



COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Wednesday, September 06, 2023

APPROVED MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl
Council President Jessica Chilton
Councilor Mark Gundersen
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
Crystal King, Communications Officer

Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner
Matthew Kahl, Contracted City Attorney
Tina Curry, Contracted Event Coordinator

OTHERS

Steve Topaz	Brady Preheim
Ron Trommlitz	Jane Garcia
Paul Vogel	Aurora Biggers
Jen Massey	Rich Mason
Arthur Leskowich	Pete Schweitzer

CALL WORK SESSION TO ORDER – 2:00 pm

VISITOR COMMENTS - *Limited to three (3) minutes per speaker*

- ◆ Ron Trommlitz. Mr. Trommlitz requested the same courtesy that was given to Doug Morten at the last meeting to speak over the three-minute limit. He read a letter into the record about the 2MG Water Reservoir presentation on August 16 which noted the project delays resulted in a 50 percent increase in replacement cost. He spoke about how the Pittsburg Road Reservoir was not a failure but that the rehabilitation plan applied to it failed, setting in motion events not shared with the community. He was here to show concern for what the City does not want the public to know. He requested a copy of the Walker report which is not being released due to attorney-client privilege.

Mayor Scholl explained the Council gave Mr. Morten extra time to speak at the last meeting because he was talking about a matter of public safety, and he did not have a script. Mr. Trommlitz thanked Mayor Scholl for allowing him the extra time.

- ◆ Pete Schweitzer. Mr. Schweitzer will be starting a mobile staging business in the fall which will be ready to roll next spring. He would like to put in a bid to the Council for next year's stages for 13 Nights. They will be national act size stages and expandable beyond that. The City Recorder's Office has his information.
- ◆ Steve Topaz. Mr. Topaz noted three items before he wanted his time limit to begin: he just learned Diane Dillard was passing away, and the City should acknowledge her; the written document he submitted is not accurately reported in the minutes of the August 2 Council meeting and work

session; freedom of speech is three minutes, and if it is extended, freedom of speech has been given up. He spoke about how the Veneer plant at the Waterfront was now going to be mixed use, wanting to know what the real plans are for using the property, and that it is known the property is contaminated. He talked about what the mill closing in the near future will mean when it stops supplying hot water to the lagoon, possible reroutings and clean-up, and questions still needing to be addressed. He described the sale and legal problems of the grow facility. The City should think about not tearing down the leaking reservoir but turning it into a roller-skating rink or velodrome. A copy of his testimony was submitted for the record.

- ◆ Brady Preheim. Mr. Preheim asked the Council to reconsider interviewing for the vacant Councilor position via Zoom and added an in-person option should be offered. Main Street Alliance no longer has an executive director. He spoke about how he believed the partnership had been a complete failure and less transparent. The City should reconsider the relationship. The City needed to have more public comment regarding the Gateway arch before moving forward. The intersection had not been worked on for a while. The work was supposed to be completed by the end of summer. A lot of merchants were unhappy, and the unfinished work would pose a problem for Spirit of Halloweentown. Columbia River Fire & Rescue should not be funded by the City. They should borrow from the County.
- ◆ Tina Curry. Ms. Curry thanked Public Works for moving the tent at the last minute with the construction team. Up-to-date information about Spirit of Halloweentown events and parking will be posted soon on the City of St. Helens website. People can let her know if they have questions.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Length of Service Recognition - Lisa Scholl (20 years) & Nicole Woodruff (15 years)

Mayor Scholl recognized Lisa Scholl for her 20 years with the City where she currently was serving as Deputy City Recorder. He shared comments from her co-workers praising her and noted she is married to his cousin. He awarded Nicole Woodruff for her service of 15 years with the City, currently as Library Technician I. He shared her background with the City and Library Director Suzanne Bishop's praise of Nicole. The Council applauded Lisa and Nicole.

2. Columbia Economic Team (CET) Semi-Annual Report - *Executive Director Paul Vogel*

Executive Director Paul Vogel presented via PowerPoint CET's semi-annual report which highlighted an organizational update; Columbia County SBDC and its success; Keep it Local's new directory and mobile app; GRO Greater St. Helens; tourism; business recruitment, retention, and expansion including that which is St. Helens-centric; economic development and workforce initiatives and projects; and what is coming up including partnerships and collaborations.

Mr. Vogel noted with the Industrial Park and the Cascades closure, they worried about PGE not having the load. He acknowledged PGE might be the better option from which to buy the extra capacity for specific loads because PGE has robust transmission, an ambitious IRP for renewable portfolio development. PGE will need someplace to send the power because they have to develop it from a regulatory standpoint. They have the capability which is all the more reason to keep them focused in St. Helens.

Mayor Scholl stated it is known that the area has load issues. Mr. Vogel responded that Columbia River Fire & Rescue District has about 50 megawatts of headroom. If it is desired to get over 50 megawatts, it is necessary to work with BPA in a seven- to eight-year planning process. Once BPA says they cannot do it, then there is more license to go out to invest in a city's own utilities and work out other interconnection and power supply agreements.

Mr. Vogel thanked the Council for their support.

Mr. Vogel explained the Paid Leave Oregon law that went into effect very recently and that it will have an impact on employers and recruitment.

He distributed photocopies of the 1859 article on attractions in St. Helens.

3. Columbia River Fire & Rescue District Financial Assistance Proposal - *City Administrator John Walsh*

Mayor Scholl reported that the District withdrew their request for financial assistance. City Administrator Walsh added he had spent a lot of time helping to find alternative funding sources and clarified he did not know what solution they found.

Mayor Scholl explained the City's relationship with Akin Blitz, who was representing the District and clarified Mr. Blitz for the most part does not represent the City on a lot of its internal lawsuits and economic matters. Mr. Walsh said Mr. Blitz is used during labor negotiations for the police and AFSCME and sometimes advises on more complicated HR issues.

Mayor Scholl acknowledged there were no prior conversations about using the City's reserve to help the District. The City was as surprised as everyone else by the request. He explained why he had pointed the District in the direction of the County.

Council President Chilton said the idea of no fire/EMT response in the city had caused emotional stress. She hoped they could rebuild back to a healthier place. The County needed to step up, and the City needed to take initiative to get involved and help the Fire District get cleaned up.

Mayor Scholl stated he stays in his lane because the District has elected officials, but he understood Council President Chilton's points.

Mayor Scholl spoke about how people should get all the behind-the-scenes information about a matter before prosecuting a person in a public forum.

4. Economic Opportunities Analysis Update - *City Planner Jacob Graichen and Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho*

City Planner Graichen and Associate Planner Dimsho explained the Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA) state policy in advance of tonight's regular session agenda item about Resolution No. 1991 for authorization of a technical assistance grant with the State to update the EOA, a project in the Strategic Plan. The State requires the analysis be updated. The last EOA the City did was in 2008 which was adopted in 2009. Mr. Graichen clarified he believed the quality control for the analysis may have been done in haste and added better data is available now. The EOA helps the City consider how much industrial land is needed for things like changing the zoning from industrial to something else. Staff believed updating the EOA was necessary. The application was due October 1st. The ask was \$60,000, which will cover the cost of an EOA in its entirety.

5. Review Proposed Rates Increases for Waste Management Drop Box Services - *City Administrator John Walsh*

Mr. Walsh reviewed the proposed drop box service rate increase which was limited to a special CPI and capped at 1.5 percent. A cover letter from Waste Management with the enclosed 2023 rate schedule is included in the meeting packet.

6. Review New Job Descriptions - *City Administrator John Walsh*

Mr. Walsh withdrew the first job description of Building Permit Technician, as it had not been vetted. He will bring it back after vetting. The rest of the job descriptions were ready for approval at tonight's regular session: Librarian I and Water Quality Operators I, II, and III. The pay for the positions was changing which a resolution will address. The job descriptions had changed a bit, too. He described the process of

the updating and negotiations and noted not every contract requires negotiations. He clarified about half of the City's job descriptions were up to date. City Recorder Kathy Payne added that last year staff implemented the step of the employee reviewing their job description with their supervisor during their performance evaluation. If they suggest any changes, staff will bring them up.

7. Assignment of Voting Delegate and Alternate for LOC Business Meeting

The Council briefly discussed the League of Oregon Cities (LOC) meeting, and their consensus was for Councilor Gundersen to be the delegate and Councilor Sundeen to be the alternate delegate.

8. Report from City Administrator John Walsh

City Administrator Walsh presented his report and noted some items were already addressed on the agenda. Highlights were as follows:

- The Paid Oregon Leave law went into effect September 1, and the City needed to revise internal policies to accommodate how the leave rolls out. He clarified the leave can be taken stop/start and not all at once.
- The City must update its Workplace Wellness policy to be eligible for future CIS grants.
- The State Ethics Board had clarified door prizes at the Wellness Fair do not have a cap. In addition, raffle prizes donated by fellow members at conferences can be accepted at any dollar amount as long as Councilors or staff are not making a decision based on the donor of the prize.
- Approval for signatures tonight:
 - The contract with Howard S. Wright had been vetted by legal and was ready to go.
 - Financial analysts Tiberius Solutions will look at the Urban Renewal forecasting and at the impacts of Cascades leaving to both the Urban Renewal Agency and to the General Fund City budget.
 - An amendment to the Kittleson and Associates, Inc. contract for work that was incomplete on the intersection. The project did have the undergrounding of the power. The contract was drawn up four years ago. It was taken down to bid it. The contractor said it is not their job to design it, and they were right. Overall, the project was going ahead as scheduled with the work that is complete. Mayor Scholl said the step was to get the contractor to bid properly on the work. A temporary fix was being made to the intersection to last the 60 days it will take to get through design and approval, etc. Mr. Walsh confirmed the fix will then be ripped back out and the project finished. The project will stay within the budget.
- He has been invited to participate at the LOC conference on a panel to discuss Council compensation and if it removes barriers for people to be on the Council. He spoke about other cities and their compensation for public service.
- The police station project was moving along.
- The First and Street project is going well.
- The contractors originally said the tent could be perpendicular next to where the street extension is. At the last minute, electrical contractors were in there, and they needed to get into it. The suggestion was to move the tent into the park. It will be gone the first week of November.

ADJOURN – 3:40 pm

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- Real Property Transactions, under ORS 192.660(2)(e); and
- Consult with Counsel/Potential Litigation, under ORS 192.660(2)(h).

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Kathy Payne
Kathy Payne, City Recorder

/s/ Rick Scholl
Rick Scholl, Mayor