



COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Wednesday, March 02, 2022

APPROVED MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl
Council President Doug Morten
Councilor Patrick Birkle – 1:08 p.m.
Councilor Stephen R. Topaz
Councilor Jessica Chilton

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
Matt Brown, Finance Director
Brian Greenway, Police Chief

Joe Hogue, Police Lieutenant
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner
Crystal King, Communications Officer
Bill Monahan, City Attorney
Tina Curry, Event Coordinator

OTHERS

Claire Catt	Adam Olsen
Brady Preheim	Thomas Peck
Amy Bynum	Jeff Humphries
Brian Varrichione	Susana Hensley
Hailey Iverson	Jak Massey

CALL WORK SESSION TO ORDER – 1 p.m.

Mayor Scholl announced that Councilor Birkle will be a few minutes late and is excused the rest of the school year.

VISITOR COMMENTS - Limited to five (5) minutes per speaker

- ◆ Claire Catt, United Way of Columbia County. She thanked Council for supporting their grant application for the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program. More than 600 kids, ages zero to five, are signed up in the School District area. They are receiving monthly books from the Dollywood Foundation. United Way of Columbia County is responsible for signing kids up, outreach, enrollment, and fundraising. Today is National Read Across America Day and a perfect time to share the opportunity for more people to sign up.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. South Columbia County Chamber of Commerce Semi-Annual Report

Chamber Vice President Susana Hensley, Chamber Board Member Hailey Iverson, and new Member Relationship Manager Jak Massey was in attendance to review the report.

- Reviewed Board members. Encouraged a City representative to fill one of the vacant roles.
- Hired a part-time Member Relationship Manager and part-time Grant Writer
- Reviewed networking and sponsorship events
- Membership increased 12% in 2021
- Visitor Center Support Proposal

- 50% of the inquiries are local or tourism related
- It's important to have someone there but Jak is only in the office about 15 hours a week
- Requesting support from the City for a dedicated staff person to be able to stay open longer hours
 - Pay \$15/hour
- \$18,600 to fund the position for a year

Council President Morten thanked them for the report. In the past, the Visitor Center has changed its space. The building is one of the first things people see as they enter town. Do they have a proposal for upgrading the appearance of the building? Susana responded that the building was updated around 2015. The Chamber is supported by the members. They haven't discussed improvements with the Visitor Center. The Chamber members have been supporting the Visitor Center. Unfortunately, they don't have the funds to make those improvements. Jak added that they have cleaned up the parking area and added signage. They will continue to clean up the area. They recently made improvements to the lighting for security.

Councilor Chilton suggested they meet with staff to discuss the proposal. Staff can report back to Council.

Councilor Topaz asked if they are open on Saturday. Jak said not normally unless there is an event. Their hours are 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Councilor Topaz asked if they have been in contact with the Mainstreet Program. Susana responded that Mainstreet is an active Chamber member and they have attended events.

Councilor Birkle apologized for missing the first part. He agreed with Councilor Chilton's suggestion for them to meet with staff. It is something to begin planning and an opportunity to look at what tourism funds are available to support it. He supports the ongoing dialog and accessible presence on the highway.

Mayor Scholl is impressed with their work and getting back to normalcy. He suggests requesting the same from Columbia County. The City has been doing a lot with the Mainstreet Program. In 2016, the City contributed a lot to the Chamber. He asked if they received Covid Relief grant funds. Susana said they did look at them but didn't qualify for some of them. Jak confirmed they are meeting with the County next week. Mayor Scholl pointed out that it is the South County Chamber of Commerce. They should also be requesting the same from Scappoose. Hailey said the Chamber serves South County, but the Visitor Center is St. Helens focused. Jak pointed out that most people walking into the building don't realize there are other cities involved.

Consensus of Council for the Chamber to follow-up with Walsh. Councilor Chilton suggested they collaborate with tourism, since a lot of their calls are likely Halloweentown and 13 Nights on the River related.

2. Public Safety Facility Update - *Matt, Brian, & Mackenzie*

Finance Director Brown introduced Mackenzie consultants. They reviewed the presentation. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

- Currently reviewing the floor plan
- In production mode with staff
- Construction documents to be completed in December 2022
- Begin Land Use process in July 2022
- Site prep in summer 2022
- Begin construction in March 2023
- Project Completion in May 2024
- Reviewed proposed site plan
- Reviewed proposed floor plan
- Reviewed exterior

Mayor Scholl asked what the budget is for the rough grade permit. Adam responded that they are still working on that. They were originally trying to coordinate that with the Industrial project. It was about \$250,000 for the fill from another site. But now they are looking at using the fill brought to the site.

Councilor Topaz said the design is terrible. It started as a police station but now is anything but a police station. They are reducing police station space. They talked about an exit to Old Portland Road, but it is gone. They need to be able to exit quickly. It should only be police and court there. Mayor Scholl pointed that they can't identify what's in some of the areas because of police security. Councilor Chilton added that police personnel have attended every meeting to assure that their needs are being met. Councilor Topaz argued that for now it's fine but does not accommodate growth.

Brown explained that it's a Public Safety Facility. It will open a lot of space at City Hall. Having IT there is necessary for security purposes. Councilor Topaz disagrees. IT will be four times their current size in the future. This is good as built. He is looking down the road five years. The police don't have as much horsepower as the other parts of the City. They're the ones who will have their space taken away. People have not cared about the police, and they won't have civilian support to protect their space in the future. Councilor Chilton disagreed. They will have lots of civilian support. Council President Morten said that Councilor Topaz is always looking ahead to the future. They're not likely to outgrow the facility in five years, but possibly in 10-20 years. The new location can be expanded in the future. The current building cannot be expanded.

Brown said that Mackenzie was part of the Needs Assessment, which looked out 20 years and projected a need for a 19,000 sq. ft. building. They made revisions to project a 50-year building at 22,000 sq. ft. He talked about the additional space for future growth. This space was specifically chosen because of the expandability and flexibility of the space.

Councilor Birkle asked if there was ever direct access to Old Portland Road. Brown showed on a map an area they could have put it, but it would create a difficult turn with the apartment building there now. They have added a secondary access that also serves as a walking trail. They are hoping for grants to continue the trail to connect to downtown.

Councilor Birkle agrees that having IT services there is beneficial if it becomes an emergency command center. The design reflects a lot of thought and diligence. Mayor Scholl agreed with Councilor Birkle. Mackenzie has worked on other police and fire buildings. He requested they keep it a clean landscape as shown in the rendering.

Council President Morten talked about safety being a priority.

Councilor Topaz said they have overlooked the security of an arrested person. Right now, their facility has a garage but it's not in the proposal. He emphasized the need to get to Old Portland Road quickly. Chief Greenway said the intent is that officers are not dispatched from the station. They are dispatched from their vehicles in the field. They want them in the community. They don't want them in the station. Seconds do matter. That is a leadership, rather than design issue. Councilor Topaz agreed, but there will be a time they need to move quickly.

Councilor Chilton talked about the flex space. The multi-use space could save money and space in the police station. It made a lot of sense.

Mayor Scholl confirmed that there is still a secure room for people to get to safely and wait for an officer to show up. He likes the design and timeline.

Council thanked Mackenzie consultants for their presentation.

3. Police Department Semi-Annual Report - Chief Greenway & Lt. Hogue

Chief Greenway and Lieutenant Hogue reviewed a PowerPoint presentation. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

- Reviewed police personnel
- Received 17,131 calls for service in 2021
 - "Suspicious circumstances, person, or vehicle" is the most common type of call
- 591 adult offenders were arrested in 2021
 - Use of force was only used 3.7% of the time
 - The most common type of force was takedowns
- 2,131 traffic stops in 2021
 - 442 citations were issued
 - Most are only given a verbal warning. They may just be having a bad day.
 - Officers don't "police" every day, they "people" every day
- 522 reports were taken by detectives in 2021
 - The average for detectives is eight
 - 217 child abuse investigations
 - 38 search warrants were issued for child pornography
- 89% community approval rating
- 21 Exemplary Service Awards were presented in 2021
- Officer McKenzie McClure was the first female officer certified in DWI Detection and SFST Instruction
- 2022 Goals
 - Reduce crime and traffic accidents
 - Requesting an increase in staffing. Created a long-term plan yesterday to provide a high level of service.
 - Maintain 90% community approval rating
 - Continue public safety facility project

Councilor Topaz said he heard good things about hiring Officer McClure. He is glad to hear there is a priority for prevention over persecution. It makes for a better police force. He recently saw one officer carrying a nine-inch binder full of information for a report. Greenway said they will be transitioning to a new records management system to reduce workload and increase access to data. With the new facility, they will be exploring additional clerical support, so they don't have detectives creating trial binders.

Councilor Topaz said the Union mentioned three new officers. He suggests between five and seven. It's a lot cheaper for them to request than crime in the community. Greenway confirmed that thefts and burglaries have increased. It's likely due to the measure that decriminalized certain amounts of narcotics.

Councilor Chilton is curious about the solution. Walsh said they hear the needs for equipment, staffing, and a facility. They are trying to balance it with all the other City programs. Greenway said he can talk to Council individually. Nothing is for certain. The union is happy, and he is happy. It comes at a cost. They appreciate the support.

Mayor Scholl was glad to see the officers and their support for each other.

Greenway said that Hogue does the budget. He's heard every year that they don't have the money. Now the Council is listening and is more in tune with what is happening.

Councilor Birkle is glad to see the conversation about the need for additional officers being done publicly. It's important for the community to understand. He recently did a ride-along with Officer Coy. He told him about the 39-page report for a search warrant. He and all the other officers are doing good work. The Oregon State Senate passed and sent a Bill to the House for traffic enforcement changes. Greenway confirmed that 16 measures came out of the legislation session in 2021 that affected policing. Training

and implementing the law changes wears on their service ability. They have two officers in the National Guard, who they could potentially lose to what is happening Ukraine and Russia. That will impact their ability to provide services.

Discussion of the need to update the staffing study.

Mayor Scholl asked if there is federal funding for fraud and child pornography cases. Greenway said not for staffing, but they will provide training and equipment needed to prosecute those cases.

Mayor Scholl congratulated Corporal Dustin King for being awarded Employee of the Year. City Recorder Kathy Payne was the runner-up.

4. Review Loan Documents for Special Public Works Fund - *John*

Walsh reviewed the resolution on tonight's agenda. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting. It is for an interim loan for three years and three months. The interest is only 0.6%. It would give them the ability to complete the streets, utilities, and riverwalk project. The total amount could change.

There is an Intergovernmental Agreement in the packet between the City and Urban Renewal Area (URA) that addresses the commitment of funding between each other. Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho added that they meet with legal counsel next week to finalize the contract and verify it is following all the legal requirements. They will need to have an URA meeting the same day the Council authorizes the contract.

5. City Administrator Report - *John Walsh*

- No Executive Session today
- Council Goals will be reviewed at today's 5:30 p.m. Special Session
- There is a meeting tomorrow with Columbia County elected officials at the Community Center
- The Riverwalk RFQ is out right now
- There is a joint meeting with Planning Commission on March 16 to talk about the streets and utilities project, and surrounding property
- The Library Director position was reposted, and they have already received 13 applications. Is there another Councilor who would like to review the applications, along with himself and Councilor Topaz? Councilor Birkle agreed to review the applications but can't commit to the interview process.
- He serves on the LOC Board. Their next meeting is April 20, during the LOC Spring Conference. He requested to be excused from Council meetings that day. Council excused him.
- LOC is going through a strategic planning process right now. He's honored and privileged to participate in it.
- Work on the Industrial Park is moving forward. They are engaging with PGE on the substation power issues.
- Responsible Boating Committee
 - Meets next Tuesday
 - Kiosk is here and ready to be installed
 - Code amendments being reviewed now
 - Met with Sheriff Pixley yesterday and marine deputies to discuss enforcement
 - Discussing Harbor Master/Dock Master duties with St. Helens Marina staff
- Challenging year for the budget
 - Public Safety Facility
 - Police Department needs
 - Inflation of labor rates
- Working on the Capital Improvement Plans for utilities can Capital projects
 - Utility rates
 - System Development Charges

- There is a high need for City attorneys right now. Jordan Ramis is very busy, which affects the response time for document review. They have not completed the review of the tourism contract.
- Tourism audit has begun
- Staff is busy and stressed. Mayor Scholl acknowledged how busy they are and how proud he is of them.

Councilor Chilton asked about tourism revenue and how it is spent. Is it reviewed during the budget cycle? Council President Morten said yes. Mayor Scholl added that they may need to make decisions before the budget so Tina knows what she can spend on upcoming events. Discussion of tourism revenues. The revenues should cover Public Works, Police, and Administration event expenses. Events should be sustainable. Councilor Topaz asked about hotel taxes for long-term residents at the hotels. Walsh responded that taxes are only received for short-term stays. It has had a negative impact on revenue.

ADJOURN – 3:19 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Cancelled

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Kathy Payne

Kathy Payne, City Recorder

/s/ Rick Scholl

Rick Scholl, Mayor