

City of Tekoa
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
Monday – January 22, 2025, 6 P.M.
Tekoa City Hall

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Schulz called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M.
- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Mayor Schulz led in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- III. ROLL CALL:**

MAYOR SCHULZ: Present.

CM MARGIE JAEGER: Present.

CM PETE MARTIN: Present.

CM MIKE HALE: Absent due to illness. CM Ausmus moved to excuse Mike Hale's second absence due to illness. CM Martin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CM SHELLY AUSMUS: Present.

CM DAVE TYSZ: Present.

CM CHERI CURRIER: Present.

IV. INTERVIEW AND APPOINT NEW COUNCIL MEMBER/EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Mayor Schulz called for a 5-minute executive session at 6:04 P.M. to discuss the questions for the council member interviews. Mayor Schulz ended the executive session at 6:09 P.M. The interviews commenced in the following order:

Brad Chandler: Brad let the council know he has been in Tekoa for a long time and in Whitman County his whole life, and he wants to give back to the community. He has worked at many levels of government and is familiar with the processes therein. He worked on theoretical boards in the navy and has been part of several local clubs and has often worked as treasurer in such. Brad is currently on the Unfit Buildings Committee and is willing to commit the time to committee work. Brad explained that he speaks up about his opinions, and he also believes talking the issues out leads to viable solutions. Brad thinks Tekoa's biggest strength is in being small and having community loyalty which can be both Tekoa's biggest advantage and a disadvantage. He believes Tekoa really needs a stronger economic base, and he wants to figure out how to grow our business base by using different methods or using a better plan.

Reid Smith: Reid is from Florida, and the Air Force brought him to Spokane. He is retired from the Air Force and considers Tekoa and the northwest home. He and his wife are an active part of the community and want to help the community become even better. Reid has been through several leadership courses and volunteered with church, overseeing youth groups. He and Kathy participate in, and their family believes in, being involved in the community. He is very willing to volunteer on committees and was in firefighting volunteerism for 15 years. He and his wife want to help Tekoa grow in tourism, Empire Theatre, Slippery Gulch, etc. Reid feels comfortable expressing his opinion. He went through conflict resolution training in the Air Force. He sees the camaraderie of the community as Tekoa's biggest strength. He believes Tekoa can be a destination city. In terms of improvement, Reid thinks that making Tekoa a safe place, having activities all ages can be involved with, and giving people reason to stop here are all needed. Reid wants people to know he is invested in helping Tekoa grow.

Dan Thomas: Dan would like to serve on the council as he has lived in Tekoa his whole life, and he wants to see if he can help improve Tekoa. Dan has farmed and now works for Whitman County, so he brings this experience to Tekoa. He volunteered in years past and would be willing to serve on council committees or be a liaison to a community group. Dan would like to serve in different areas and become more well-rounded. He is interested in helping people. Dan explained that as he is getting older, he has more of an opinion and is willing to express that while listening to others. One of the strengths of Tekoa is that basic services are available. He would be up for building tourism. Dan would like to improve in being business friendly. He would like to revisit the building permitting process.

Mayor Schulz called an executive session to discuss candidate qualifications for 10 minutes at 6:29 P.M. The mayor called executive session at 6:39 P.M. and expressed his appreciation for the candidates. CM Ausmus explained Executive Session is private, and council members are not allowed to speak about what happens in executive session. She explained that the council goes into executive session to discuss qualifications of applicants and they do not take a straw vote while in session.

The council voted as follows:

CM Martin- Dan Thomas
CM Ausmus-Reid Smith
CM Tysz-Dan Thomas
CM Currier-Dan Thomas
CM Jaeger-Dan Thomas

Dan Thomas was sworn in as the new council member for Tekoa City Council Position 1 by the clerk-treasurer.

- V. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS:** CM Martin asked to add a 3-person budget committee to the agenda. This will be added at the end of “NEW BUSINESS.”
- VI. JANUARY 6, 2025, COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES:** CM Ausmus moved to approve January 6, 2025, minutes. CM Martin seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.
- VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS, PUBLIC HEARINGS AND CORRESPONDENCE:**
- A. PUBLIC COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE:** Nikki Hughes introduced herself as the new deputy clerk treasurer. She is enjoying the position, not having to commute, and her colleagues. The council welcomed her.
- B. COMMUNITY GROUP UPDATES:** Reid Smith reported that the Empire Theatre roof was supposed to be repaired Sunday. It appeared that there were previous repairs. Steven Thomas let the community know that the ambulance has been making a concerted effort to answer all the calls from Tekoa. EMT classes have started, and three people are taking those classes.
- VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**
- A. ETHICS POLICY:** Atty. Hanson is absent due to a death in the family.
- B. HARASSMENT POLICY:** Atty. Hanson is absent due to a death in the family.
- C. TINY HOMES:** Atty. Hanson is absent due to a death in the family. The mayor invited the council to come up with a base tiny home policy. CM Currier commented on the tiny home between here and Oakesdale and how well that is done. It was commented that the county has newly adopted Tiny Home guidelines, and the council is interested in going over them. There was discussion.

IX. NEW BUSINESS:

A. AIRLINE PILOTS' ASSOCIATION: Postponed.

B. ORDINANCE 902: 2025 BUDGET AMENDMENT: Clerk Evans-Teague explained this is to move the water and sewer utility taxes collected in Dec. 2024 to the Current Expense Fund. CM Tysz moved to accept Ordinance 902. CM Jaeger seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

C. PUBLIC WORKS-PROJECT LIST: Steven Thomas went over the projects that he is aware of and that need attention, primarily for water and sewer. He mentioned "bottlenecks" in town that need the services to be separated appropriately and some of which may need outside contractors. There was discussion. CM Tysz suggested we have Century West look at the line on Broadway that needs to be replaced to hopefully take advantage of infrastructure dollars that may be available. There was discussion re: alleys and potholes. CM Tysz asked about the beaver dam. Steve commented on his 3-month report. Steven would like to add random drug testing to the personnel policy manual. He would like the council to look over his suggested addition to the policy. There was discussion. It will be submitted to Atty. Hanson to review.

D. CITY HALL DUMPSTER: CM Tysz stated he has used the city dumpster quite a bit for 30 years. He would like to have it available for excess garbage for the community and stated there are those in the community who would like it to be opened again. There was discussion. The mayor explained his stance that access to the dumpster falls right under the gifting of public funds. The city pays for the dumpster to be emptied. There was discussion about options for dumping. CM Currier stated she doesn't want to see people abuse it. CM Ausmus suggested keeping only the extra-large dumpster once a year for community clean-up. CM Jaeger suggested opening it up on Tuesdays and closing it at the end of the day. There was discussion. CM Tysz moved to open the dumpster on Tuesdays. CM Jaeger seconded the motion. There was discussion about a trial basis. CMs Tysz, Jaeger, Martin, Thomas and Currier voted yes. CM Ausmus voted no. She would like to see if the April clean-up meets the need. The motion passed.

E. BUDGET COMMITTEE: CM Martin would like to see a budget committee formed to oversee the budget. He moved to establish a budget committee of three. CM Ausmus seconded the motion. CM Tysz suggested the financial officer should be on the committee. There was extended discussion. The motion passed unanimously. CM Tysz, Currier and Thomas volunteered.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS:

A. MAYOR'S REPORT: Mayor Schulz let the council know it costs about \$500 each time the streets are applied with mag chloride. The sink and shower at the sewer plant lab have been repaired. Steven and Jess have been working on their certifications for sewer and water, respectively. There were about two dozen people at the community meeting about the sewer plant project. Port of Whitman had a quarterly economic meeting, and he was able to talk with a representative with Patty Murray's office re: the sewer plant. He is going to Olympia tomorrow to meet with our legislators about financial help for the new sewer plant and public records laws. He will report back at the next meeting.

B. STAFF REPORT: Clerk/Treasurer Evans-Teague reported the city is still mid-stream in the audit. Corrections should conclude Feb. 6, 2025; then the SAO will issue their opinion on the audit. Stephen Thomas gave a three-month overview of the activities of the public works. There was discussion about cross-connection certification.

C. COUNCIL REPORTS & COMMENTS: CM Currier mentioned that on the corner of Water St. and Hwy. 27, the tansy needs to be addressed. The mayor will find out who owns it and see if it can be sprayed. CM Currier will volunteer to plant trees there, if the owner is amenable. There was discussion. CM Martin has talked with the Port of Whitman re: the golf course, but the golf course board wants to replace the building, and the POW wants to work with the current building. CM Martin will report on this at the next meeting. CM Ausmus reported the Park and Rec. Dept. is having their community meeting on January 28 at 6 P.M. She also mentioned clean-up week in the spring. She will find out the dates for the next meeting.

XI. APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS AND CLAIMS: CM Ausmus moved to accept EFT payroll and vouchers #17600-17614 in the amount of \$51,567.96 and EFT payroll and vouchers #17615-17666 in the amount of \$59,402.49. CM Martin seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

XII. CONTINUED PUBLIC COMMENTS: Brad Chandler reported that Northeastern Whitman Co. is non-inclusionary in the county plan for tiny homes, so none of their guidelines apply to us. There was discussion. He reminded the council that they had passed having one tiny home per lot several months ago. He commented on the city adopting a drug testing policy.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Mayor Schulz called Executive Session at 8:27 P.M. for 10 minutes to discuss a pending legal matter. The mayor ended the Executive Session at 8:38 P.M. CM Tysz moved to pay settlement costs to Eric Hood for the public records suit. CM Ausmus seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT: CM Ausmus moved to adjourn the meeting. CM Jaeger seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mayor Schulz adjourned the meeting at 8:42 P.M.

APPROVED:

Roy Schulz - Mayor

ATTEST:

Eliza M. Evans-Teague- Clerk/Treasurer