

Officials in Attendance: Mayor Greg McCunn; Councilwomen Tracy Ling and Jolene McGee; Councilmen Aaron Alvarado, Bruce Nupp, Evan Schalock and John Kabosky

Staff Present: City Administrator Jim Caruso, City Attorney Mike Waters, Clerk/Treasurer Jordan Roberts, Deputy Clerk Catherine Konzal

Officials Absent: Councilman Norvell

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM

A motion by Councilman Nupp to excuse the absence of Councilman Norvell, seconded by Councilwoman Ling. Roll call vote taken with all in favor. Motion carried.

Audience Comments:

- *Peggy Flyckt, Chewelah Resident* – Has nothing against Sunshine but would like to keep the garbage service with the City. The City people are always so kind and helpful. When we need someone to come, they come when they say they will and have fulfilled all appointments with us.
- *Jerad Arnold, Chewelah Resident* – Selling the garbage service to Sunshine would leave the City residents having to tighten their belts. All of the expenses for the garbage service; executive and clerk wages and benefits, shop, rent, office, operations, etc., would have to be picked up by the remaining utilities and would likely result in additional higher rates to the utility customers.
- *Cara Nupp, Chewelah Resident* – We have property in Suncrest that Sunshine services. When they missed a pickup, they would not come back but would offer a credit. That didn't help with the garbage issue. The City garbage service will come back, we may get a fee and it might be a day or two, but they come back. I think we need to keep it local.
- *Fire Chief Watts* – Updated the Council on the grants received recently; Gary Sinise foundation gave us a little over \$5822 to purchase a commercial extractor to clean the fire fighter gear.
- Deputy Clerk Konzal read 3 letters to the Council from residents that could not attend;
 - *Nate McNeil, Chewelah Resident* – I believe the control of our garbage service should stay with the City of Chewelah. I previously had garbage service with Sunshine, and I was not happy with that service. I know there will be rate increases with growing operational costs and I can accept those increases.
 - *Ginger Burkey, Chewelah Resident* – I urge you to keep the City garbage department. I have received excellent service and the City employees are exemplary. They are connected to our community, and it is shown in their work ethic.
 - *Gaylea Nolander, Chewelah Resident* – The reason we have a garbage department today is because of the City of Chewelah citizens, coming together for the common good of the community. Because the Council at that time was so financially responsible, as I am sure you are too, the City was able to build their own sanitation/garbage department from the ground up. The Council was adamant about staying on a program that provided funds for updating the equipment in all departments that provided essential services for our citizens. The Council made funding essential services their top priority. Our City employees are connected to our community and serve our citizens well. The decision to sell definitely needs more time, more study, and more citizen input. I respectfully ask that you retain our City of Chewelah Sanitation/Garbage Department.

Approval of/Changes to Proposed Agenda:

- *Motion by Councilwoman McGee to Make a Permanent Change to the Agenda by Adding City Department Reports to the Agenda, seconded by Councilwoman Ling. Roll call vote taken with all in favor. Motion carried. Roll call vote taken with all in favor. Motion carried.*
- *Motion by Councilwoman Ling to Approve the Agenda, seconded by Councilman Alvarado. Roll call vote taken with all in favor. Motion carried.*

Announcements/Appointments:

- City Administrator Jim Caruso - The City would like to welcome Andy Harbolt as our new Code Enforcement Officer. He previously worked for Stevens County as a Deputy, Detective, Sergeant, Captain then Under Sheriff.
- Mayor McCunn
 - Each year the Administration shuffles Committee assignments. I plan to do that at our next Council meeting.
 - There is a perception that this Administration has a desire to get out of the garbage business. I want to correct that for the record, that is 100% untrue. I do want to state my intention and explain how we wound up here; Each year we go through our budget review process and each department head comes forward seeking to achieve a balanced budget and talk about the dynamics and the challenges they face in doing that. Being a rural town in the United States today, is not easy. One of the reasons it's not easy is, there is an immense amount of legislation coming at our country and it has to do with green energy. It has to do with emission controls and things of this nature, much of which is designated at a Federal level and built around large cities but applied to Chewelah. These changing dynamics are incredibly challenging. We need to understand the businesses we're in and for today and for future decision makers, we need to assess each of these businesses. The Administration's job is to provide the information. It's the Council's job to make these types of decisions.

Presentations:

- *Clerk Treasurer Jordan Roberts* – Presented information on a sustainable garbage service, with numbers, along with the pros and cons of staying in the garbage business vs getting out. Either way, the rates will be going up.
- *Public Works Director Mike Frizzell* – Over the years, there have been multiple times Sunshine has suggested that they could take over the garbage service. In the past it was easy to say that we could offer a better service at a lower price. In the past year the repairs on our equipment has put us in a position that we can't say that. We actually were at the point that I had to call Sunshine to ask if they could pick up our garbage the following week if we couldn't get the truck running. Luckily, we were able to get it operational. This fall we will need to work with the Administration to figure out a more reliable way to increase rates on a steady basis. Right now, with garbage, we are stuck with whatever the costs are. The cost of trucks and the fluctuating price of fuel, we have to control over. What we have done in the past is worked off of the previous year's budgets.
- *Sunshine Regional Manager Steve Wulf and General Manager Paul Dionne*– Presented the services that Sunshine would offer. If the City decides not to sell the garbage, Sunshine will still help when needed. We're local, we are not a huge corporate operation. Sunshine Disposal & Recycling is a family-owned business of 4 generations.

When we collect inside the small municipalities, we make sure the garbage driver himself stops at City Hall when he is done to make sure there hasn't been any calls coming in while he's been on route.

We have drivers that live in the Chewelah city limits, they are invested in this community. We get very good ratings from the communities we serve.

Mayor's Report (including):

- Behavioral Epidemic going on in our state and the Country that sincerely needs addressed. The State Legislature, working financially through the Department of Commerce in partnership with DSHS and the Healthcare Authority, has created a model to create transitional homes for behavioral health patients from Eastern and Western hospitals. It's called an Intensive Behavioral Health Treatment Facility. There is definitely a need. The way it is designed, however, is that larger cities with significant healthcare resources are better equipped to shoulder that burden.
- There will be a Town Hall held next week on 2/21 at the Civic Center at 6:00 pm regarding the Moratorium Ordinance that the Council passed last meeting. The intent of the Town Hall is to answer questions.
- Winterfest was a tremendous success. We are working on areas to improve and have Sharon and others from Chataqua to learn from. I want to thank everyone; 49 Degrees North, Melody Riders, the Council's and the audience as well.

City Administrator's Report :

- Citywide Surplus Auction will be held April 8th, at the Public Works shop . We will be selling some vehicles and other assorted items.

Committee/Commission Reports:

- *Councilman Kabosky, Parks/Rec/Cemetery* – We were awarded a \$100,000 grant that Larry Fetter helped apply for, for the Parks, Facilities and Trails. There will be a meeting every Thursday with the Mayor's task force, which is about 16 people from different business groups and organizations in the area, including Larry Fetter who has many years of experience in this, to get a comprehensive plan together.
- *Chairman Schalock, Economic Development* – There has been a recent change with the Economic Vitality Pillar, the individual that was on it stepped down. I took over the pillar and this will be the main focus of the EDC.
- *Councilwoman McGee, Economic Development* – I am on the Tourism and Promotion Pillar, we've had a meeting every month led by Mike Bentz. We have got 49 Degrees North, the Chamber, the EDC, the County all involved.
- *Councilwoman McGee, Code Enforcement* – We have been working on the language for allowing beekeeping within City limits. In order to change that Code we need to have a Public Hearing.

Old Business: None

New Business:

- Deputy Clerk Konzal read Ordinance 977. *Motion by Councilwoman McGee to Approve Ordinance 977 Amending the 2023 Budget, seconded by Councilman Alvarado. Roll call vote taken with all in favor. Motion carried.*
- *A motion by Councilman Nupp to Reject Sunshine's Proposal for Trash Service, seconded by Councilwoman Ling. Discussion by Councilwoman McGee and Councilman Schalock regarding the need to absorb the new information and the comments from Citizens before*

they make a decision. Councilman Schalock said this is the most people he's seen at a Council meeting in a long time and that has to count for something. We were voted in by the citizens and I would really prefer not to make a decision tonight. Councilman Kabosky said he ran for office to represent the people of Chewelah. His job is to be a representative. Councilman Kabosky has talked to a lot of people in the community and didn't find a lot of support to sell to Sunshine.

City Attorney Waters explained the motion on the floor is to reject Sunshine's Proposal. A yes vote would be to reject the proposal. A no vote would be voting to maintain the current status as it is right now. Which is basically there is still an offer out there and it's on the table, and the Council hasn't decided on it yet.

Roll call vote taken with Councilwoman McGee voting against, Councilman Schalock abstaining, remaining votes in favor. Motion carried.

Adjournment:

At 8:03 pm, motion by Councilman Nupp to adjourn, seconded by Councilwoman Ling. Roll call vote taken with all in favor. Motion carried.

Mayor M. Gregory McCunn

Deputy Clerk Catherine Konzal