

**CLE ELUM PUBLIC SAFETY & HEALTH COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**

**JANUARY 16, 2026**

**1:00 PM**

**119 W FIRST STREET  
CLE ELUM, WA 98922**

**1. Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance**

**Committee Members Present:**

Cassidy Buechle-Curtis via zoom

Beth Williams

Steven Harper

**Staff Present:**

Debbie Lee - Clerk

Rich Albo - Police Chief

Ed Mills - Fire Chief

**2. Appoint New Chair for 2026**

Committee Member Williams nominated Committee Member Buechle-Curtis to continue serving as Chair.

**MOTION: Committee Member Harper made a motion to appoint Committee Member Buechle-Curtis as the chair; seconded by Committee Member Williams.**

**MOTION CARRIED: 3 yes 0 no.**

**a. Set Meeting Time and Day**

This will be discussed at the next meeting when the full committee is present.

**3. Unfinished Business**

**a. Municipal Code — Addressing (Fire/Police)**

The document is currently being reviewed by legal, and the committee is awaiting their proposed changes.

The notes in red on the document provided are the notes that legal will consider and review. During the discussion, Committee Member Harper inquired about how changes are made, noting that some decisions are made by the group while others must wait for legal's response.

Buechle-Curtis will follow up with legal regarding the anticipated timeline for their review and feedback.

**b. Cle Elum Municipal Code — Chapter 2.15 — Fire Department**

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The document is currently being reviewed by city legal, and the committee is awaiting their proposed changes.

c. Title 8 — Health & Safety

Committee Member Buechle-Curtis is reviewing the code to become familiar with it. Given the size of the code, priorities have been identified, including fireworks, junkyards, TV and radio antennas, and false alarms. The fireworks section appears to be in good shape overall, while other sections may need more attention.

Chief Albo shared information from the City of Ellensburg regarding false alarm calls (see attached report). After reviewing the current code language, Chief Albo agreed that updates should be prioritized, including clarification of the process and appeals process.

Chief Mills will develop criteria related to false alarms under Section 4.105 of the International Fire Code, which is the only applicable section currently used by the Fire Department. This information will be discussed during the upcoming study session. Chief Mills will email the criteria to the group and ensure it is included in the next meeting packet.

Chief Albo recommended reviewing the code line by line, beginning with winter fireworks as the highest priority and then moving through the remainder of the code from top to bottom.

Chief Albo noted that fireworks continue to be used regardless of restrictions and suggested that allowing fireworks during a specific date and time could potentially deter illegal use outside those parameters and slightly reduce overall usage. He expressed interest in hearing Chief Mills' perspective on fireworks. Chief Albo also emphasized that fees and penalties should be significant due to the inherent danger involved.

Public Works identified several items related to fireworks that they would like to review.

Committee Member Harper discussed New Year's Eve fireworks and suggested the possibility of creating specific guidelines for that date.

Key discussion points included penalties, and regulating sales. A study session is proposed for February to further discuss these topics.

Committee members will continue reviewing the code and provide their perspectives on priority areas. Buechle-Curtis will send out an email to schedule the study session.

Committee Member Williams joined the meeting in progress at 1:35 p.m.

The committee also discussed the importance of gauging council's overall sentiment on the matter.

d. E-Bike — Discussion

The next step for the committee is to move forward in a clear direction and work toward

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having a code in place. The focus would be more on where these devices are allowed to operate rather than on speed restrictions. For example, use would not be permitted on sidewalks or in areas with pedestrian traffic, with “rules of the road” applying where appropriate. There was also discussion about whether they would be allowed on trails, with a preference expressed for allowing trail use. It was noted that state restrictions on the John Wayne Trail need to be researched.

Committee Member Harper recommended gauging council’s sentiment on the overall direction they would like to take before proceeding, and then establishing a clear path forward based on that input.

The Police Department reported that they have not experienced any issues to date.

The topic will be brought to Council for discussion to gather their thoughts and guidance.

#### 4. New Business

##### a. Title 6 — Animals

Committee Member Harper introduced Title 6 (Animals) stating the previous Committee Members began reviewing the code line by line. During the discussion, the committee reached a point where it became clear that a different approach may be more effective. Rather than continuing incremental edits, the committee discussed reviewing another municipality’s code and potentially rewriting the entire section. A sample code from Sumner was presented. It was noted that there are also strong components within the City of Cle Elum’s existing code.

Harper encouraged the committee to review both codes to determine whether elements could be combined to create a revised version. Harper expressed support for using Sumner’s code as the base document, with light edits to tailor it to the City of Cle Elum. Harper also requested that Jackie VonDongen be involved in the process, noting her extensive experience in this field. Committee member Buechle-Curtis agreed that Sumner’s code provides greater clarity and a helpful level of detail.

Chief Mills joined the meeting in progress at 1:55 p.m.

The next step will be to work with Jackie VonDongen, Code Enforcement, to identify portions of the Cle Elum code that are specific, important, and should be incorporated. It was proposed that Jackie VonDongen attend the February meeting, with a narrative provided to her in advance.

Committee Members will review the code and return with their proposed edits. The revised draft will then be presented to legal for review, followed by presentation to council for consideration and potential adoption.

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b. Cle Elum Public Safety & Health — Meeting Minutes — December 17, 2025

**MOTION: Committee Member Harper made a motion to approve the Cle Elum Public Safety & Health Committee Meeting Minutes; seconded by Committee Member Williams.**

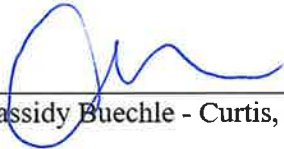
**MOTION CARRIED: 3 yes 0 no.**

5. Other Committee Comments

Committee Member Williams asked what type of response the city is receiving from fire volunteers, including how many individuals have volunteered for calls and who is actively responding.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:14 p.m.

  
Cassidy Buechle - Curtis, Chair

  
Debbie Lee, Clerk