



COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Wednesday, January 07, 2026

APPROVED MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

MEMBERS ABSENT

Councilor Brandon Sundeen

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
Gloria Butsch, Finance Director
Sharon Darroux, Engineering Manager

OTHERS

Alexis Krupa	Tammy Maygra	Alana Gilston
Peter Olsen	Brady Preheim	Adam St. Pierre
Joe	Patrick Birkle	Steve Toschi
Patrick C.	Nick Flory	Nicole Battista
Jeremy Evans		

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

- ◆ Tammy Maygra. Expressed concerns about transparency, specifically regarding redacted public records including the Jim Band report. She quoted previous statements made by Mayor Massey during her campaign about the importance of unredacted public records and accused her of hypocrisy for not releasing unredacted records now that she holds office.
- ◆ Brady Preheim. Challenged statements made about the water tax during the work session. He disputed the claim that a comparable boat could be purchased for \$25,000, noting that the boat has two new motors worth \$50,000 and required an additional \$6,000 for synchronization. Preheim also addressed the Jim Band report, criticizing the claims of attorney-client privilege used to withhold it and asserting that the attorney stated the report belonged to Jim Band, not the City. He criticized the tourism contractor for providing incorrect information about the train's fuel tank capacity and pointed out that the City had not discussed the "alien" asset, which he claimed was more expensive than the boat and train combined.

- ◆ Patrick Birkle. Thanked the Council for providing responses to public comments during work sessions. He questioned the assertion that \$300,000 could fund six police officers, suggesting it would likely only cover three when accounting for salaries, benefits, and training. Regarding tourism, he acknowledged previous accountability issues with the former contractor but noted improved accountability with the current contractor. He expressed concern about housing affordability related to potential waterfront development, emphasizing that housing should address the needs of citizens across income levels. Additionally, he advocated for retaining the boat for emergency management purposes.
- ◆ Adam St. Pierre. Played a recording of Finance Director Gloria Butsch explaining budget limitations and the process of creating a balanced budget. The recording demonstrated an exchange where a Budget Committee member had suggested reallocating tourism funds and Butsch explained the constraints.
- ◆ Steve Toschi. Expressed support for high-end housing development on the waterfront, arguing that the City has already built sufficient lower-income housing which he claimed was causing problems in schools and for police. He was concerned about the Police Department doubling their overtime budget without discussion and suggested implementing an existing agreement for officers to be on call from home to reduce overtime costs. He also noted the importance of maintaining Sand Island's operations.

RESOLUTIONS

1. **Resolution No. 2064:** A Resolution Appointing the Budget Officer for Fiscal Year 2026-27

Mayor Massey read Resolution No. 2064 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to adopt Resolution No. 2064. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT - INCREASING UTILITY RATES**

Resolution No. 2065: Resolution to Establish Water, Sewer, and Storm Drainage Utility Rates and Charges

Removed from agenda.

APPROVE AND/OR AUTHORIZE FOR SIGNATURE

3. Agreement with Axon Enterprise, Inc. for the Purchase of an Axon Air/Skydio X10 Basic Patrol Drone Program and Authorize the City Administrator to Execute the Agreement

Removed from agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA FOR ACCEPTANCE

4. Parks and Trails Commission Minutes dated October 13 and November 10, 2025
5. Planning Commission Minutes dated August 12, September 9, and October 14, 2025

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Hubbard to accept '4' and '5' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard

CONSENT AGENDA FOR APPROVAL

6. City Council Minutes dated December 17, 2025
7. Budget Calendar for FY2027
8. Adoption of St. Helens Reservoir Siting Study and Authorization for Staff to Proceed with Negotiations to Acquire the Recommended Site

9. Authorization for Leak Adjustment Decisions to be Made Under the Administrative Rules and Deferred to City Council Only Under Extenuating Circumstances or by Customer Appeal
10. OLCC Licenses
11. Accounts Payable Bill Lists

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve '6' through '11' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard

WORK SESSION ACTION ITEMS

Water Taxi

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Hubbard to deem the water taxi surplus property.

Mayor Massey suggested exploring the option of developing an RFP to find an entity that might operate the boat, potentially through a sale where the City would hold the note. Council President Chilton expressed support for this approach, noting that while she saw vision for the boat, the City was not currently in a position to manage it. City Attorney Wigod explained that City Administrator Walsh could develop a public process allowing people to submit proposals for operating the boat, purchasing it with City financing, or leasing it.

Councilor Hubbard expressed concern about potentially missing the window for selling the boat, but the majority of the Council preferred exploring other options first.

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

Motion: Motion by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Hubbard to authorize the City Administrator to work on an RFP for the water taxi. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard

Tram

Council President Chilton noted that the tram was not being used and was causing issues for the tourism contractor.

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Hubbard to deem the tram surplus property. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard

Mayor Massey requested information about the "alien" asset mentioned during public comment, including its purchase price and any associated software. Council President Chilton agreed to inquire about this asset with the appropriate parties.

INTERVIEW CANDIDATES FOR BUDGET COMMITTEE

12. Budget Committee Interviews Schedule & Candidates
 - 7:30 p.m. Nicole Battista
 - 7:40 p.m. Jeremy Evans
 - 7:50 p.m. Nick Flory
 - 8:00 p.m. Alana Gilston
 - 8:10 p.m. Brady Preheim

Each candidate was asked the same five questions regarding their availability to attend meetings, reasons for wanting to join the Committee, what they would add to the Committee, their views on challenges and opportunities facing St. Helens, and if they had anything else to add.

Nicole Battista described her Business Major background and experience with budgeting for Scout organizations. She expressed concern about police staffing and interest in youth programs.

Jeremy Evans highlighted his background as an actuary for insurance companies, explaining his role in ensuring proper financial reserves. He emphasized his critical eye, respect for financial processes, and attention to risk. He identified economic development challenges and staffing issues as major concerns for the City.

Nick Flory shared his experience on the Parks and Trails Commission and his commitment to St. Helens as his home. He expressed support for law enforcement and public safety, and identified the budget and creating economic growth as key challenges.

Alana Gilston emphasized her lifetime residency in the community and desire to bring a younger perspective to the Committee. She identified Spirit of Halloweentown as an opportunity for revenue growth and expressed interest in learning more about the City's budget process.

Brady Preheim noted his previous service on the Budget Committee and extensive knowledge of City operations. He expressed concerns about budget integrity and the waterfront development, questioning Romano Capital's development experience.

After deliberation, the Council appreciated all candidates but particularly valued Evans' financial expertise and risk assessment background.

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Hubbard to appoint Jeremy Evans to the Budget Committee. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

Council President Chilton reported...

- Acknowledged upcoming budget cycle challenges.
- Congratulated long-serving City staff members Jennifer Johnson, Melanie Payne, and Shanna Duggan.
- Celebrated the reopening of the paper mill, emphasizing its importance in bringing industry, jobs, and tax revenue back to St. Helens.

Councilor Hubbard reported...

- Expressed satisfaction with Project Arcadia's fruition after extensive negotiations. Highlighted the return of hands-on work to the community.

Councilor Gundersen reported...

- Echoed the significance of the mill reopening. Emphasized the Council's commitment to the project and its positive impact on citizens and workers.

MAYOR MASSEY REPORTS

- Thanked City staff, particularly City Recorder Payne and Deputy City Recorder Scholl, for meeting preparations.
- Acknowledged challenges facing understaffed departments.
- Expressed appreciation for Finance Director Butsch during the budget season.
- Addressed a citizen comment about her phone not working, promising to follow up.
- Shared excitement about Project Arcadia and noted the mill's upcoming hundredth anniversary, highlighting its importance to St. Helens' identity.
- The side-by-side draft ordinance will be on the next agenda.

PROACTIVE ITEMS

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURN

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