which is a nonconforming use. The revised language states that the window may remain as it currently operates for the duration of the contract, and the matter will be revisited when the contract expires.

The agreement is structured as a five-year contract with an annual rent increase of 5%. Harper asked where the 5% figure originated, and Malek clarified that this rate is very standard in commercial leases. She added that the current rent is actually low for this type of business, coming in at under \$1 per square foot—an exceptional rate compared to other areas, where rents average about \$14.45 per square foot per month. The committee agreed that the contract, as written, is acceptable. Beginning in 2026, the 5% annual increase will apply, with the rent adjusting accordingly.

MOTION: Committee Member Harper made a motion to approve and recommend the lease agreement to the council for recommendation with the rent starting at \$1,362.54 in January; seconded by Committee Member Weis.

MOTION CARRIED: 3 yes 0 no.

g. [City of Cle Elum Agreement with Upper Kittitas County Senior Center 2025](#)

The current contract expires at the end of 2025. The council has not provided any direction regarding potential changes to the agreement. The budgeted amount is being updated to \$12,000 for the 2026 fiscal year.

MOTION: Committee Member Weis made a motion to approve the Agreement with Upper Kittitas County Senior Center for 2026 by increasing the amount allocated to \$12,000.00 and presenting it to the council for recommendation; seconded by Committee Member Malek.

MOTION CARRIED: 3 yes 0 no.

h. [Pitney Bowes Leasing Agreement — Renewal](#)

Robin Newcomb, Finance Director, explained that the lease is renewed every five years

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unless another company is selected, and noted that the cost did not increase significantly. Pitney Bowes remains the standard provider for office postage equipment. Renting the machine for \$200 per month, plus the cost of postage, saves considerable time given the volume of mail the City processes, making it a beneficial and efficient tool.

MOTION: Committee Member Malek made a motion to approve the Pitney Bowes Leasing Agreement and recommend it to the council for consideration; seconded by Committee Member Weis.

MOTION CARRIED: 3 yes 0 no.

i. Ordinance 2025-027 — Interest Income to General Fund

Robin Newcomb, Finance Director, explained that the main change is to direct all interest earnings to the General Fund, which is allowed as long as a policy is in place. The attorney has made the necessary revisions to the new policy. She noted that the City is exploring creative ways to pay a judgment without raising taxes. All City funds must be kept in reasonable interest-bearing accounts, and currently the interest is allocated to all funds. The proposal is to have all interest deposited into the General Fund to support general fund activities. Newcomb added that adopting the formal ordinance format would clearly demonstrate the city's intent.

MOTION: Committee Member Harper made a motion to recommend allocating Interest Income to the General Fund to the council for consideration; seconded by Committee Member Weis.

MOTION CARRIED: 3 yes 0 no.

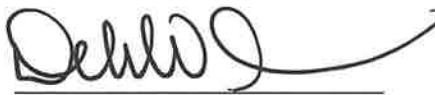
4. Other Committee Comments

There will not be a General Government Committee meeting in December. Committee member re-appointments may occur in 2026. Appreciation was expressed for everyone's busy schedules and for their attendance.

5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 a.m.


Steven Harper, Chair
2/5/26


Debbie Lee, Clerk