



COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Wednesday, September 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
Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Crystal King, Communications Officer
Suzanne Bishop, Library Director
Ashley Wigod, Contracted City Attorney
Matthew Smith, Police Chief
Doug Treat, Acting Police Lieutenant

Jose Castilleja, Police Sergeant
Evin Eustice, Police Sergeant
Kolten Edwards, Police Detective
Dylan Gaston, Police Officer
Jamin Coy, Police Officer
Terry Massey, Police Officer
Luke Marshall, Police Officer
Payton Rue, Police Officer
Jennifer Stratton, Police Officer

OTHERS

Arthur	Judge Nickolas Brajcich
Chuck Leahy	Family and friends of Police Chief Smith
Susie Wilson	Craig Allen
Brady Preheim	Ron Houghtelling
Nick Hellmich	Jared Houghtelling

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SWEARING IN OF NEW POLICE CHIEF MATTHEW SMITH

Circuit Court Judge Nickolas Brajcich administered the oath of office to Chief Smith.

Mayor Massey thanked Chief Smith's family for their support and for sharing his time with the City. Photographs were taken with the Chief, his family, the judge, and Council members.

PROCLAMATION

1. National Library Card Sign-Up Month - September 2025

Mayor Massey read a proclamation declaring September 2025 as National Library Card Sign-Up Month, highlighting how libraries are foundational to education, imagination, and opportunity. The proclamation emphasized the St. Helens Public Library's role in providing equitable access to information, technology, and culture while supporting citizens in navigating life's challenges. Mayor Massey encouraged all residents to sign up for a library card and explore the endless possibilities it offers.

The Mayor also mentioned an upcoming Columbia County Genealogy Conference called "Many Lands, Many People" scheduled for September 20, which will feature nationally recognized presenters and will be available both in person and via Zoom.

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

- ◆ Brady Preheim. Commented on the Kelly Street property sale, stating he didn't oppose selling the property but objected to the process. He suggested the proper procedure would be to get the property appraised, sell it for cash, and then conduct an RFP if the City wanted to purchase dirt. He criticized the appearance of "dirt just showing up" without formal agreements. Preheim also commented on the Council compensation resolutions, suggesting the use of a citizen's advisory committee rather than having councilors vote on each other's compensation packages.
- ◆ Nick Hellmich. Spoke via Zoom, requesting the unredacted release of the Jim Band investigation to the public. He mentioned submitting public records requests for text messages between Council members, warned against deleting messages, and announced creating a community public freedom of information act fund. He also noted that blocking citizens from official mayoral social media accounts could violate First Amendment rights according to recent Supreme Court decisions.

DELIBERATIONS

2. Sale of City-Owned Property on Kelly Street described as:

- Tax Account No. 28848, Map No. 4N1W04-BB-03000, 9,583 Square Feet

Council President Chilton noted that previous discussions centered on ensuring the structural fill material received as compensation was both usable and of appropriate value. Contracted City Attorney Wigod explained that the City had conducted a public hearing earlier in the day where the property sale was discussed, including an appraisal showing the highest and best use would be selling to the adjacent property owner. The attorney clarified that the proposed compensation was structural fill material equivalent to or exceeding the appraised value.

Concerns had been raised about whether the structural fill material had been appropriately evaluated for both its value and environmental components. The Council expressed support for selling the property but wanted verification of the material's value and environmental compliance.

ORDINANCES – *Final Reading*

3. **Ordinance No. 3315:** An Ordinance Amending the St. Helens Municipal Code Chapter 13.30, Adding a Sunset Provision to the Public Safety Fee

Mayor Massey read Ordinance No. 3315 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to adopt Ordinance No. 3315. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

4. **Ordinance No. 3316:** An Ordinance Amending the St. Helens Municipal Code Chapter 13.32, Requiring Voter Approval Before the Establishment of New Fees on Utility Bills Unrelated to Utility Services

Mayor Massey read Ordinance No. 3316 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to adopt Ordinance No. 3316. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

ORDINANCES – First Reading

- 5. Ordinance No. 3314:** An Ordinance Revising Chapter 18.36, Environmental Protection, Erosion Prevention, and Sediment Control Rules, of the St. Helens Municipal Code to Meet the City's Requirement as a Designated Management Agency Under the DEQ's Willamette Basin Mercury Total Maximum Daily Load

Mayor Massey read Ordinance No. 3314 by title. The final reading will be held at the next meeting.

- 6. Ordinance No. 3317:** An Ordinance to Annex and Designate the Zone of Certain Property at 58506 Kavanagh Street (Avenue)

Mayor Massey read Ordinance No. 3317 by title. The final reading will be held at the next meeting.

RESOLUTIONS

- 7. Resolution No. 2051:** A Resolution of the City Council of St. Helens, Oregon Declaring City Owned Property on Kelly Street, Tax Map/Lot No. 4N1W04-BB-03000 as Surplus and Authorizing the Sale of the Property in Compliance with ORS 221.725

Mayor Massey read Resolution No. 2051 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Council President Chilton to adopt Resolution No. 2051 declaring the City-owned property on Kelly Street, Tax Map Lot Number 4N1W04-BB-03000 as surplus and authorizing the sale of the property in compliance with ORS 221.725, conditional on the City Administrator confirming that the fill dirt received as compensation meets the needs for structural fill and environmental regulations. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

- 8. Resolution No. 2053:** A Resolution of the City Council of St. Helens, Oregon, Authorizing Amendment No. 2 to the Purchase and Sale Agreement of Property at 1300 Kaster Road, Tax Account Nos. 13249 and 13215, and Authorizing and Directing the City Administrator to Take Appropriate Steps to Effectuate Closing of the Sale of Property

Mayor Massey read Resolution No. 2053 by title.

Contracted City Attorney Wigod raised concerns about clarifying water rights aspects of the property sale to Arcadia Paper. Amendment No. 2 would extend the closing deadline to September 30, 2025, but recommended confirming details about water rights before proceeding.

Craig Allen, Mill Manager for Arcadia Paper, addressed the Council to clarify that the purchase sale agreement included 20 million gallons per day of water rights, splitting the 40-million-gallon allotment previously held by Boise White Paper and PCA. Council members and Allen discussed whether these were licenses to use the water or actual ownership of water rights.

Allen expressed concern about delays affecting their ability to close the transaction, noting that expiration of agreements with other agencies was causing complications that could impact plans to reopen the mill and bring jobs back to St. Helens.

Council President Chilton assured Allen that the City wants to proceed with the closing and ensure appropriate water rights are included.

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve Resolution No. 2053, authorizing Amendment No. 2 to the Purchase and Sale Agreement of the property at 13000 Kaster Road, tax account numbers 12329 and 13215, as amended by the City Attorney, related to paragraph eight, closing, and authorizing and directing the City Administrator to take appropriate steps to effectuate closing of the sale of property, with the additional condition that the City Administrator

receive confirmation from legal counsel that the City's water rights that are not expressly licensed to the buyer remain under City ownership and use.

It was pointed out that the address and one of the tax account numbers were incorrect in the motion.

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

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve Resolution No. 2053, authorizing Amendment No. 2 to the Purchase and Sale Agreement of the property at 1300 Kaster Road, tax account numbers 12349 and 13215, as amended by the City Attorney, related to paragraph eight, closing, and authorizing and directing the City Administrator to take appropriate steps to effectuate closing of the sale of property, with the additional condition that the City Administrator receive confirmation from legal counsel that the City's water rights that are not expressly licensed to the buyer remain under City ownership and use.

Wigod requested a brief recess to consult with the buyers to ensure both sides are understanding what is being approved.

After a brief recess to discuss the matter with the buyer, the Council returned with a revised motion.

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

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve Resolution No. 2053 authorizing Amendment No. 2 to the Purchase and Sale agreement of the property at 1300 Kaster Road, tax account numbers 13249 and 13215 related to paragraph eight closing until September 30, 2025, and authorizing and directing the City Administrator to take appropriate steps to close the sale of property with the additional condition that the City Administrator receive confirmation from legal counsel about the City's water rights. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

9. Resolution No. 2054: A Resolution Establishing an Official Compensation Package for the Mayor for Food, Beverages, and other City-Related Items

Mayor Massey read Resolution No. 2054 by title.

Mayor Massey declared an actual conflict of interest and abstained from voting.

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Council President Chilton to adopt Resolution No. 2054. **Vote:** Yea: Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen; Abstaining: Mayor Massey

10. Resolution No. 2055: A Resolution Establishing an Official Compensation Package for the City Councilor Position Currently Held by Mark Gundersen, the City Councilor Position Currently Held by Brandon Sundeen, and Applying to Any City Councilors Subsequently Holding those Positions, for Food, Beverages, and Other City-Related Items

Mayor Massey read Resolution No. 2055 by title.

Councilor Sundeen and Councilor Gundersen declared an actual conflict of interest and abstained from voting.

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Hubbard to adopt Resolution No. 2055. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Hubbard; Abstaining: Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Sundeen

- 11. Resolution No. 2056:** A Resolution Establishing an Official Compensation Package for the City Councilor Position Currently Held by Jessica Chilton, the City Councilor Position Currently Held by Russell Hubbard, and Applying to Any City Councilors Subsequently Holding those Positions, for Food, Beverages, and Other City-Related Items

Mayor Massey read Resolution No. 2056 by title.

Council President Chilton and Councilor Hubbard declared an actual conflict of interest and abstained from voting.

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to adopt Resolution No. 2056. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Sundeen; Abstaining: Council President Chilton, Councilor Hubbard

- 12. Resolution No. 2057:** A Resolution Establishing an Official Compensation Package for City of St. Helens Employees, for Food, Beverages, and Other City-Related Items

Mayor Massey read Resolution No. 2057 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to adopt Resolution No. 2057. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

AWARD BID/CONTRACT

13. Award Bid and Authorize Mayor to Sign Contract with Jeffries Construction, LLC for 2025 Storm Cleaning & CCTV, Project No. SD-201, in the Amount of \$63,613.00

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve '13' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

APPROVE AND/OR AUTHORIZE FOR SIGNATURE

14. Agreement with Columbia County for Transfer of Jurisdiction for Portions of Gable Road, Columbia Boulevard, and Bachelor Flat Road

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve '14' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

15. Appoint Kelsey Knutson to the Library Board

Delayed until next meeting due to error in recommendation motion.

CONSENT AGENDA FOR ACCEPTANCE

16. Parks and Trails Commission Minutes dated July 14, 2025

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Council President Chilton to approve '16' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

CONSENT AGENDA FOR APPROVAL

17. City Council Minutes dated August 27, 2025
18. Amended Police Sergeant Job Description
19. Accounts Payable Bill Lists

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve '17' through '19' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

WORK SESSION ACTION ITEMS

Oregon Association Chiefs of Police Agency Review Program

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to direct the City Administrator and the Chief of Police to engage the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police to perform an Agency Review of the St. Helens Police Department and report back within one year about the outcome.

Clarification about the one-year timeline. The report would need to be received within a year of it being completed.

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

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

Councilor Sundeen reported...

- Nothing to report.

Council President Chilton reported...

- Reported on the 911 Board meeting where serious issues with the current radio system for first responders were noted, impacting communication and safety.
- Mentioned Spirit of Halloweentown preparations, including plans for celebrity guests, and updates to the gift shop and haunted house.
- Announced the upcoming Senior Health Fair on Tuesday at Columbia River Foursquare Church, scheduled from 10:00 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Expressed hope for a positive school year experience for local students.

Councilor Hubbard reported...

- Nothing to report.

Councilor Gundersen reported...

- Nothing to report.

MAYOR MASSEY REPORTS

- Expressed gratitude for City staff, highlighting City Recorder Payne's nomination for Recorder of the Year in Oregon. Unfortunately, she was not selected.
- Discussed the Levitt Grant being pursued by Main Street, which could add \$40,000 annually to the 13 Nights on the River event budget. Voting for the grant takes places September 5-15.
- The Library is hosting the Columbia County Genealogy Conference called "Many Lands, Many People" scheduled for September 20, featuring national presenters and available both in person and via Zoom. Preregistration is requested but not required, and participants can register online or directly at the library.

PROACTIVE ITEMS

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURN – 8:07 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