



COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Wednesday, December 03, 2025

APPROVED MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Jennifer Massey
Council President Jessica Chilton
Councilor Mark Gundersen
Councilor Russell Hubbard
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
Matthew Smith, Police Chief
Douglas Treat, Police Lieutenant

OTHERS

Arthur Leskowich	Mark Griffin	Phyllis Rice
Mellisa Warner	Mercedes Massey	Paul Deshazer
Nick Flory	James Jackson	Tammy Maygra
Brady Preheim	Terry Massey	Jeff MacDonald
Levi Deshazer	Kalia Deshazer	Jill Johnson
Nick Hellmich	Keith DeSpain	Rob Hamilton
Adam St. Pierre		

CALL REGULAR SESSION TO ORDER – 7:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Massey began by providing a summary of the earlier work session discussion regarding the proposed side-by-side vehicle ordinance before opening the floor to visitor comments. She explained that the ordinance had been under development since February, had gone through multiple reviews with law enforcement including the interim police chief, Sheriff Pixley, Chief Smith, and Lieutenant Treat. The Council had identified several items needing revision including provisions for child car seats, clarifying Highway 30 crossing points, changing "daylight hours" to specific requirements about headlights, and reconsidering the minimum operator age from 18 to possibly 16 years old.

Mayor Massey indicated that City Administrator Walsh would work with legal counsel to incorporate these revisions, with the goal of presenting an updated draft ordinance for Council review by the second meeting in January 2026, followed by a separate meeting to establish fees.

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

- ◆ Nick Flory. Expressed support for the ordinance, noting it would benefit the local economy, tourism, and businesses, while also providing convenient transportation with smaller parking footprints.

- ◆ Nick Hellmich. Supported the ordinance but suggested keeping the age limit at 18 due to brain development concerns. He addressed several counterarguments including those about airbags, noting that motorcycles and bicycles don't have them either.
- ◆ Keith DeSpain. Identified himself as co-owner of Columbia River Motorsports and offered his business's support to ensure vehicles would be properly street-legal if the ordinance passed. He noted other cities in Columbia County were adopting similar measures.
- ◆ Jeff MacDonald. Voiced his support, noting that many safety requirements being considered are already standard for ATV operation in recreational areas.
- ◆ Phyllis Rice. Spoke about how ATVs provide mobility and freedom for disabled individuals who might otherwise be homebound, seeing the ordinance as potentially life-changing for such residents. She asked if they will need license plates. Mayor Massey responded that they will not for St. Helens.
- ◆ Jim Jackson. Thanked the Council for their progressive approach, suggesting the ordinance would help refresh St. Helens' image. He also proposed the eventual formation of a side-by-side club and the possibility of developing City property as an ORV site.
- ◆ Brady Preheim. Expressed opposition to the side-by-side ordinance, arguing that local governance of vehicle licenses results in confusing city-specific regulations and suggesting it should be handled at the state level. He advised that residents should petition their state lawmakers for a consistent statewide ordinance. He also critiqued the motivations behind the ordinance, mentioning a recent podcast that he believed was politically motivated, and called for transparency regarding related issues, including the "justice for Sarah Zuber" cause. He felt the motivation behind that campaign was not genuine and politically driven, and criticized the concealment of City-related reports, advocating for their full release.
- ◆ Rob Hamilton. Expressed a neutral position but recommended setting the minimum age at 18 rather than 16, citing incidents of reckless driving he had observed on Firlock Park Street and Gable Road.
- ◆ Adam St. Pierre. Initially joked about opposing the ordinance because he would feel compelled to buy one if it passed. He then shared observations from Moab, Utah, noting that side-by-sides are prevalent there and, according to a conversation he had with a local officer, are not involved in a disproportionate number of accidents. He also pointed out that some individuals involved in City matters have made unsubstantiated and baseless accusations for attention.
- ◆ Mellisa Warner, who owns both a motorcycle and a side-by-side, supported the ordinance, noting that side-by-sides have safety features like roll cages that motorcycles lack, and that they would be more visible due to their lights and accessories.

Chief Smith addressed the Council regarding the side-by-side ordinance, noting that the Police Department was working on language that would restrict Highway 30 driving while still allowing residents to cross at designated points to access businesses like Safeway.

Mayor Massey expressed appreciation to everyone for attending and speaking. Their time is valued.

APPROVE AND/OR AUTHORIZE FOR SIGNATURE

1. Agreement with Steve Anderson for Services to Perform a Technical Evaluation of the Local Limits and Update, if necessary, for the Wastewater Treatment Plant

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to approve '1' above.

Mayor Massey expressed concerns about the contract language, noting that while she felt comfortable approving this specific agreement because Anderson had previously worked for the City in 2004 and 2017, she would like future professional service agreements to include more detailed qualifications information, deliverable dates, contingency plans, guaranteed revision support, and conflict of interest disclosures. She indicated she would follow up with an email outlining these suggestions for improving future contracts.

Vote: Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

2. Amendment No. 1 of Agreement with Keller Williams Sunset Corridor Lower Columbia Group for Realtor Services (Extension of Agreement)

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Hubbard to approve '2' above.

Vote: Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

CONSENT AGENDA FOR ACCEPTANCE

3. Library Board Minutes dated October 13, 2025

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to accept '3' above.

Vote: Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

CONSENT AGENDA FOR APPROVAL

4. City Council Minutes dated November 5 and 14, 2025
5. Accounts Payable Bill Lists

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve '4' and '5' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

WORK SESSION ACTION ITEMS**Leak Adjustment at 196 S. River Street (Yacht's Landing)**

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Hubbard to approve the request for a leak adjustment at 196 S. River Street in the amount of \$3,873.83. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

Frequency of Joint Council/Boards and Commissions Meetings

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to schedule joint meetings with Council and boards and commissions twice per year beginning in 2026. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

Councilor Sundeen reported...

- Provided a brief history lesson about "Jackass Canyon." The name originated from Joe Watson, a hermit who lived on the bluff property currently for sale by the City from the 1930s through the 1960s. Watson raised donkeys and was known for riding them around town.
- Announced an upcoming vacancy on the Parks and Trails Commission.

Council President Chilton reported...

- Announced a bazaar at Avamere on December 13, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Councilor Hubbard reported...

- The police station site had been cleaned up and was ready for final paperwork and contracting with the general contractor.

Councilor Gundersen reported...

- Nothing to report.

MAYOR MASSEY REPORTS

- Thanked City staff, particularly City Recorder Payne and Deputy City Recorder Scholl, for preparing for Council meetings.
- Expressed appreciation for the public engagement on the side-by-side ordinance. This type of constructive community input was what she hoped to facilitate when running for office.
- Reaffirmed her commitment to maintain open dialogue with residents both in person and online.

PROACTIVE ITEMS**OTHER BUSINESS****ADJOURN – 7:40 p.m.**

Respectfully transcribed by ClerkMinutes and submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Kathy Payne

Kathy Payne, City Recorder

/s/ Jennifer Massey

Jennifer Massey, Mayor