



# COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Wednesday, May 15, 2024

## APPROVED MINUTES

### MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl – arrived at 3:30 pm  
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  
Mouhamad Zaher, Public Works Director  
Sharon Darroux, Engineering Manager  
Suzanne Bishop, Library Director

Shanna Duggan, Recreation Manager  
Crystal King, Communications Officer  
Cameron Burkhart, Communications Support Spec.  
Bill Monahan, Contracted City Attorney  
Tina Curry, Contracted Event Coordinator

### OTHERS

Ron Trommlitz	Steve Topaz	Josh Brown
Lynne Pettit	Stephanie Patterson	Brady Preheim
Jenni Gilbert	Jane Garcia	Mitz
Jeff Yarbor	Adam St. Pierre	Claire Catt
Michelle	Jenn	MM
Kanale Tumlinson		

### CALL WORK SESSION TO ORDER – 2:00 pm

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

- ◆ Ron Trommlitz. Mr. Trommlitz addressed the 2 million-gallon (2MG) water reservoir failure and how the City's participation caused the death of the reservoir. He received a message from Mouhamad Zaher to stop probing the matter, as his probe was irritating people who were considering suing Mr. Trommlitz. He asked if John Walsh was responsible for people he supervised. The City cited client privilege when he asked to see the Walker Report, and it did not answer when he asked if it suspected the reservoir was leaking after chlorine was reported.
- ◆ Steve Topaz. Mr. Topaz also addressed the 2MG water reservoir and the response he received when he tried to ask questions about the reservoir during his time serving on the Council. The reservoir could not be repaired and if attempted the number two reservoir could cave in. Contaminated water was getting into the reservoir. The City was a million gallons behind where it should be in case of fire.
- ◆ Brady Preheim. Mr. Preheim urged the Council to vote no on the garbage increase. He described how the City needed to start over on the police station project. He addressed how Spirit of Halloweentown was essential to the community and said the Council needed to

continue the event and stop delaying in making a decision. The tourism contract should be extended to the end of the year and the Request for Proposal (RFP) should be separated out to start in January 2025.

- ◆ Jim Coleman. Mr. Coleman, St. Helens resident, sent an email to each Councilor a couple of weeks ago and didn't receive any replies. He confirmed he would resend them.
- ◆ Adam St. Pierre. Mr. St. Pierre said the ownership of the Wauna Trust Account was questioned during the Budget Committee meeting and described different answers from Mayor Scholl and City Administrator John Walsh. The problem may have been communicating the proper information, especially regarding Mr. Walsh and tourism. He described Mr. Walsh's response as the single point of contact person for questions about the tourism RFP and explained why he suggested reassigning tourism from Mr. Walsh to Councilor Sundeen.

## DISCUSSION TOPICS

### **1. Review Request from Hudson Garbage to Increase Garbage/Recycling Rates - Hudson Garbage District Manager Josh Brown**

Josh Brown, District Manager and Kanale Tumlinson, Site Manager, requested an adjustment of garbage/recycling rates (letter included in the meeting packet), citing challenges of delivery of trucks and finding skilled labor of drivers and mechanics. They noted 2023's inflation rate was 4.3 percent which was reflected in the requested increase. It was clarified Hudson's franchise was for 10 years with a few years left.

Council President Chilton acknowledged cost increases and supported what Hudson Garbage needed to maintain their good quality of service.

Mr. Walsh noted the request was on the Regular Session agenda tonight with an opportunity for public comment.

### **2. Recreation Program Semi-Annual Report - Recreation Manager Shanna Duggan**

Recreation Manager Shanna Duggan reviewed her report via PowerPoint, a copy of which was included in the archive packet for this meeting. Key items highlighted included:

- Statistics for 2023, such as registered programs
- Projects and goals for 2023/2024
- How Recreation was funded
- Board and committee work
- Current programming partnerships
- Current grants
- A Rec Desk last 60 days snapshot (2/29/2023 to 4/29/2024)
- Upcoming goals
- A brief video

She clarified Recreation served 90 kids after school right now, at three different schools.

The Council commended Ms. Duggan for her work especially in making the program self-sustainable and expressed gratitude for the program.

City Administrator Walsh added background information about the growth of the program.

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

Communications Officer Crystal King and Communications Assistant Cameron Burkhart presented the semi-annual report via PowerPoint, a copy of which was included in the archive packet for this meeting. Key items highlighted included:

- Statistics on press releases and social media posts, news media contacts/requests, and newsletters
- An overview of Communications' tasks and divisions
- Waterfront communications/projects
- Other projects/focused efforts such as winter weather messaging and regular meetings to discuss the library's weekly needs for communications
- A sample of what a day looked like in Communications
- What was coming up next for them

The Council and Staff discussed communicating projects the City would not do this year such as the cancellation of Fourth of July fireworks with Council President Chilton suggesting adding the reason the fireworks were cancelled to prevent speculation.

#### **4. Review Proposed Engineering Fees - *Engineering Manager Sharon Darroux***

Engineering Manager Sharon Darroux reviewed the proposed Engineering fees via PowerPoint (included in the meeting packet), explaining the reason for the update was traffic coming and fees needing to be in place to manage the speed humps policy on the Regular Session agenda for the final reading. She had also looked at some general fees and updated them as well and reviewed the updates to the fees for the following items:

- Right-of-way permits
- Pavement cuts
- Plan reviews for public improvements
- Public improvement construction permits
- Building permits
- Engineering inspections
- Speed hump request applications
- Traffic studies

Councilor Hubbard addressed how the fee increases were more inflation for building and how he did not like the fee increases.

Questions from the Council were addressed as follows:

- Probably most of the engineering done was focused on the infrastructure the City was doing as well as managing privately constructed public improvements.
- All the fees were applicable to projects except capital improvements.
- The speed bumps would not be the same cost for each street, so a fee could not be set for the bumps. The speed bumps would be installed by a contractor.

#### **5. Utility Bill Leak Adjustment Request for 280 St. Helens Street (Salisbury)**

City Administrator Walsh addressed the utility bill leak adjustment request for 280 St. Helens Street (supporting documentation included in the meeting packet); the leak was a result of the winter freeze.

Councilor President Chilton said she looked through the request, noting the applicant provided proof the leak was fixed.

The request was on tonight's Regular Session agenda for a decision.

#### **6. Discussion Regarding Events in the Downtown Area Considering all the Construction Projects**

City Administrator Walsh addressed events such as Spirit of Halloweentown not conflicting with construction. Key discussion items regarding events in the downtown area in light of construction projects were as follows:

- Councilor Hubbard questioned how it was possible to do Spirit of Halloweentown if the City could not do Fourth of July or 13 Nights.

- Council President Chilton explained the Fourth of July was mainly on the Veneer property or in the Waterfront Park. Since the usual space could not be utilized, Spirit of Halloweentown was more shifted up into more available space.
- Mr. Walsh clarified the contractors did not think the event(s) would impact their work.
- Councilor Sundeen noted it was possible to move Fourth of July and 13 Nights activities and still make the events work, but he did not believe the same thing could be done with Spirit of Halloweentown because people came to see the Plaza. The City should lean away from having a large-scale event downtown but recommends decorating since people will still come.
- The Council discussed issuing tickets to limit attendance/regulate crowds as was done during Covid restrictions.
- Council President Chilton believed trying to do attractions like the alien museum, utilizing the store that was already open, and maybe doing some of the Spirit of Halloweentown events in local restaurants might be a good way to push things.
- Councilor Sundeen said he would like assurance that parking would not be a disaster again like last year.
- Council President Chilton suggested holding Spirit of Halloweentown only for the month of October, as she did not believe holding the event for two months would be appropriate this year, although she did not want to disrupt any plans that were already paid for and reserved.

#### **7. Discussion Regarding Current Agreement for Events Management**

Mr. Walsh reiterated his suggestion to continue with the Request for Proposal (RFP) process and extending E2C's contract to the end of the year or at least through the end of 13 Nights on the River which would be in between events. Key discussion items regarding the current agreement for events management were as follows:

- Councilor Gundersen explained why he agreed with Mr. Walsh's suggestion.
- Councilor Hubbard expressed concerns about not honoring the RFP if the contract were extended, which the Council discussed.
- Mr. Walsh confirmed there had been only one applicant so far for the RFP and only one call, from the same person.
- Council President Chilton explained why she agreed that the answer was not to continue kicking the matter down the road, noting the Council was only doing what was advised to do by its lawyers, that Halloweentown would not look how it usually did this year anyway, and that the Council was not trying to fire the current Events Coordinator.
- Councilor Sundeen agreed that if there were a year to do a change, this year was it; he did not believe it was right to keep extending the process.
- The Council discussed the delays in making a decision on the tourism contract.

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

Mr. Walsh presented his report with key highlights as follows:

- Making a decision on the tourism contract was really about wanting continuity if a new person took over the contract.
- The crew filming downtown had been active with no conflicts so far with the construction contractor; the film could have residual tourism for the city.
- St. Helens was on Congresswoman Bonamici's list of 15 community projects for her district to champion to the legislature with a potential of \$4 million to \$5 million for advancement of the City's reservoir project.
- The Parks & Trails Commission worked on funding through the Oregon Community Foundation, receiving a \$2,500 grant for signs.

- He had a special meeting with Project Arcadia, a group looking to use a portion of the mill site that would bring local jobs. The Council entered into an agreement with Project Arcadia for a due diligence period to work with them.
- Over 100 vendors had signed up for Citizens Day in the Park. The City was working with Peak Electric for upgrades in the park which would have some impact on the park restrooms being closed part of the day.

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- If the City were to do 13 Nights in McCormick Park with alcohol, the Council would need to take action by exemption or amendment to the Municipal Code that prohibits the use of alcohol in city parks.
- RFPs for tourism/events were due May 22. The Council made suggestions regarding who should be on the evaluation committee. Council President Chilton noted the importance of inviting the community. Mr. Walsh clarified each committee member would review the proposals and score them. Each Councilor should invite one person to the evaluation process and let him know who they would be.
- Since the Council had decided not to proceed with the police station construction on Kaster Road, staff sought direction on what to do next with the team of architects and engineers on standby ready to work on a project. After discussion, the Council directed staff to start working on the old PGE site at the corner of Columbia Boulevard and S. 18th Street. Councilor Hubbard wanted to make sure the City got an agreement on the land.
- Budget adoption was scheduled for June 5 and would require a supplemental budget for the capital outlay for the purchase of the Union building on Kaster Road.
- Urban Renewal would meet with the Budget Committee tomorrow night.

**ADJOURN – 3:40 pm**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

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

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Kathy Payne  
 Kathy Payne, City Recorder

/s/ Jessica Chilton  
 Jessica Chilton, Council President