



COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Wednesday, April 02, 2025

APPROVED MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Jennifer Massey
Council President Jessica Chilton
Councilor Mark Gundersen
Councilor Russell Hubbard
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator	Crystal King, Communications Officer
Kathy Payne, City Recorder	Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder	Jamin Coy, Police Officer
Joe Hogue, Interim Police Chief	

OTHERS

Reed Hjort	Glory Beaudoin & Family
Brady Preheim	Brinlee Bowen & Family
Jim Coleman	Hope Vue & Family
Guy Auker	

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mayor Massey 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. Hope Vue won first place, receiving \$150 along with her poster being submitted to the State level. Glory Beaudoin and Brinlee Bowen 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.

AWARD BID/CONTRACT

1. Award the Belton Sewer Step System Capacity Study, Project No. S-685, to Grayling Engineers

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to award the Belton Sewer Step System Capacity Study, Project No. S-685, to Grayling Engineers. **Vote:** Yea: Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Sundeen; Nay: Councilor Hubbard

Councilor Hubbard declared that he does not have enough information to make a decision. He expressed concerns about the cost and suggested the study could potentially be done in-house to save money. City Administrator Walsh acknowledged that he had not consulted with Public Works on this matter and agreed that the price seemed higher than expected.

After further discussion, the Council decided to reconsider their votes.

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

It was agreed to bring this item back as an agenda item with a presentation for further consideration.

APPROVE AND/OR AUTHORIZE FOR SIGNATURE

2. First Amendment to Contract with Advanced Excavating Specialists, LCC for Riverwalk Project Phase I

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to approve '2' above.

City Administrator Walsh clarified that this amendment was related to extending the time for the completion of railings, which were a crucial factor in ensuring the park's safety.

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

CONSENT AGENDA FOR ACCEPTANCE

3. Parks and Trails Commission Minutes dated February 10, 2025

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve '3' above.

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

CONSENT AGENDA FOR APPROVAL

4. Council Minutes dated March 17 and 19, 2025
5. Proposed Amendments to Public Works Supervisor Job Description
6. Accounts Payable Bill Lists

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

WORK SESSION ACTION ITEMS

Police Station

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to instruct staff to plan a Council Public Forum for May 7 at 6:00 p.m. to share information with the public on the proposed new police station site. **Vote:** Voting Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

Jail Levy Support

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to direct staff to draft a letter in support of the jail levy for the Mayor to sign. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

Hiring Process for Chief of Police

Mayor Massey declared a potential conflict of interest. Her husband is a St. Helens Police Officer. She is not biased and confident she can act objectively in the City's best interest.

Councilor Hubbard read the following statement into the record, "The City's internal recruitment process for its Chief of Police has closed and we have received three applicants. The City will be convening an evaluation panel that will be made up of the following:

1. 2 – 3 people with significant law enforcement expertise from outside the community. The City will consult with the Oregon Association of the Chief of Police (OACP) linebacker program to get recommendations for these people – from outside the community.
2. One Councilor and I will be the Councilor serving in that role.
3. Two people from law enforcement from within the community, as available.
4. The City Administrator in a non-voting role.

Interviews will take place as soon as possible. We anticipate them taking place in the next 30 days if not sooner. After the applications and interviews are scored, the evaluation committee will make a recommendation for the highest scored applicant to become the next Chief of Police. Or, if the evaluation committee decides that it does not believe any of the candidates are in the best interest of the City to select, it may make that recommendation and the City can decide how to proceed to fulfill the role with an alternative plan.

If the evaluation committee makes a recommendation to select a candidate, the recommended candidate must pass background checks, psychological evaluation, and fitness for duty analysis.

The selected applicant will then be submitted to the City Administrator to present to City Council for approval.”

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Hubbard and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to approve this referenced evaluation process for the Chief of Police position. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

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

- ◆ Brady Preheim. Expressed significant concerns regarding the ongoing police chief hiring process, highlighting several areas he believed warranted further attention. He criticized the Council for delaying the decision and called the process unjust and unacceptable. Preheim also pointed out potential conflicts of interest, specifically mentioning Mayor Massey's husband being on the police force and her pending lawsuit. He argued that these factors should preclude her from participating in any discussions related to the Police Department. Furthermore, he questioned Council President Chilton's ability to be impartial due to her connections to Mayor Massey and campaigned for Councilor Gundersen to replace her. Preheim urged the Council to release the unredacted reports, including the Band report and its supplemental documents, to the public. He concluded by calling for an investigation into the Mayor for alleged interference and other misconduct.
- ◆ Guy Auker. Addressed the Council regarding a graffiti removal product discussed during a prior Work Session. He praised Wayne Mayo for proposing an efficient solution to graffiti issues and mentioned researching a company called Orion that offers a similar product. Auker expressed his support for Chief Hogue and his ongoing lawsuit, opining that the Chief is owed substantial compensation. Furthermore, Auker criticized Mayor Massey's handling of public comment time, referring to a perceived inconsistency in how it was managed during the meeting.

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

Councilor Sundeen reported...

- Thanked Interim Police Chief Hogue and Officer Coy for being present.
- Invited community members to participate in two upcoming volunteer events scheduled for April 5 to enhance local parks.
 - McCormick Park Japanese Gardens, 9-11 a.m.
 - Nob Hill Nature Park, 1-3p.m.

Council President Chilton reported...

- Attended the recent Joint City Council/Planning Commission meeting. It was nice to see constructive collaboration on proactive ideas.
- Toured the Waterfront property with Public Works Director Zaher and Engineering Manager Darroux. She appreciates the work staff are doing and is excited for the project to be complete.
- Attended the Annual Chamber of Commerce Award Banquet. It was great to celebrate the efforts of local entrepreneurs and community leaders.
- Read a statement into the record, "I'm here because the people of my city trusted my decision-making skills, ability to make thoughtful decisions, and to stand by them, and that's exactly what I intend to do. Our focus should be on the processes that nourishes and produces the fruit."

Councilor Gundersen reported...

- Congratulations to "If I Were Mayor..." Student Contest participants. He hopes to see more and appreciates the insights they offer.
- Read a letter from Sheriff Pixley addressed to Police Commissioner Sundeen and City Administrator Walsh, "I want to take a moment to commend the City of St. Helens Police Department for the remarkable progress it has made under Acting Chief Hogue's leadership. Shortly after Joe was appointed, he immediately enacted a change to the agency assist policy, enabling officers once again to assist neighboring agencies. Joe has consistently engaged with me at multiple occasions to ensure the St. Helens Police Department remains helpful. He also hosted a chief's meeting, attended by key leaders from local law enforcement agencies. Through these efforts, he has successfully rebuilt relationships with Columbia County Public Safety leaders, relationships that had been strained under the previous administration. Over the last few months, I along with other members of my agency, have noticed a significant positive shift in the attitude and demeanor of St. Helens Police Department staff. Officers are more approachable and the increased interagency cooperation has been most of all appreciated. Additionally, I have seen a strong emphasis on community engagement with more outreach of integration than before. I attribute these positive changes to the leadership of Acting Chief Joe Hogue. Under his guidance, the St. Helens Police Department is heading in a new positive direction. His tenured leadership and commitment to the community have positioned the department for future success. I sincerely hope the City Council considers making Joe Hogue a permanent Police Chief."

Councilor Hubbard reported...

- Acknowledged the community spirit and engagement displayed at the Chamber of Commerce Awards Banquet.
- Expressed optimism about the upcoming Police Chief selection committee process. He looked forward to moving forward constructively amid challenging circumstances.

MAYOR MASSEY REPORTS

- Invited Councilor Sundeen to share a historic fact during his reports in the future.
- Shared her invitation to attend the prestigious 2025 Governor's Conference on Tourism, organized by Travel Oregon, scheduled for April 14 at the Convention Center.
- Emphasizing the importance of differentiating facts from opinions, she urged citizens to verify information using credible sources, such as recorded meetings, clarification memos, and official meeting minutes for accuracy and timeliness.
- Acknowledged City staff, specifically City Recorder Payne and Deputy City Recorder Scholl, for their diligent preparations for Council sessions, highlighting the value of their behind-the-scenes efforts to ensure smooth meetings.
- Proposed directing the City Attorney to review Ron Trommlitz's request for more information from the Walker report, with the Council reaching a consensus to proceed.

- Suggested moving public comment back to the beginning of Regular Sessions to ensure all input is considered ahead of making decisions, a change also agreed upon by the Council.
- Expressed appreciation of the Council's positive dialogue and collaborative efforts in addressing challenging situations.

OTHER BUSINESS**ADJOURN – 7:32 p.m.**

Respectfully transcribed by ClerkMinutes and submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Kathy Payne
Kathy Payne, City Recorder

/s/ Jennifer Massey
Jennifer Massey, Mayor