



## COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Wednesday, November 18, 2020

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### APPROVED MINUTES

#### MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl  
Council President Doug Morten – arrived at 1:08 p.m.  
Councilor Keith Locke  
Councilor Ginny Carlson  
Councilor Stephen R. Topaz

#### STAFF PRESENT

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Matt Brown, Assistant City Administrator                       | Mike De Roia, Building Official               |
| Kathy Payne, City Recorder                                     | Sharon Darroux, Engineering Project Manager I |
| Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder                              | Tina Curry, Event Coordinator                 |
| Mouhamad Zaher, Public Works Director                          | Bill Monahan, City Attorney                   |
| Sue Nelson, Public Works Engineering Director                  |   |
| Rachael Barry, Government Affairs & Project Support Specialist |   |

#### OTHERS

|                |               |                 |
|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Lynne Pettit   | Michael Curri | Tim Goodman     |
| Joan Youngberg | Sheri Acker   | Mike McGlothlin |
| Scott France   |               |                 |

#### CALL WORK SESSION TO ORDER – 1:03 P.M.

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

- ◆ Joan Youngberg, representing Connect St. Helens. She talked about Connect St. Helens and its focus to connect the community. They are working on a project to repurpose campaign signs encouraging connection, such as using their logo and the words, "We Belong." It has been tough to connect but they are doing what they can. She encouraged Council to place a sign in their lawn. She has signs if they want one. Connect St. Helens has a Facebook page and is developing a website.

Councilor Carlson talked about the group being formed about a year ago in response to the suicide rate increase. It has been hard to move forward with COVID-19. She thanked Joan and the team for their continued efforts.

Council President Morten arrived.

Mayor Scholl acknowledged that Connect St. Helens is about sharing stories. The signs will help bring exposure to the group. Joan added that knowing someone's story helps people connect and increase understanding. There is a lot to gain in sharing.

Joan reported that the "This is Us St. Helens" houses are now displayed in the St. Helens schools.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS****1. Employee Length of Service Award**

1:13 p.m.

One employee has reached a milestone in his employment with the City of St. Helens. The following individual will receive a certificate and pin.

Dustin King began working for the City in February of 2007 as a Patrol Officer. He resigned in 2010. He was rehired in November of 2015, and has worked his way up, serving as a Detective from April of 2018 to just recently when he was promoted to Corporal. This gives Dustin five (5) years of continuous service to the citizens of St. Helens.

Congratulations, Dustin, and thank you for your service!

**2. Discussion regarding Broadband - *Matt & Strategic Network Group***

1:15 p.m.

Assistant City Administrator Brown introduced Michael Curri from Strategic Networks Group.

Michael reviewed his presentation. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

- A local digital utility - owned and operated for community interests.
- Brings connectivity to unserved, underserved, and overcharged.
- Partners with decades of experience across all fields.
- Ensures access to essential digital services.
- It is more important now than ever. Action now avoids falling further behind.
- Creates and retains wealth in the community.
- Unique offer for community to own a revenue-generated asset.
- A special district would be created with board members. It cannot be sold to a private owner.
- Reviewed the estimated revenues.
- Reviewed the steps and timeline.
- Requesting agreement to proceed and begin outreach.

Councilor Topaz would prefer waiting for the new Council to come on board before moving forward.

Council President Morten pointed out that this has been discussed for several years. He would like to see setup costs.

Brown pointed out that the request is for Michael to receive the email addresses for Council and send them a Needs Ready Assessment to complete. It is just the process to begin seeking the Council's interest. It could also include Scappoose and Columbia City if they are interested.

Councilor Carlson talked about the rural locations of the County without services. It needs to include areas outside city limits. Brown pointed out that organizations representing the rural areas are aware. Councilor Carlson also wants to make sure the project cost will not increase suddenly. Brown agreed.

Columbia City Administrator Mike McGlothlin thanked Brown for including them. There is interest from Columbia City in participating. They do lack service in outlining areas. He heard Michael mention that it would start with a core area and then grow out later. What is the core? Michael explained that they want to connect people as soon as possible. They can grow this in the entire County. Multiple jurisdictions add complications. It is important to work together. Commitment and community engagement must happen.

Mike asked what the financial commitment is. Michael responded that it is less than 15%. Communities need to have skin in the game. They need to be ready to move forward soon.

Councilor Carlson asked if the community fact finding has a cost. Michael responded that there is a cost of about \$8,500. They are only going to charge about \$4,500 for all three communities if they commit. Columbia City is interested but they have not heard much from Scappoose, however they have a new City Administrator. Columbia County is looking at alternatives.

Discussion ensued.

Councilor Locke encouraged the Council to proceed. They are already several years behind. He asked about rates. Michael explained that it depends on the market and costs. The goal is for it to cost about \$60/month for 100 megs, \$80/month for 500 megs, and \$100/month for a gig. However, it depends on the actual cost, signups, and the area it includes. He talked about speeds based on cost.

Discussion about networks that can be made available to schools.

Mayor Scholl wants to move to the next step by conducting the needs assessment. It will be on tonight's agenda for a decision.

### **3. Discussion Regarding Urban Trail Map – *Council President Morten***

2:19 p.m.

Council President Morten talked about the presentations made by the Parks & Trails Commission. The Commission wants to create a simpler, phased-in proposal. They will be holding a virtual workshop to discuss route ideas. After that, they will bring a formal presentation to Council.

Councilor Carlson appreciates the work the Parks & Trails Commission has done. The trail will be an asset to community members.

After discussion, it was decided to add the discussion to the December 16 Council work session agenda.

Council President Morten expressed that the last presenter was very timely. He lost Comcast five days ago. He is using the Wi-Fi at City Hall because he has no service at home. This is the fourth or fifth time this has happened, and he pays \$4,000 a year for the service.

Mayor Scholl pointed out that Comcast will be at the next meeting to review their franchise agreement. He encouraged the Council to review the agreement prior to the meeting.

### **4. Strategic Action Plan Updates**

2:30 p.m.

Brown reviewed the updates.

- He, City Planner Jacob Graichen, and Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho will present facade updates for the UB/Court building at a December meeting.
- Bathroom cleanings are still being done by a third party. It is about \$2,000/month. The cleanings continue through the end of the year. It is currently reimbursable through the end of the year. The Council needs to decide if they are going to continue next year when it is not reimbursable, have staff clean the restrooms less often, or close them. Public Works Engineering Director Sue Nelson and Public Works Director Mouhamad Zaher will report back in late December or early January.
- Discussion of Comcast Ch. 29. Councilor Carlson would like to use the station more to get information out. The community survey reported that the channel is not used much. Councilor Carlson said that it is hard for people to engage when they do not have Facebook. Brown reported that they can stream to the website with a new service they have. Councilor Carlson wants to make sure the website has information without having to go to Facebook. Brown suggested encompassing this with the communications plan. Mayor Scholl would like to review that strategic action plan for communications. It will be added to a future agenda for discussion.

**5. City Administrator Report**

2:39 p.m.

Brown introduced new Public Works Director Mouhamad Zaher. He is happy to be here and looking forward to working on projects.

Council welcomed him to the City.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

None

**ADJOURNMENT – 2:44 p.m.**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Kathy Payne

Kathy Payne, City Recorder

/s/ Rick Scholl

Rick Scholl, Mayor