

MINUTES OF THE CASHMERE CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY SEPTEMBER 25, 2023, AT CASHMERE CITY HALL – In-Person and Digital

OPENING

Mayor Jim Fletcher opened the regular City Council meeting at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall. Clerk-Treasurer Kay Jones took minutes.

The public can attend the council meeting in person, by phone, or by digital conference.

ATTENDANCE

Present

Not Present

Mayor: Jim Fletcher

Council: John Perry
Chris Carlson
Shela Pistoresi
Jayne Stephenson
Derrick Pratt

Staff: Kay Jones, Clerk-Treasurer
Steve Croci, Director of Operations

Chuck Zimmerman, City Attorney

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilors Carlson and Stephenson toured the Chelan County Regional Jail. The correction officers are having to deal with a lot of mental health issues. The facility is old, the plumbing is outdated, and one flush away from a disaster. A new facility is greatly needed with a separate wing for inmates with mental health issues.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jeff Johnson residing at 250 Kennedy Road addressed the council regarding Kennedy and Rank Road. The school only provides a bus service if you are more than a mile from the school. The school does not service the Kennedy and Rank Road area. These roads have no sidewalks and are very narrow, so they are unsafe for the kids to walk. With the two new developments in the area the housing and traffic have doubled. Mr. Johnson wanted to know what the city is planning for that area to address traffic and safety.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED by Councilor Carlson and seconded by Councilor Pratt to approve the agenda as submitted. Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes of September 11, 2023, Regular Council Meeting
Payroll and Claims Packet Dated September 25, 2023

Claims Direct Pay and Check #42971 through #42993 totaling \$50,564.90.

Manual Check # 42968 Through #42970 not needing prior approval

Set Public Hearing October 23rd at 6:00 on Revenue Sources and possible increase in property tax

Set Public Hearing November 13th at 6:00 on the 2024 Preliminary Budget

Set Public Hearing on November 27th at 6:00 on the 2024 Final Budget

MOVED by Councilor Pratt and seconded by Councilor Carlson to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. Motion carried.

MANUEL NAVARRO, CEO OF COLUMBIA VALLEY COMMUNITY HEALTH (CVCH)

Manuel Navarro CEO of Columbia Valley Community Health (CVCH) provided the Council with an overview of the organization and its services. He has worked for CVCH in various capacities for twelve years and was appointed the CEO last July. CVCH serves Chelan and Douglas County, their annual budget is 50 million. In 2022 they provided 48 million dollars in care. According to Navarro, approximately 1500 CVCH patients are from the Cashmere/mid-valley area.

APPROVAL OF 2024 WOODARD & CURRAN BUDGET FOR MANAGING WATER AND WASTEWATER UTILITIES

Mayor Fletcher informed the council that in looking at the history of the CPI index, in the last 2 years the CPI increase has not been below 4% and in 2022 it was 7% and 8% increases. Prior to the 2 years the CPI increases were below 3%. The city based the utility rates on the prior CPI increases, which were below 3%. The city has been falling behind for the last 2 years and will have to catch up.

Woodard & Curran Area Manager Chris McMahon went through the line items of the proposed budget for water and wastewater operations. He explained the increases and answered questions. With 15 months of operations information available the expenses associated with operating the system are becoming well defined.

- The area's CPI change for the previous 12 months is 5.4%, which was used to adjust labor, office supplies, miscellaneous operating costs, and utility costs.
- Chemical costs have increased dramatically during the past 12 months and are expected to continue to increase as demand remains high. Chlorine Gas, used for drinking water disinfection has increased 347% and polymer, used for wastewater solids thickening has increased 25%.
- Residuals management, which is hauling the biosolids to Waterville, the costs have increased 8.6% and are expected to increase by a similar amount in the coming year.
- Laboratory reagents and outside analysis costs have increased more than the CPI during the past 12 months. This was reflected in the end of the year's budget adjustment. Outside laboratory analysis costs have increased by 25% and the reagent prices have increased 15%.
- Additional sampling has been required to closely monitor the wastewater process due to inconsistent discharges into the facility. This has resulted in a 25% increase in treatment system sampling to ensure stable operations at the WWTP.

The total budget for 2024 is a 12% increase over the 2023 budget for operating the water and wastewater utilities.

MOVED by Councilor Carlson and seconded by Councilor Stephenson to approve the Woodard & Curran 2024 Budget for operating the water and wastewater utilities. Motion carried unanimously.

2024 AGREEMENT FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES

The city contracts with Chelan County to provide services to Cashmere to develop a comprehensive emergency management plan and program. The proposed 2024 agreement is the same as previous years with an annual amount of \$10,333.40 for services to develop Cashmere's Emergency Management Plan, which is 3.6% higher than 2023.

MOVED by Councilor Pratt and seconded by Councilor Carlson to approve the 2024 Agreement for Emergency Services with Chelan County. Motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 05-2023 DECLARING AN EMERGENCY REGARDING NINE OR MORE FIRE HYDRANTS

The management company Woodard & Curran is in the process of flushing and testing the city fire hydrants and in the process, it was determined that at least nine of the hydrants are not operational and should be immediately replaced. Proper performance of fire hydrants is an essential function and immediate action is needed for the protection of public health and safety for the citizens living in Cashmere and their property.

Declaring an emergency will waive the competitive bidding process and allow Woodard & Curran and staff to replace immediately the fire hydrants that are not operational.

MOVED by Councilor Pratt and seconded by Councilor Stephenson to approve Resolution No. 05-2023 declaring an emergency regarding nine or more fire hydrants and waiving competitive bidding. Motion carried unanimously.

BUDGET WORKSHOP TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE UTILITY RATE INCREASES

Mayor Fletcher spoke with the council regarding the utility rates and the need to increase rates to keep up with the high increases of the past couple of years in supplies and services for operating the water and wastewater utilities.

The council was provided a worksheet showing the next few years and the decline in the amount the utilities will be able to transfer to the capital funds. Annually both utilities transfer \$400,000 to the water and wastewater capital fund. Without these funds capital projects will have to be postponed or not able to be done at all. The city is also obligated to keep the debt to net income ratio above 1.7.

The city will be holding a public hearing regarding the budget for 2024 after which the council will make a decision on the rate increases to be drafted for the rate resolution that will take effect January 1, 2024.

PROGRESS REPORTS

The playground equipment for ages 2-4 will be ordered soon, pictures were provided to the council.

Councilor Stephenson mentioned that in Arizona they have parks with equipment for adults to use for exercising. She suggested the city consider an adult area in Riverside Park for equipment.

Director Croci reported that the pump track will be paved during the week of October 8th – October 5th.

Work on the SCADA improvements electrical has started and the light poles for the Sunset Highway project will be delivered at the end of November and the trees for the project should be here in October.

The paving projects for the Riverside Park trail and the alley are completed.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Fletcher adjourned the meeting at 7:18 p.m.


James Fletcher, Mayor

Attest:


Kay Jones, Clerk-Treasurer