



COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Wednesday, November 02, 2022

APPROVED MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl
Council President Doug Morten
Councilor Patrick Birkle
Councilor Stephen R. Topaz
Councilor Jessica Chilton

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
Mouhamad Zaher, Public Works Director
Brian Greenway, Police Chief
Joe Hogue, Police Lieutenant

Dylan Gaston, Police Detective
Matt Smith, Police Corporal
Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Bill Monahan, City Attorney
Tina Curry, Event Coordinator

OTHERS

Ron Trommlitz	Steve Toschi
Brady Preheim	Litia Miller
Stephanie Patterson	Jenna Cook

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

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

- Ronald Trommlitz read his comments into the record about requesting a copy of the Walker Consultant's Report on the reservoir. The City had paid \$2,800 for the report, which detailed the conditions, causes, responsibilities, and possible solutions suggested prior to years of litigation due to the failed liner. He submitted Public Records Requests in March and October, but both had been denied by the City Attorney.

Council President Morten requested a copy of what was read by Mr. Trommlitz.

- Brady Preheim noted Spirit of Halloweentown was a great event. He noted the trash cans had all been removed from the park, and some should have been left there. He expressed concerns about the Groundbreaking Ceremony, since a developer had not been hired, as well as the state of the City's finances due to the City not having hired a new Finance Director. He did not believe the City understood its financial situation, especially in light of the previous Finance Director, and that worried him.

DISCUSSION TOPICS - *The Council will take a break around 4:00 p.m.*

1. Employee Length of Service Recognition - **Scott Williams for 15 Years**

Mayor Scholl and Council members congratulated and thanked Scott Williams, a dedicated employee who had served the City with diligence and excellence. He was unable to attend in person as he was busy setting up for the Groundbreaking Ceremony.

2. Police Department Semi-Annual Report - *Brian Greenway, Police Chief*

Chief Greenway and Lieutenant Hogue reviewed their report. A copy was included in the archive packet for this meeting. Key items highlighted via PowerPoint included staffing updates with new hires and the Department's new hiring process which had been recalibrated for excellence. One new officer was expected to start in November, although DPSST training was not scheduled until May 2023. The State of Oregon had halted signing bonuses for lateral officers unless that same bonus was offered to every current employee. Crime trends, crime prevention strategies and case solving statistics in city were also reviewed. The agency had the first female officer instructor trained in drug recognition, and her additional training had helped increase the DUI numbers in the report. She and other St. Helens officers offered refresher training classes to the School District and talked with the District about encouraging students to consider policing as a viable profession. They also noted the exceptional work by the department in solving cases, including some that have already been prosecuted, with a particular emphasis on efforts to protect the vulnerable members of the community like children and the elderly. St. Helens K-9, Ryder, had been doing excellent work in investigations and the apprehension of suspects. Several incidences were noted, highlighting the work of the police officers, including a burglary attempt, which escalated to attempted assault and two fires where the police had fast response times. Some notable detective work and community partnerships were also highlighted, including the CCMH Crisis Stabilization Center. They stressed the challenges around mental health patient transportation strategies due to the amount of time it took officers away from the community. The Department had continued to work with the Fire Department to aid in evacuation and fire suppression efforts and training other Columbia Community Law Enforcement (CCLE) Agencies.

They clarified that the Police Department only offered escort services in collaboration with Columbia Community Mental Health (CCMH) Crisis Stabilization Center when the County had not been involved. The County did offer transportation for inmates to Portland, but not for mental health. Suspected mental health cases were not a cause for arrest. Protocol was to just hold the person and have an assessment done at the CCMH Crisis Stabilization Center. If one was arrested, their attorney could request evaluation, which would then trigger a mental health assessment. The current mental health policy within the State would only assess and hold those individuals who expressed suicidal thoughts. No calls had been had on the kiosks and boating docks with prevention being the emphasis and not response. Due to leadership changes, water training for officers had been delayed.

Councilor Birkle commended the department on the excellent work they had been doing. He had done a ride along and was impressed by Officers McClure and Marshall doing a DUI assessment, particularly with their resourcefulness in using a mobile translator to communicate as the driver only spoke Spanish.

Mayor Scholl also expressed pride in the Department having helped people get out of the fire at the nursing home even after the explosions.

3. Relocate to S. 1st & St. Helens Street for 3:00 p.m. Streets and Utilities Extension Project Groundbreaking Ceremony

Mayor Scholl noted the relocation to S. 1st Street for the Groundbreaking Ceremony went well and was celebrated by many.

4. Discussion regarding Safety During Large Community Events - *Councilor Birkle*

Councilor Birkle introduced the discussion regarding safety and emergency management during large events, which came into focus for him particularly at the Halloween Parade. He hoped the letter Chief Greenway had shared prior to the parade would offer reference points to review what had been done and where improvement could be made. He cited examples such as having adequate signage, barriers, and adequate volunteers and staff to assist during these events. He hoped these changes could avoid some of the situations that had occurred during the Parade and 13 Nights on the River, like drivers going the wrong way, overcrowding in certain places, and middle school students disrupting businesses and

citizens trying to enjoy the event. His proposed solutions included adequate emergency management planning, event specific planning, security and safety preparedness, like active shooter readiness and swift emergency services response. He noted Chief Greenway had proposed having an event specific emergency action plan, thorough event staff training on suspicious activity and behavior spotting and reporting, and medical emergency response agreements. And even though Council could not foresee all eventualities, it was important to have a thoughtful plan.

Council President Morten suggested using high school students and civic organizations, such as Rotary and Kiwanis, to help at the events rather than having that fall on the police, who could help out where needed.

Councilor Chilton suggested using private security at some of the larger events and reviewing what that would cost the City.

Councilor Topaz suggested a threat assessment training on handling of incidents during events to improve readiness. He noted an incident that occurred at the City Hall front office as a wakeup call to the Council.

Mayor Scholl agreed 13 Nights on the River needed some type of help and suggested reaching out to the organizer to discuss the security and funding to make sure things are in place for subsequent events.

City Administrator Walsh talked about parade permit improvements as events got larger and larger to improve garbage deposit, restrooms, public safety and the ability to support the number attending.

Mayor Scholl noted the citizens displeasure with being held up in areas without stop signs. This was an early heads-up as the City began its new Council. The task was on the City to do everything it needed to do to foresee all eventualities to have well-thought-out plans.

Councilor Topaz suggested having people in security shirts during events.

Mayor Scholl clarified the Police Department used to do the patrolling and advised Council to check five or six years back to see how that used to run. They agreed the increased attendance called for more private security.

Council agreed to revisit the discussion as it was a huge part of community building.

5. Discussion of Joint City Council and Planning Commission Meetings - *Jacob*

City Planner Graichen briefly discussed the Planning Commission's desire to have a joint meeting, especially with new Councilor Elects and new Planning Commissioners.

The Council consented to meet Wednesday, December 14, at 4 p.m. City Recorder Kathy Payne would send a calendar invite.

6. Review of Chase Road Easement Agreement Modification - *Jacob*

City Planner Graichen reviewed the Chase Road Easement Agreement modification. A copy was included in the archive packet for this meeting. He informed the Council that the document had been signed, to his disbelief. He talked about the history of agreement of easement, including the evolution of the project. All that was left was the Mayor's authorization and signature.

7. Discussion regarding Adopting Uses of Opioid Settlement Funds - *John*

City Administrator Walsh reviewed the Opioid Settlement Funds memo. A copy was included in the archive packet for this meeting. Various groups were still working on settlements; 45% was to go to prevention, and 55% was to go to local jurisdictions for treatment and recovery. The City was going to receive \$210,000 over the next 18 years. He requested Council approve the uses that are allowed, like NARCAN or other FDA-approved drugs to reverse opioid overdose, in addition to expanded training over the life of the settlement payments.

City Administrator Walsh clarified Council could allocate the funds to third parties like the Alano Club as long as the money was for allowed uses in developing prevention and education programs.

The money would then be allocated through the budgeting process, after reviewing where to allocate the expenses, which did not have to be in the same year.

8. Councilor Topaz Central Waterfront Discussion

Councilor Topaz reported the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) had given a presentation wanting public discussion on covering over the contaminated waterfront/lagoon of the mill property. However, covering the contaminated area would limit use of the harbor. The Portland Harbor shared some concerning numbers about putting contaminated waste in the St. Helens lagoon, approximately eight to nine million cubic yards of it. The challenge with other locations, like Hillsboro, was that because of regulations, waste could only be transported along particular routes which were longer, making St. Helens the closest dump site. Because of fishing and tribal conditions on the river, moving the waste could only be done four months a year, which meant 18-truck loads per hour, 24 hours a day, seven days a week over a 10-year period. With the check-ins required for trucks hauling waste, traffic would be heavy along the 2.5 miles from Highway 30 to the dump site. While trains could be used from Portland, trucks would still need to off-load the waste from the train to the dump site. Barges were the most efficient option for transporting the waste, but they could not be used if DEQ covered the mill property. Only DEQ and the Boise operation were discussing what to do with St. Helens' waterfront. The City should save the waterfront and get rid of the contamination, so barges could be used.

Council President Morten noted the Waterfront and the lagoon were two different projects. He understood that for the lagoon project, the staging area to sort contaminated and non-contaminated materials would happen in Portland and only the clean fill would be brought to St. Helens.

Mayor Scholl clarified the lagoon project was part of the Central Waterfront Project and confirmed the City had responded to DEQ about adding a nine-inch layer of charcoal to the buildup of sediment, stating the City did not want that as a remedy, but wanted to be able to reuse the waterfront. No plans had been confirmed yet by DEQ. The City has an open agreement with U.S. Ecology and had funding to further study the integrity of the lagoon and the dike. The City was uncertain how many trains or truckloads there would be because the delivery method had not been decided.

Councilor Topaz said he was surprised DEQ's presentation noted St. Helens would be able to use the waterfront if it was covered, but a similar plan was previously rejected in downtown Portland.

Mayor Scholl clarified DEQ did that in downtown Portland and that waterfront could no longer be used, which was why St. Helens was opposed to DEQ's proposed remedy. The City needed to continue to fight this, including through litigation, as they had not been consulted formally about this plan.

Councilor Topaz reiterated the City was not part of the formal discussion between Office Max and DEQ.

Mayor Scholl added the City knew the contaminations are deeper, under the existing contaminant currently. He assured the City would continue its fighting to the point of litigation if necessary; but there were still a lot of unknowns.

Council briefly discussed the history of the Port's property and creosote plant, the timelines involved with the mill property, and concerns about the work DEQ was doing and its lack of communication. The City would continue tracking what DEQ was doing.

City Administrator Walsh clarified that he did not advocate to take Portland's hazardous waste. They were only looking at the mildly impacted materials that needed to come out of the river. An updated market analysis study could be found on the Waterfront Redevelopment website which provided information on the tipping fees, the amount of waste material involved, etc. and also showed trucks and

the trains were not an option, and that barge transport was the most cost-effective option. A transload facility on the waterfront could be located away from the mill docks.

Councilor Topaz noted a transload system would be an asset to the City as it would offer an opportunity for barge loading services for other people.

9. Report from City Administrator John Walsh

City Administrator Walsh presented his report, reviewing tonight's regular meeting agenda items and various City activities along with the following key items:

- Event Coordinator Curry and Communications Officer King would present a report about the media reach for Halloweentown at the next Council meeting. The media reach from the Sun-Maid Raisins sponsorship resulted in a billion impressions.
- Discussion would begin soon about the bid process and how to approach the Public Safety Facility Project, as well as the general funding and how the City would afford it. Jon Ellis was preparing a detailed report on the City's finances generally and specifically for the project which staff hoped to have in the next few weeks.
- The Riverwalk newsletter had been a popular outreach method with 200 people signed up for updates and more were expected. The business and neighborhood meetings with local residents was well received. The contractor would have an office on the premises and other resources would be available for people to bring any grievances. At the meetings, several items were clarified, including that there would be no out-of-pocket expenses for businesses and that the work would be done using hammering or boring the rock. Feedback was mostly positive, especially around fire system connections to upgrade buildings etc. The real issue seemed to stem from the City finding non-coded electrical hook-ups to some of the businesses, causing them concern.
- As mentioned, St Helens was chosen as a pilot project for the Growing Rural Oregon Initiative to support local entrepreneurs. The grant amount had increased from \$30,000 to \$100,000, which the City would host for a while as it had been difficult to find the right place for the funds. Discussion was ongoing about the best place for the funds that would have the most impact.
- A meeting was held last week to discuss the best funding options and packages for the \$16.4 million Wastewater Project. If structured right, the City could save about \$4 million. The City was eligible for about \$2.5 million in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, which the City would use for designing the project. Individual loans would be used for each of the three basin projects, and each loan was eligible for a \$500,000 principal forgiveness if water quality components were also implemented. This approach did not slow down the timeline, and some of the environmental permitting would be easier; however, there could be a few months delay waiting for the grant cycle to go through, but it was worth the 25% savings.
- The City is working hard to find some permanent solutions for Makerspace funding and make that position permanent and back into the General Fund. He confirmed the discussions included funding for the entrepreneurial funds. The ARPA funds the City received were great and inflated to some programs and service offerings, but those funds would fall off, so the City needed to build them up and keep those service levels sustainable.
- City Staff was preparing for an audit. No responses were received for the RFQ, so the City reached out to the current auditor, who provided a proposal which the Council accepted several months earlier, and now it was time to do the work.
- The patrol at the docks was going well and the kiosk resulted in a marked improvement; people were not overstaying. Council would receive a report from the harbormaster at a future date.
- The City was working with community partners on HB3115 regarding the homelessness mandate with the July 2023 deadline. The Planning Commission was also involved. Mayor Scholl noted St. Helens had an inventory of what was happening, and he would speak loudly if there was an influx of those experiencing homelessness, adding there was more to it than having the State throw money

at it. Council discussed the importance of being mindful of any influx, especially with how aggressive Portland was, which might also be influencing the boating situation at the docks. A conversation was initiated with the Community Action Team. The City should be proactive in looking at transitional housing, education programs and other ways to support the homeless. Mental health services, housing, and jobs all needed to be addressed.

City Administrator Walsh added the City needed to be mindful of its role and determine its lane. Social programs were not its strength as other critical services were provided; homelessness was not just a City issue.

ADJOURN – 5:02 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - Cancelled

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Kathy Payne
Kathy Payne, City Recorder

/s/ Rick Scholl
Rick Scholl, Mayor