



COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

APPROVED MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl
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
Joe Hogue, Acting Police Chief
Suzanne Bishop, Library Director
Gloria Butsch, Finance Director

OTHERS

Brady Preheim	Mitzi Ponce	Jenni Gilbert
Jennifer Massey	Adam St. Pierre	Arthur
Marci Sanders	Aaron Kunders	Shauna Stroup-Harrison
James	Jenn Dougherty	Tauni Osterman
Kate Freitag	Matt Freitag	David Nelson
David Lauridsen		

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

- ◆ Brady Preheim. Spoke about the election results, complained that his public records request for tourism bills had not been completed after 60 days, and wanted to see the results of the investigation of the police chief, noting the improvement of having the acting chief in town.
- ◆ Jennifer Massey. Commended Mayor Scholl and looked forward to continuing to collaborate with him, as he cares deeply about the city.
- ◆ David Lauridsen, Crooked Creek Brewery owner. Spoke about the effect of the lack of parking on businesses in the Riverfront District and read the petition to reduce impacts of the delay in completing Phase 1A of the Riverfront project, noting the significance of non-resident signatures and urging Council to come up with a solution to open the street.
- ◆ Tauni Osterman. Reported speaking with people who are staying away from downtown because it is a mess.

- ◆ David Nelson. Spoke about losing parking because people do not know how to park without the stripes, how one additional apron on one manhole adds about 80 ft of parking, how many people are avoiding downtown and its events because of the construction, and the easy temporary solution to allow at least another 30 parking spots.
- ◆ Matt Freitag. Requested the contractor for downtown prioritize pedestrian access, especially ADA access, and parking spaces.
- ◆ Dana Lathrope. On behalf of the Parks & Trails Commission, asked Council to make the Milton Creek project a Council goal. As a business owner in downtown, she commented on the impacts of the construction projects, thanking Mayor Scholl and City Administrator Walsh for listening and noting frustration with the Public Works Director's inappropriate communication.
- ◆ Adam St. Pierre. Commended Mayor Scholl for his eight years of service and estimated the loss of revenue due to lack of parking for downtown business owners as well as what it would cost to provide temporary parking.
- ◆ Jenni Gilbert. Explained why putting up light poles and fixing the bumpers around the sewers is a simple solution for the parking by Crooked Creek, noted the oddness of Interim School Superintendent Steve Webb's bringing up putting school resource officers (SROs) back in schools and that the City lacks resources for SROs. She requested that Council focus on the issues at the schools, and thanked Mayor Scholl for his service to the community.
- ◆ Shauna Stroup-Harrison. Asked why the curb extensions downtown were designed the way they were and if the bollards between City Hall and the courthouse would continue to be one-way.

Mayor Scholl explained the curb expansions downtown were designed to slow traffic, make pedestrians easier to see, and allow safer crossings for pedestrians. Strand Street from Cowlitz Street to the courthouse will continue as a one-way road.

PROCLAMATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF ABSTRACT OF VOTES FROM NOVEMBER 5, 2024, GENERAL ELECTION

1. November 5, 2024, General Election Results for City of St. Helens

Mayor Scholl read the proclamation title and noted a typographical error in the date.

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to accept the abstract of votes from November 5, 2024, General Election. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO ATTEND EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

2. Consideration of the Application of Kaelyn Cassidy of Columbia County Spotlight to Qualify as a Representative of the News Media to Attend Council Executive Sessions

Mayor Scholl noted Ms. Cassidy met all requirements and submitted everything needed.

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Hubbard to approve the request for attending executive sessions with consideration of the application of Kaelyn Cassidy of the Columbia County Spotlight to qualify as a representative of the news media. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

ORDINANCES – First Reading

- 3. Ordinance No. 3306:** An Ordinance Amending the St. Helens Municipal Code Chapters 17.16, 17.32, 17.60, 17.80, and 179.96 Pertaining to Multifamily Development, Oregon House Bill 4064 (2022) Regarding Manufactured and Prefabricated Dwellings, Oregon House Bill 3395 (2023) Regarding Single Room Occupancies, and Other Housekeeping Amendments

Mayor Scholl read Ordinance No. 3306 by title. The final reading will be at the next meeting.

APPROVE AND/OR AUTHORIZE FOR SIGNATURE

4. Agreement with Keller Williams Sunset Corridor Lower Columbia Group for Realtor Services
5. Third Amendment of Agreement with Oregon Patrol Service for Bailiff Services
6. Extension of Agreement with Wetland Solutions NW, LLC for Wetland Services
7. Extension of Agreement with Moore Site Services LLC for Consulting and Mechanical Support at the St. Helens Industrial Business Park
8. Extension of Agreement with Professional Mariner Services, LLC for Consulting to Meet Requirements for City Vessel
9. Eighth Amendment to Agreement with OTAK for the S. 1st Street & Strand Streets Road & Utility Extensions Project No. P-525
10. Amendment No. 1 to Agreement with Columbia County for SAFE Boat Sharing
11. Extension of Agreement with Advantage JC Excavating LLC for Services related to Clean-up of Various Properties
12. Second Amendment to Contract with Moore Excavation for the S. 1st Street and Strand Streets Road and Utility Extensions Project P-525
13. Third Amendment to Contract with Moore Excavation, Inc. for the S. 1st Street - St. Helens Street Intersection Improvements Project R-685

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Council President Chilton to approve '4' through '13' above.

Councilor Hubbard questioned Item '8.' City Administrator Walsh confirmed Item '8' is a time extension to the agreement the City just signed in October. The City does not have to pay Professional Mariner Services for another year. It is a time and materials basis and a very low amount. The work is related to getting a certificate of inspection from the Coast Guard, which is important to the boat's value.

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

APPOINTMENTS TO CITY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

14. Reappoint Lew Mason to the Budget Committee

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to reappoint Lew Mason to the Budget Committee. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

15. Reappoint Jerry Belcher to the Parks & Trails Commission

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to reappoint Jerry Belcher to the Parks & Trails Commission. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

16. Appoint Reid Herman to the Planning Commission

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to appoint Reid Herman to the Planning Commission. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

CONSENT AGENDA FOR ACCEPTANCE

17. Planning Commission Minutes dated November 12, 2024

18. Library Board Minutes dated November 18, 2024

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to approve '17' and '18' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

CONSENT AGENDA FOR APPROVAL

19. Amended Library Board Bylaws

20. Purchase of New Water Filtration Facility Replacement Modules from Trojan Technologies Corp. in the amount of \$250,802.41 as Budgeted in the 2024/25 Capital Improvement Plan

21. Proposed Revisions to Communications Officer Job Description

22. Proposed Revisions to Deputy City Recorder Job Description

23. Proposed Revisions to Administrative Billing Specialist Job Description

24. Proposed Revisions to Building Permit Technician Job Description

25. Proposed Revisions to Community Development Administrative Assistant Job Description

26. Request for Proposals (RFP) Document for Forestry Management Services

27. Contract with Hamer Electric for Repair of Electrical Service to the River Pumps at the Industrial Business Park in the Amount of \$67,850

28. Contract with Clear Trail CPAS for Audit Services in the Amount of \$53,500 for FY24/25, \$54,600 for FY25/26, and \$55,700 for FY26/27

29. Accounts Payable Bill Lists

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to approve '19' through '29' above.

Mayor Scholl asked about Item '28' and paying for future years. Finance Director Butsch confirmed the contract for audit services was for future years, but the City does not pay upfront.

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

WORK SESSION ACTION ITEMS

Should the City reserve area in the St. Helens Industrial Business Park for a Woodland Reserve?

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to direct City staff to work with the Parks & Trails Commission to finalize the proposed land and process for zoning.

Key comments from Council noted its support of the Parks Commission's idea to build a new park or reserve at Milton Creek. Some places might be designated City parks, and the rest of the area could be a nature reserve not necessarily maintained by the Parks Division but on a volunteer basis. Further discussion about zoning is needed with the City Planner and the Planning Commission. Such a park or reserve would be a great asset for nearby industrial employees.

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

Should the City hire a contracted Project Manager to finish the street utilities project?

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to direct staff to add on to a current contract with OTAK for hiring a Project Manager to finish the streets and utility project. Councilor Gundersen seconded the motion.

Mayor Scholl thanked Public Works staff for managing the project, which was outside their scope of work, explaining how their involvement cost taxpayers zero dollars and saved approximately \$2 million, and reflected how much they care about the city and quality of work. He described numerous project setbacks, noting that the project had been in process for two years.

Vote: Yea: Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Sundeen; Nay: Mayor Scholl, Councilor Hubbard

Should the City open S. 1st Street further past Crooked Creek Brewery?

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Council President Chilton to direct staff to work with the contractor to open S. 1st Street farther south to allow three more parking spaces on each side for a total of six as determined by Engineering.

Key comments from Council included how the project was only running five months longer than expected, how six parking spots were immediately opened up after the earlier meeting, how Council relies on staff to make the best decisions based on information provided, the less expensive option of rubber to put around manholes, looking into opening up the street more, and how Council was supported by the public in its decision to do the project all at once rather than over 10 years.

Mayor Scholl noted serving on Council was not an easy job, but he did sign up for it. He sometimes felt bullied online for tough decisions. He looks forward to exercising his First Amendment right as a citizen come January 1.

The motion was taken off the table, as the action was already completed.

Should the City lease the vacant space at the Columbia Center adjacent to the Makerspace?

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Council President Chilton to approve leasing the vacant space at the Columbia Learning Center to expand the Makerspace.

Council President Chilton stated one of the City's goals is to expand learning opportunities that could potentially bring job creation, which is the intention of the Makerspace. An expanded Makerspace will be a great asset.

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

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

Council President Chilton stated she tries to keep her eye on the Senior Center and the School District. She commended Mayor Scholl, noting his great love for St. Helens.

Councilor Sundeen reported on the Christmas Ships event. He commended Public Works and Engineering. He thanked Mayor Scholl for his service and encouragement to stay on Council.

Councilor Gundersen commended Mayor Scholl, also thanking him for encouragement to stay on Council. Additionally, he commended Public Works and Engineering staff for their work.

Councilor Hubbard suggested everyone visit the new Makerspace, urged Mayor Scholl to enjoy his retirement, and wished all a Merry Christmas.

MAYOR SCHOLL REPORTS

Mayor Scholl thanked all the Councilors he had served with. He felt he had remained true to himself. He commended City Administrator Walsh. He spoke about "Pantygate" and how he and City Administrator Walsh were never cleared of the allegations. He hoped whatever comes from the investigation, a clear and non-redacted report would be released to the public. As a regular citizen on January 1, 2025, he will no longer be bound by executive session. He was not upset about losing the mayoral election. He would continue to be vocal and transparent to defend himself, his name, and anybody else in the process.

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURN – 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully transcribed by ABC Transcription Services LLC and submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Kathy Payne
Kathy Payne, City Recorder

/s/ Rick Scholl
Rick Scholl, Mayor