



COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Wednesday, October 02, 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
Suzanne Bishop, Library Director

OTHERS

Patrick Birkle	Jennifer Massey	Jim Coleman
B	Arthur	Antonia Doggett
Mercedes Massey	Jenni Gilbert	Brady Preheim
Nick Hellmich	Keith Meeuwssen	Adam St. Pierre

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

- ◆ Patrick Birkle. He was elated with how this year's Spirit of Halloweentown was going and described the positive aspects of the event. He commended Council for following through with a difficult process in transitioning to events contractor Treadway. He had heard positive comments about the event from businesses and residents.
- ◆ Mercedes Massey. Described her disappointment in Mayor Scholl's response to her comments at the last Council meeting regarding inaccuracies about police support and staffing numbers, and noted the recent OSHA fine the City received for the police station. She provided examples of how Council's statements of support for the police force were inconsistent with its actions. A public apology from Mayor Scholl was warranted.
- ◆ Jenni Gilbert. Spoke about how the loss of the city's 24-hour police coverage endangered citizens and police officers. Council did not keep its promises a year ago to listen to the Police Association, as well as law enforcement, their families and citizens to correct the matter. She asked that Council make good on the recommendations and agreements the Budget Committee outlined for funding the police department. No option remained other than to implement the \$25 Public Service fee. She now fully agreed with the Police Association's vote of no confidence in the Mayor and City Administrator and explained why City Administrator Walsh should resign or be removed

and why Mayor Scholl should not be seeking reelection. She chided Council for jeopardizing the safety of its citizens and the City's police force.

- ◆ Toni Doggett. Did not believe anyone wanted to put the city in danger and disagreed with attacks on City Administrator Walsh, which reflected poorly on mayoral candidates. Prior concerns she had brought to Council were addressed with a good outcome, but it did take a long time, which was how government worked. City employees were not fair game to score political points. Candidates should be kinder as they may have to work with staff in the future. She believed the City was doing its best under current circumstances.
- ◆ Brady Preheim. Agreed with Ms. Doggett's comments and urged Council to do more to stop the attacks on City Administrator Walsh. He disagreed with the process regarding the transfer of the K-9 officer to the County, noting Council should have voted before the dog was transferred, and questioned the City's need to license the boat which was the responsibility of the tourism director. The person who called for Mayor Scholl's resignation and held a vote of no confidence was fired for lying and that created the police's staff shortage, not Mayor Scholl. Spirit of Halloweentown was not going well, and the City would lose money by the end of the month. He believed the plan was to make Tourism look unprofitable as an excuse to get rid of it.
- ◆ Adam St. Pierre. Noted comments made by City Administrator Walsh during the work session about Spirit of Halloweentown, reported rumors of Spirit of Halloweentown assets vandalized, unused, and unavailable to the new contractor, and suggested having City Administrator Walsh in charge could be an ethics issue. Many business owners, managers, and employees said they were happier with Spirit of Halloweentown this year than in the past, noting no difference in revenue the first week compared to previous years.
- ◆ Nick Hellmich. Liked the Spirit of Halloweentown setup in the main strip of the road better this year. He did not like people hoping the event to fail. Project Arcadia's tax base would hopefully make up for the City's budget deficit. He would probably start a Neighborhood Watch in his area and encouraged citizens who felt unsafe in their homes to exercise their Second Amendment rights.

RESOLUTIONS

1. PUBLIC COMMENT - Increase in Drop Box Rates

No comments.

Resolution No. 2028: A Resolution Establishing Drop Box Rates and Superseding Resolution No. 1992

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Hubbard to adopt Resolution No. 2028. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

2. Resolution No. 2029: A Resolution Authorizing City Administrator John Walsh and City Finance Director Gloria Butsch to Establish an Events Credit Card Account

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Council President Chilton to adopt Resolution No. 2029. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

3. Resolution No. 2030: A Resolution of the St. Helens City Council, Establishing the City Employee Compensation Schedule for Fiscal Year 2024-2025, Superseding all other Resolutions

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to adopt Resolution No. 2030. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

APPROVE AND/OR AUTHORIZE FOR SIGNATURE

4. [RATIFY] Agreement with Steve Todd for Pro Tem Judicial Services
5. Agreement with Professional Mariner Services, LLC for Consultant Services to Obtain all Requirements for Lawful Operation of the City's Vessel
6. Second Amendment to Contract with Moore Excavation, Inc. Extending their Contract Time to December 31, 2024 for S. 1st Street - St. Helens Street Intersection Improvements, R-685
7. First Amendment to Contract with Moore Excavation, Inc. Extending their Contract Time to December 31, 2024 for S. 1st Street - Strand Street Road and Utilities Extension Project, P-525
8. First Amendment to Contract with Moore Excavation, Inc. Extending their Contract Time to December 31, 2024 for Undergrounding the Electrical Services on the S. 1st Street - Strand Street Road and Utilities Extension Project, M-532
9. Amendment to Agreement with Steven Leskin for Legal Defense Services
10. Amendment to Agreement with Steve Sharfstein for Legal Defense Services

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve '4' through '10' above.

City Administrator Walsh clarified that the City did not already have the scope of work in-house for item five above, Mariner Services. The bill of sale was being sought from the builder. The City had the title, but Mariner Services needed hired, as the work was more complicated because the Coast Guard changed the way the boat, a documented, inspected US Coast Guard vessel could be licensed, which is an annual process. While Treadway had no immediate plans to use the boat, it was less work to keep the boat in good standing rather than letting the certifications lapse.

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

APPOINTMENT TO CITY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

11. Appoint Jay Echternach to Library Board

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Hubbard to approve '11' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

CONSENT AGENDA FOR ACCEPTANCE

12. Library Board Minutes dated August 12, 2024
13. Planning Commission Minutes dated August 13, 2024
14. Parks & Trails Commission Minutes dated August 12, 2024

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to approve '12' through '14' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

CONSENT AGENDA FOR APPROVAL

15. City Council Minutes dated June 19, July 16, and August 27, 2024
16. OLCC Licenses
17. Declare Surplus Property - Police K-9 Jax
18. Change Newspaper of Record from Columbia County Chronicle & Chief to the Columbia County Spotlight
19. Accounts Payable Bill Lists

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to approve '15' through '19' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

WORK SESSION ACTION ITEMS

Toy N Joy

2 - \$100 donations

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to donate two \$100 utility bill vouchers to Toy N Joy. **Vote:** Voting Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

Timber Sale

Mayor Scholl explained as timber prices had increased 10%, Council was ready to move forward with an invitation to bid on the timber cut.

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Council President Chilton to authorize the invitation to bid on the timber cut. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

Council President Chilton described the importance of addressing police staffing issues and requested that Councilors make action items regarding how to change the hiring and funding processes for police in the event of an officer's retirement or injury so there was no lapse in coverage. The police force had ideas, but funding is needed for an updated staffing study, which was last done in 2011

Councilors Gundersen and **Sundeen**, and **Mayor Scholl** agreed to add the item to the agenda. Council needed to discuss with the Police Chief why the department was unable to recruit to fill the four available positions.

Councilor Sundeen explained the City did not have a canine handler for K-9 Jax, and the County, which housed the dog temporarily, wanted to keep Jax, who could continue to be used by St. Helens Police when needed. He reported on upcoming and recently attended meetings and noted the upcoming Nob Hill Park clean-up. He reported on this year's Spirit of Halloweentown event so far and how pleased he was with Treadway. He thanked those who volunteered to make sure Spirit of Halloweentown endured into the future.

Councilor Gundersen described Treadway's need for volunteers and provided details on the Columbia Learning Center's space available for rent, noting Council should consider making it an action item to look at leasing and then subleasing the space. The library aspired to increase the Makerspace to accommodate fiber arts. He reported on attending Spirit of Halloweentown, which he thought was great.

Councilor Hubbard said Treadway was doing a great job with what it had to work with, noting the contractor was professional and organized. Shop owners had positive feedback, people were happy, and City employees were relieved to not be yelled at when bringing assets to Treadway. He would like Chief Greenway to attend Council meetings to answer questions.

MAYOR SCHOLL REPORTS

Mayor Scholl reminded the City ran on a three-to-five vote, and as Mayor, his powers were limited to one vote. Legally, communication amongst the Council could only occur at the dais, so mayoral candidates claiming they could get things done without communicating from the dais were living a fairytale. He was pleased with the progress and momentum of the Waterfront project. The "I Dig St. Helens" campaign was underway at downtown businesses, which he described. He agreed City Administrator Walsh did not deserve hostile comments, which were being made for political purposes.

He had not heard about the police officer working a 20-hour shift and looked forward finding out what was going on. While open dialogue was allowed when visitors spoke during Visitor Comments in regular Council meetings and work sessions, the Mayor’s report was not an open dialogue. During his last report he was interrupted and disrespected. He owed no one an apology; he was owed one. No one should interrupt a person’s time to speak. He loved St. Helens and the progress the community was making. The October 16 Council meetings were cancelled because Council would attend the League of Oregon City Conference, which he described.

Mayor Scholl and **Councilor Sundeen** thanked Sergeant Jon Eggers for his 25 years of service to the St. Helens community.

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURN – 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Kathy Payne
Kathy Payne, City Recorder

/s/ Rick Scholl
Rick Scholl, Mayor