



# COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Wednesday, January 21, 2026

## APPROVED MINUTES

### MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Jennifer Massey  
Councilor Mark Gundersen  
Councilor Russell Hubbard  
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

### MEMBERS ABSENT

Council President Jessica Chilton

### STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator  
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder  
Crystal King, Communications Officer  
Jacob Graichen, City Planner

### OTHERS

Steve LeSollen	Phyllis Rice	Mark Griffin
Jeff Heller	Reed Hjort	Doug Morten
Nick Flory	Brady Preheim	Tammy Maygra
Patrick Birkle	Nick Hellmich	Robyn Toschi
Susie Stutzman	Claire Catt	Jane Williams
Jeffrey Macdannald	Joe	Judy Thompson
Steve Toschi	Ced	

### CALL REGULAR SESSION TO ORDER – 7:11 p.m.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

- ◆ Nick Flory. Thanked the Mayor and Council for their service and expressed appreciation for the work being done on behalf of the City, acknowledging that their time and effort were not always sufficiently compensated.
- ◆ Tammy Maygra. Addressed the Council regarding a previously submitted request for the release of the full Band report. She noted that at the prior meeting she had asked for the document's full release and observed that it had not yet been made public. She referenced statements the Mayor had made prior to taking office regarding transparency, accountability, and the need to scrutinize withheld documents, and urged the Mayor to release the entire report, stating that taxpayers had a right to its contents as they had funded it.
- ◆ Robyn Toschi. spoke in opposition to a proposed ordinance that would allow side-by-sides (utility terrain vehicles) on city streets. She raised several concerns: the financial and staffing burden of administering a vehicle registration program at a time when the City is already stretched thin,

including recent layoffs and budget pressures; the lack of cost or staffing studies accompanying the proposal; and the dismissal at a prior work session of the retained attorney's suggestions to limit side-by-sides to one side of the highway and to hold a public comment event before finalizing the draft. She raised safety concerns regarding seat belt requirements, noting that the Mayor had indicated seat belts would not be mandated on vehicles not originally manufactured with them, and questioned insurance coverage requirements. She also referenced the Police Chief's recommendation that crossing points be limited to Gable Road to keep side-by-sides off Highway 30. Toschi concluded by urging the Council to vote no on the ordinance, characterizing it as an unnecessary risk to the City and its citizens.

- ◆ Brady Preheim. Began by defining the terms "street" and "city," emphasizing distinctions between city, town, and rural populations. Preheim criticized the City's consideration of allowing Columbia County Economic Team (CET), a county organization, to be run by Main Street, an entity focused on the City and not the County. He objected to Paul Vogel's involvement, stating that Vogel had caused problems and harassed staff, and questioned why Vogel was being treated as a savior when staff members had reported abuse and harassment, and Vogel allegedly owed over \$600,000 in unpaid taxes. Preheim expressed concern that the City might absorb these costs. He questioned the \$60,000 payment to Erin as an executive director for Main Street, especially when City staff had not received raises and there was no union agreement regarding cost-of-living increases. Preheim asked for clarification on whether the City's contingency funds were depleted, given statements that the City might not have money by the end of the year to meet payroll. He also called for accountability regarding the tourism director, whom he accused of lying on the public record about the size of a train tank, stating the train was unusable because it had a three-gallon tank when that was not true. Preheim suggested it might be time for a different contractor to manage the train and questioned the City's plan to auction off a boat. He also noted that when he was on the Budget Committee, there was no discussion about reappointing him, contrasting this with the City's current standard of reappointing people to committees.
- ◆ Nick Hellmich. Congratulated City staff on recent approvals, though noting he was "putting the cart before the horse" as approvals were still pending. He expressed support for the side-by-side ordinance and stated he did not see how it could cost more money beyond implementation. Hellmich emphasized his belief in "live and let live" and Darwinism, suggesting that people who do dumb things face consequences. He clarified that he forms his own opinions and does not always agree with Brady Preheim, despite previous perceptions that he was a mouthpiece for Preheim and Steve Toschi. Hellmich reflected on how nervous he used to be when first speaking at Council meetings and how the group now feels like "one big dysfunctional family." He expressed hope that the City could get its affairs in order and reiterated his support for allowing side-by-sides on the road.
- ◆ Phyllis Rice. Supports the side-by-side ordinance. She encouraged those using side-by-sides for fun to keep it under control and not jeopardize opportunities for individuals who are handicapped and need alternative transportation methods.
- ◆ Steve Toschi, via Zoom. Spoke against the side-by-side ordinance based on his experience with thousands of auto accident cases. Toschi explained what it means to see people die on the roadway and stated that the ordinance would result in injuries and deaths that would not occur if people were in automobiles. He criticized Mayor Massey's statement that she is "not an expert in anything," calling it a statement from "quite an ignorant person." Toschi emphasized that seat belts make a difference and questioned whether seat belts could even be installed in ATVs to

make them safer. He noted that most fatal accidents occur at speeds of 25 miles per hour or less and that restraining occupants prevents injuries even at low speeds. Toschi warned Councilors that they could find themselves in a situation where a low-speed accident involving a side-by-side results in a death, leaving them potentially at fault and facing loss of livelihood and lawsuits. He emphasized that Oregon law does not recognize "survival of the fittest" or assumption of risk as defenses for side-by-side users. Toschi urged the Council not to enact the ordinance, stating it is unsafe, but if they proceeded, they should consult appropriate experts to analyze the risks and determine if it is the right thing for the community.

Mayor Massey made a brief comment in response to the visitor comments, questioning whether the City should also ban motorcycles and scooters in St. Helens, noting they present similar safety concerns.

### **DELIBERATIONS**

1. Annexation of Approximately 6.57 Acres of Property Located South of Sykes Road about 300 feet West of where the BPA Lines Intersect with Sykes Road, and North of the Morten Lane Terminus next to 58990 Morten Lane (Stutzman)

**Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Hubbard and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to advance the recommendation of staff and Planning Commission and approve the annexation. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

### **RESOLUTIONS**

2. **Resolution No. 2065:** A Resolution to Adopt Rate Study to Establish Methodology for Water, Sewer, and Storm Drainage Utility Rates and Schedule Adjustments

Mayor Massey read Resolution No. 2065 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to adopt Resolution No. 2065. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

### **APPROVE AND/OR AUTHORIZE FOR SIGNATURE**

3. Third Contract Amendment with Consor North America, Inc. for Professional Services for the Wastewater Capacity Improvements to Sanitary Sewer Mains in Basins 4, 5, & 6 to Advance the Design of the Sewer Pump Station No. 7 Capacity Upgrades to the 60% Design Level

**Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve '3' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

### **APPOINTMENTS TO CITY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

4. Appoint Patrick Birkle to Planning Commission

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

### **CONSENT AGENDA FOR ACCEPTANCE**

5. Library Board Minutes dated December 8, 2025
6. Parks & Trails Commission Minutes dated December 8, 2025
7. Planning Commission Minutes dated December 9, 2025

**Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to approve '5' through '7' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

**CONSENT AGENDA FOR APPROVAL**

8. City Council Minutes dated January 7, 2026
9. OLCC Licenses
10. Accounts Payable Bill Lists

**Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve '8' through '10' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

**WORK SESSION ACTION ITEMS**

**Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to reappoint Ivan Salas to the Budget Committee. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

**COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS**

Councilor Sundeen reported...

- The Parks and Trails Commission held a meeting where they discussed the need for a new master plan. They are reviewing the current plan, identifying completed items, and compiling a list of future additions.
- One vacancy remains on the Parks & Trails Commission after a prior call for applicants yielded no responses. He encouraged community members interested in parks, trails, bicycles, and public spaces to apply.
- Met with Judy Thompson to discuss plans for the America 250 celebration. An initial meeting attracted over 30 attendees from various organizations such as Kiwanis Club, Lions Club, the Highway 30 Cruisers, local artists, authors, and the Garden Club.
- The Kiwanis are marking their centennial year, with the parade theme incorporating the 250th anniversary of the nation and the Kiwanis' 100th.
- In response to Mayor Massey's question, he confirmed that Judy Thompson is reaching out to Arcadia representatives, as they are also celebrating their centennial this year.
- He is researching youth advisory council models across the state and developing ideas to improve the City's previous model, aiming to present them in a broader discussion at an upcoming meeting.
- He shared a historical note that 75 years ago, the St. Helens Chamber of Commerce hosted Carl Brandenfels, a Yankton-area resident with over 200 patents, at their event. Some of Brandenfels' inventions are held at the Columbia County Museum, which is relocating to the John Gumm building with plans for a soft opening in February.

Councilor Hubbard reported...

- Noted a busy schedule with many meetings.
- Thanked those involved in planning work sessions for their efforts.

Councilor Gundersen reported...

- Nothing to report.

**MAYOR MASSEY REPORTS**

- Expressed gratitude to City staff, mentioning Deputy City Recorder Scholl and City Recorder Payne (absent) for preparing the Council for meetings and City Administrator Walsh for keeping the Council informed on issues during a busy December.
- Mayor Massey, like Councilor Sundeen, is collecting information about youth advisory councils from other Oregon towns, aiming to formulate a youth program by year-end.

- She proposed an agenda item for the next council meeting to discuss youth advisory councils, acknowledging the need to begin applications by spring and suggesting the Council handle initial groundwork to avoid staff overload.
- Mayor Massey addressed the side-by-side ordinance topic, articulating that side-by-side owners are unlikely to misuse vehicles that cost \$40,000 to \$100,000. She compared side-by-sides to motorcycles, which also lack seat belts and present similar or greater risks, referencing a past motorcycle incident on Columbia Boulevard. While recognizing the safety concerns and emphasizing the severity of proposed fines, she stressed her belief in responsible citizen behavior and the value of offering this benefit to taxpayers. She has no personal interest in using side-by-sides but acknowledged their appeal to other residents, awaiting the ordinance's final version and considering the need for seat belts.

**PROACTIVE ITEMS**

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**ADJOURN – 7:43 p.m.**

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

ATTEST:

/s/ Lisa Scholl  
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder

/s/ Jennifer Massey  
Jennifer Massey, Mayor