

REGIONAL NEWS

Cle Elum councilors approve measures for revitalization, garbage fees and affordable housing

by **Jim Fossett**
jim@nkctribune.com

CLE ELUM – Cle Elum City Councilors have voted to approve Ordinances 1572 and 1574, in addition to Resolution 2019-17.

Ordinance 1572

This ordinance is aimed to provide the kind of funding stability needed to ensure the downtown revitalization project is not delayed. Delays come when grants underwriting the project are awarded on a schedule that does not jive with the construction schedule. Umpqua Bank agreed to make \$7 million available, though the maximum a city can borrow is set by its debt capacity. Cle Elum's is at \$4.7 million. Officials opted for a \$7 million cap to accommodate changes in the city's debt capacity due to the growth the city will see in the near and distant future.

For dollars borrowed Umpqua is charging the city less than 3 percent on a scaled fee schedule over time. The city will repay Umpqua with grant dollars awarded. Before this ordinance was approved, city councilor **Steven Harper** assured that no loan would be requested until the city council

approves a request for a loan. City Treasurer **Robin Newcomb** spearheaded this project. "It started out as a conversation. After a good deal of research it proved to be a viable option, one that granting agencies like to see."

Ordinance 1574

This ordinance responds to Waste Management's recent raising of shipping fees, meaning trucking garbage from the Transfer Station to the landfill.

Said City Administrator **Rob Omans**, "Starting in 2020 we only need a 3 percent increase in fees, about \$1.50 per month for the average citizen, to cover the costs triggered by the increase. The city is not making any money on this."

Before the ordinance was approved, councilors discussed the fact that the Transfer Station is no longer recycling glass, and as a result businesses and residents have to pay for the weight of the glass they haul to the Transfer Station for disposal.

A spokesperson at the Kittitas County Solid Waste Department indicated that as of Oct. 1, Transfer Stations in Ellensburg and Cle Elum stopped recycling glass be-

cause, "there is no market for recycled glass. It costs less to manufacture with new glass than it does to manufacture with recycled glass."

Resolution 2019-017

This ordinance was approved to address the perennial issue of affordable housing in Cle Elum. The good news: It won't cost city taxpayers a dime.

Bottom line: The city sends revenues from Washington's 6.5 percent sales tax to the state, but with the approval of this resolution the state will take 0.0146 percent off the 6.5 percent – and send it back to the city for use in specific projects defined by the state as affordable housing projects.

What can the city do with the new affordable housing revenues?

The 2019 legislative session

produced SHB 1406 (codified as RCW 82.14.540) to provide a new affordable housing revenue stream for counties, cities and towns that choose to participate.

For cities under 100,000 population the funds may be used for (1) acquiring, rehabilitating, or constructing affordable housing, which may include new units within an existing structure or facilities providing supportive housing services under RCW 71.24.385 (behavioral health organizations), or (2) operations and maintenance costs of new units of affordable or supportive housing.

The funds may also be used to provide rental assistance to tenants that are at or

below 60 percent of the median income of the city using the funds.

In addition, any city may finance loans or grants to nonprofits or public housing authorities to carry out the purposes of the bill and may pledge the tax proceeds from SHB 1406 for repayment of bonds in accordance with debt limitations imposed by the state constitution or statute.

What's more, any participating city may enter into an interlocal agreement with other cities, counties, and/or housing authorities to pool and allocate the tax revenues received under SHB 1406 to fulfill the intent of the legislation.

SOURCE: Municipal Research and Services Center

County lodging tax grants recommended for approval in 2020

KITTITAS COUNTY – The county-wide consolidated lodging tax work group met Friday, Nov. 15, to review 2020 grant applications for special events and projects. Funding for the grants comes from a special sales tax collected on overnight lodging facilities throughout the county.

The tax is collected by Kittitas County and the cities of Roslyn, Cle Elum and Ellensburg. Each entity makes a portion of the funds it collects available for this annual grant process and appoints representatives to the work group that reviews the applications.

Funds made available by each jurisdiction this year totaled \$251,242. The work group recommended awards totaling \$251,239.

As part of the review process the work group heard from each applicant recommended for funding and then deliberated on the final awards.

Recommendations for final awards must now be approved by each participating jurisdiction's legislative body prior to becoming official.

The following applications were approved for funding for 2020.

Award recommendations

Gallery One Annual Marketing: \$13,320.

Cle Elum Downtown Association: \$15,000.

Washington State Horse Park 2020 Marketing Plan: \$12,000.

Laughing Horse Arts Foundation Jazz in the Valley: \$8,000.

Ellensburg Downtown Association Hoedown, Buskers and Dachshunds on Parade: \$2,800.

Western Art Association National Fine Art Show and Auction: \$4,942.

Junk-tiquen in the Burg: \$2,000.

RTown Community Roslyn Art Fest 2020: \$2,000.

Easton Memorial Day Celebration: \$1,392.

Kittitas County Search and Rescue 2020 Washington State Search & Rescue Conference: \$9,200.

Huffman Farms 2020 Pumpkin Festival: \$3,743.

Kittitas County Chamber of Commerce Tourism Master Plan for Kittitas: \$18,700.

Kittitas Environmental Education Network Yakima River Canyon Bird Fest: \$15,000.

Spirit of the West Cowboy Gathering: \$2,856.

Kittitas County Chamber Roslyn Mountain Ale Festival: \$800.

Kittitas Environmental Education Network Wind Fall Cider Fest and Bluegrass: \$13,750.

Cle Elum Roundup: \$8,000.

Hospice Friends Bower's Field Fly-in: \$14,000.

Kittitas County Historical Society Annual Advertising: \$8,500.

2020 ChillAxe Classic Car Show and RC Car Race: \$9,400.

Ellensburg Downtown Association Brewfest Comedy Kickoff: \$1,750.

Kittitas County Chamber Dachshunds German Fest: \$8,700.

Roslyn Downtown Association Marketing: \$10,000.

See **LODGING TAX...**, page A5