



COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Wednesday, April 03, 2024

APPROVED MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl
Council President Jessica Chilton
Councilor Mark Gundersen
Councilor Russell Hubbard
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

STAFF

John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Gloria Butsch, Finance Director
Tina Curry, Contracted Event Coordinator

OTHERS

Jane Garcia	Jenni Gilbert	Steve Toschi	Robyn Toschi
Jen Massey	Arthur Leskowich	Brady Preheim	Steve LeSollen
Janet LeSollen	Dakota Harris	Maisy McDole	Derek Beaudoin
Ivan Bissell	Carrie Bissell	Pakou Vang	Willow Bill
Howard Blumenthal	Jesse Family	Chloe Cloughton	Cylie Yeager
Nick Hellmich	Stephanie Patterson	Hannah Woods	Ginny Carlson
Adam St. Pierre	M. Ponce	Marci Sanders	Students & Families

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ANNOUNCE & AWARD PRIZES TO "IF I WERE MAYOR..." STUDENT CONTEST WINNERS

Mayor Scholl announced and awarded the prizes for the "If I Were Mayor..." Student Contest. Three poster submittals for the fourth and fifth grade category were submitted. Glory Beaudoin won first place, receiving \$150 along with her poster being submitted to the State level. Danielle Jesse and Hope Vue tied for second place, each receiving \$50. All three participants received a certificate, swag bag featuring contributions from multiple departments, and will be invited to join the mayor for a pizza lunch this summer.

PROCLAMATION

1. National Library Workers Day - April 9, 2024
Mayor Scholl read the proclamation into the record.

National Library Workers Day

April 9, 2024

WHEREAS, libraries are essential institutions that offer the opportunity for everyone to connect with others, learn new skills, and pursue their passions, no matter who they are or where they are on life's journey; and

WHEREAS, the passion and dedication of the library assistants and technician of St. Helens Public Library contribute to the cultural enrichment, educational advancement, economic development, and social cohesion of our city; and

WHEREAS, St. Helens Public Library librarians and library support staff bring the St. Helens community expert assistance, personal service, both in person and online by each year serving the more than 37,390 visitors to the library, circulating over 65,000 items, and presenting free programs for all ages; and

WHEREAS, the library workers at St. Helens Public Library tirelessly serve our community, enriching lives and fostering literacy and lifelong learning through their expertise and commitment during the more than 2,300 hours the library is open year-round; and

WHEREAS, it is important to recognize the unique contributions of all library workers and the value to individuals and society of those contributions; and

WHEREAS, the City of St. Helens joins libraries, library workers, and library supporters across America are celebrating National Library Workers Day sponsored by the American Library Association-Allied Professional Association (ALA-APA).

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Rick Scholl, the Mayor of the City of St. Helens, do hereby proclaim Tuesday, April 9, 2024, as

NATIONAL LIBRARY WORKERS DAY

I encourage all in this community to take advantage of the variety of library resources available and to thank library workers for their exceptional contributions to American life.

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

- ◆ Stephanie Patterson. Today's Work Session agenda indicated that there would be discussion about 13 Nights on the River. However, a hostile environment was created when E2C Corp. stepped forward to discuss. The contractor was repeatedly interrupted and yelled at by the Mayor. Communication did not happen and no information was conveyed. An apology for getting emotional does not repair the communication or solve the problem. It sets the tone for public meetings, social media, and in the community. It gives permission to treat people rudely and disrespectfully. It's not the first time and she wants it to stop.

Mayor Scholl said he publicly apologized to Tina Curry during the meeting and tried to again after the meeting but she walked away. She is a hired contractor who has leveraged the City and provoked the meeting. That is no excuse for his behavior.

- ◆ Hannah Woods. She encouraged the Council to put out an RFP for the tourism contract. There are a lot of local vendors and production companies who have the expertise and community support to bring light and relieve stressors. These conversations seem to be very political. Whether it be her company, E2C, or someone else, public safety should be a priority in tourism conversations.

- ◆ Nicholas Hellmich. He listened to the last Parks & Trails Commission meeting that discussed building cabins on Sand Island. There was a clause in the contract that said the City would have to buy the cabins back at the end of the contract. He suggested they investigate that part of the contract further. As far as concerts at McCormick Park are concerned, that will only be for one year. He is willing to help as an alcohol monitor, road crossing, etc. Construction projects will benefit the city in the long run.
- ◆ Steve Toschi. He commended the Council for the final extension of the contract with the tourism director. It will be an emergency if they're unable to secure contractor services for the year. The contractor will get them through a challenging year of tourism events during construction. He cautioned the Council to be careful maintaining the tourism program. Businesses depend on it.
- ◆ Brady Preheim. Glad they are continuing the contract. It is appropriate to do a future RFP but is inappropriate for people to show up and talk about it when they've never done it before. They need to be ready to do it in June for 2025. He agreed the Work Session conversation about moving 13 Nights on the River was very disrespectful. 13 Nights on the River and 4th of July are for the locals and not tourism related.

Mayor Scholl pointed out that E2C is paid to do those events. Brady responded that Tina generates her own revenue. As far as the police station is concerned, he is more confused about the LUBA appeal now and whether it will be withdrawn. He suggested remodeling the existing facility.

- ◆ Ginny Carlson. In the last few years, police have moved away from being community influences. If the Council dedicates funding to the facility, it's time to have a community presence to build those connections again. She attended a Habitat for Humanity Conference in Atlanta and talked about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. It's important to remember that no one is more important than another and should never be talked over. She saw the increase in revenue when Tina came and built the program. Council must do what's best for the community.
- ◆ Howard Blumenthal. He is not in favor of having 13 Nights on the River downtown this year. Parts of the area are already cut off and construction will increase. As far as the Flying Eagle is concerned, he would like to have it in someone's hands who helped build it. Someone could offer \$1,000 and walk away with their heritage. He wants to see it stay here.
- ◆ Willow Bill. The history of the canoe is important. He asked for the Council to believe in him. He will take care of it but it's not his.
- ◆ Adam St. Pierre. He respects Council's decision to stay out of social media postings. Social media can be great but it's not all correct and it can lead to bullying. They made some changes to their transparency and accountability page to return to productive dialogue and debate. When will there be an RFP for tourism? If Spirit of Halloweentown is the only tourism event, it should not take this long to get done. He was informed there would be clarification of the Wauna Credit Union account tonight. He recently learned that E2C will begin working with the City of Rainier but doesn't want to see the Wauna funds being used there. A thorough investigation or public statement should be made of its ownership.

RESOLUTIONS

2. **Resolution No. 2002:** A Resolution Adopting Findings in Support of and Authorizing an Emergency Procurement of Tourism Services

Mayor Scholl read Resolution No. 2002 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Council President Chilton to adopt Resolution No. 2002.

Discussion.

Council President Chilton requested clarification. This extends the contract through December 31. During that time, will they be working on an updated contract and executing an RFP? City Administrator Walsh said they are prepared to work on those as soon as the attorney has them ready. He will contact them to find out the status. Discussion ensued about the timing of the contract and RFP. City Recorder Payne talked about the delays in the attorney's office being caused by work that took priority, such as public records requests with timelines. Council members expressed their frustration with the contract and RFP delays and reminded staff of the urgency to get this done.

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

APPROVE AND/OR AUTHORIZE FOR SIGNATURE

3. Agreement with Lower Columbia Engineering, LLC for Erosion & Sediment Control Inspections

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

CONSENT AGENDA FOR APPROVAL

4. Council Minutes dated January 24, 2024
5. Declare Surplus Property - Police Department
6. Accounts Payable Bill Lists

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Council President Chilton to approve '4' through '6' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

WORK SESSION ACTION ITEMS

Leak Adjustment at 404 N. 12th Street

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Council President Chilton to approve a utility account adjustment for 404 N. 12th Street of \$3,435.40. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

Leak Adjustment at 695 N. Columbia River Hwy.

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to approve a utility account adjustment for 695 N. Columbia River Hwy. of \$1,141.08. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

13 Nights on the River Venue

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Council President Chilton to move 13 Nights on the River from Columbia View Park to McCormick Park for the 2024 concert series due to the numerous construction projects occurring in the waterfront and downtown area.

Discussion. Mayor Scholl spoke of staff meeting to discuss the 2024 venue and coming to the consensus that it would not be safe downtown.

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

Flying Eagle Canoe

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Council President Chilton to declare the Flying Eagle Canoe surplus at the next meeting.

Discussion. City Recorder Payne reviewed the options for disposal; including giving it to another government agency, auction, bids, liquidation sale, fixed price sale, trade, or donate to a nonprofit organization. They will decide at the next meeting which option to do.

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

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

Council President Chilton reported...

- There were comments made about community policing. It's not that they don't want to see that, they just don't have the staffing for it. A detective was moved back to patrol to help with coverage even though there is still very much a need for a second detective. Despite that, they are still visiting schools and serving in the community in their own time.
- Toured Public Works last week. She appreciates all of them and the work they do. They had good questions based on the stressful things going on with the budget.
- Citizens Day in the Park is on June 22 and they need volunteers.
- Megga Egg Hunt is a community favorite. She appreciates all the business donations and community volunteers.
- Meeting with the local Public Safety Coordinating Council on Friday.
- Empty Bowls fundraiser on April 12 at McBride Elementary School. It benefits the Columbia Pacific Food Bank.
- Asked to speak at a Lions Club meeting to share what is happening at the City.

Councilor Sundeen reported...

- Interviews this week for Parks & Trails Commission members.
- Work Party at Nob Hill on Saturday.
- Congratulated Officer Terry Massey for five years of service.
- Agreed that community policing is important. Chief Greenway has a goal to be more active in the community and promised to be at the Kiwanis parade this year. They would be doing more if they could, but as population and crime increases that does take priority.
- Doing a ride-along this week.
- Met with Councilor Hubbard and potential investors at the paper mill site last week. They are excited for the prospects and will do what they can to get things moving.
- Met with Public Works Field Supervisor/Safety Coordinator Ethan Stirling last week to talk about safety. He thanked Stirling and all those working with him on the Safety Committee.

Councilor Gundersen reported...

- He toured Public Works last week as well. It's a great staff and he learned a lot. He's proud of the work they do that is rarely heard about.
- There is a police levy in May that he hopes passes. He was doing some research and discovered that St. Helens is below even what the Defund the Police program suggests.

Councilor Hubbard reported...

- There was no Library Board meeting last month.
- He receives enlightening email updates from Library Director Suzanne Bishop each week.
- He and Councilor Sundeen met with a group interested in the mill site. They are already familiar with the machines and will immediately have 70 good paying jobs.

MAYOR SCHOLL REPORTS

- Received a letter from American Hyperion Solar. Unfortunately, they are not pursuing the site in St. Helens. He was discouraged by the letter and thanked everyone involved in the process. The City will be moving forward with this other opportunity.

- There is a lot of construction downtown. Moving 13 Nights on the River to McCormick Park is the only feasible site.
- Congratulations to Officer Terry Massey on five years. He was a Reserve Officer prior to becoming a Police Officer. He would like to see the reserve program reinstated to help with recruitment.
- National Library Worker Day is April 9. He encouraged everyone to visit the library and thank them.

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURN – 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Kathy Payne
Kathy Payne, City Recorder

/s/ Rick Scholl
Rick Scholl, Mayor