



# COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Wednesday, November 20, 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  
Gloria Butsch, Finance Director  
Suzanne Bishop, Library Director  
Sharon Darroux, Engineering Manager

Everardo Medina, Code Enforcement Officer  
Jacob Graichen, City Planner  
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner  
Crystal King, Communications Officer  
Cameron Burkhart, Communications Support Specialist  
Ashley Wigod, Contracted City Attorney

### OTHER

Steve Topaz                      Paul Vogel  
Brady Preheim                Sierra Trass  
Jane Garcia                    Mitz  
MM

### CALL WORK SESSION TO ORDER – 2:00 p.m.

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

- ◆ Steve Topaz. Spoke about the importance of following procedures and reviewing unconstitutional procedures, noting instances in which procedures were less than adequate in previous meetings.
- ◆ Brady Preheim. Referred to Agenda Item 7: Discussion of 4th of July Fireworks, noting he understood the Council would not be discussing the fireworks until after the Halloweentown financial report had been published; and expressed concerns about the City sharing false information provided by the tourism contractor, the lack of Code enforcement of illegal signs, completion of the Police Chief's report, and the lack of response to his public records requests.

### DISCUSSION TOPICS

#### 1. Report from Columbia Economic Team (CET) - Executive Director Paul Vogel

Paul Vogel, Executive Director, Columbia Economic Team, reviewed his brief report, which highlighted recruitment and investment projects underway.

Sierra Trass, Small Business Specialist, CET, presented via PowerPoint an overview of the Columbia County Business Community Connection Project. Key highlights included understanding Columbia County's business landscape including data specific to St. Helens, which was the only community in the County that saw such a huge jump in businesses growing their employee base. Countywide business

insights and commentary specific to St. Helens was shared as well as the top five economic solution ideas in the County. She clarified what soft skills were and noted the opportunity to connect the great CET programming in St. Helens High School with the local business community. She also confirmed this is the first time CET had done such a project, its first big retention effort, and this process would be repeated every three to five years. The data will be used to create a countywide plan with partners and enact projects over the next three to five years as well.

Mayor Scholl commented on manufacturing and small businesses benefiting from the existing workforce, the similarities between CET's report and the most recent Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA), and the City's role in assisting new businesses.

## **2. Communications Semi-Annual Report - *Communications Officer Crystal King***

Communications Officer King and Communications Support Specialist Burkhart presented via PowerPoint the Semi-Annual Report which covered May through October 2024. Key highlights included measurable numbers for the reporting period, tasks supporting communications, staff coverage, projects, Waterfront redevelopment numbers to date and communications on the project, the media side of Spirit of Halloweentown, winning the national City-County Communications & Marketing Association (3CMA) October Photo Contest, the library campaign, and what was up next.

City Administrator Walsh described working with Communications Officer King, Councilor Sundeen, and Library Director Bishop on a recent statement of commitment to youth safety in the community.

## **3. Discussion of Animal Facility License Request at 244 N. 2nd Street - *Code Enforcement Officer Everardo Medina***

Code Enforcement Officer Medina reviewed the Animal Facility License request, confirming he had visited the site two months ago and runoff was not a problem at that time. He also reviewed the noise ordinance, noting that one complaint had been submitted expressing concern about the sound of the goose. Upon further inspection and with no evidence provided from the neighbor, he determined the request met the qualifications. He recommended approval of the license, noting the license could be revoked if the restrictions were not being followed and the license could be approved only for the ducks and chickens.

Councilors expressed concerns about standing water and runoff on the property, the presence of bird flu in migrating geese, and the likelihood that other neighbors were opposed to the goose but had not submitted complaints. Mayor Scholl agreed with Staff that the application met the qualifications.

## **4. Planning Division Semi-Annual Report - *City Planner Jacob Graichen***

City Planner Graichen and Associate Planner Dimsho presented via PowerPoint the Planning Division report for the period of April to October 2024. Key highlights included project management, an update on current planning and permits, and essential projects in the next six months or so and how they relate to the strategic plan. Solving accessibility issues, election signs being more of an issue this year, and including the Endangered Species Act in flood plain decisions after December 1 were also highlighted.

Staff addressed questions and comments from Councilors about Federal Emergency Management Administration's (FEMA) endangered species rules, redevelopment of the Grace's Rivertown Antiques property, annexations in progress, the entry sign on Millard Road, and funding from Travel Oregon.

Mayor Scholl noted every city had to implement codes sent down by the State and the Housing Needs Analysis was mandated by the State as well.

## **5. Financial Report for First Quarter of Fiscal Year 2024-25 - *Finance Director Gloria Butsch***

Finance Director Butsch presented the First Quarter Financial Report, noting the City was on target with almost every department having 75 percent of their budget left. She noted the City receives 90 percent of property tax revenues in November and December and explained the estimated beginning fund

balance for the General Fund was much lower than anticipated. The balance was just an estimate since the audit had not yet been completed, but the General Fund would likely be about what was projected for the end of this fiscal year with the added interfund transfers, property sales, and timber revenues. Additionally, there will be another supplemental budget for the Street System Development Charge (SDC) Fund. She noted that the banking resolution on tonight's agenda would change back to the practice that the City Administrator and Finance Director are the signers on the checking account. When the last Finance Director left, the Mayor was made a signer.

#### **6. Tourist-Oriented Directional Signage in Right-of-Way - *Engineering Manager Sharon Darroux***

Engineering Manager Darroux presented a follow-up to the October 2 meeting when Council directed staff to look into an ordinance for tourist-oriented directional (TOD) signage. Key highlights included what defined TOD signage, background on the TOD sign request from Crooked Creek Brewery, and key updates on draft ordinance results. The federal Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices limited TOD signs to rural highways and prohibited them in urban areas. Violating the manual ran the risk of losing federal funding. Next steps included a recommendation from the Sign Administrator at the Oregon Travel Information Council to establish a no TOD sign zone. Highway mile posts 25 to 30 incorporated the entire urban growth boundary (UGB), which would eliminate the need to create an ordinance.

Staff addressed questions and comments from Councilors about rural highways outside of the UGB, the new sign being planned to direct traffic to the Waterfront and downtown, and regulations on signage other than TOD signs.

Council President Chilton recommended implementing a policy right away and advised Darroux to reach out to Crooked Creek to inform the owner of the information she found and let him know the TOD sign will not work.

#### **7. Discussion regarding 4th of July Fireworks**

City Administrator Walsh reported that Treadway was committed to finding a sponsor to cover costs for the 4th of July Fireworks in the park and all events throughout the year. Western Display had explained the difference between a \$25,000 fireworks show and a \$30,000 show. Most of their shows were 20 minutes. People get fatigued by longer shows, which would probably be a waste of money. To go bigger, Western Display recommended a bigger finale and perhaps more boxes. Western Display wanted to look at the barge to make sure it had enough space. The price tag of \$25,000 would give a good, solid 20-minute show.

Council discussed having \$5,000 of credit with Western Display, going bigger and better in addition to the fireworks shows by having a festival celebration, and doing a two-day event of Thursday with 13 Nights on the River and holding over the vendors for Friday's July 4th celebration. Council will discuss how much to spend on fireworks at tonight's meeting.

City Administrator Walsh noted the City was still working with Treadway on next year's event schedule.

#### **8. Report from City Administrator John Walsh**

City Administrator Walsh reported on reviewing City policies and procedures impacting youth safety, City support for the Senior Center and its programs and services, efforts to improve broadband services, takeaways from the recent ethics training, strategic planning, and upcoming meetings with Treadway to get updates on holiday projects. He answered clarifying questions from Councilors about the Senior Center.

The Council expressed support for the City's work to help the Senior Center and discussed takeaways from the recent League of Oregon Cities meeting and the need to review the City's charter, bylaws, and other guiding documents.

**ADJOURN – 4:10 p.m.**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- Real Property Transactions, under ORS 192.660(2)(e)
- Consult with Counsel/Potential Litigation, under ORS 192.660(2)(h)

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