



# COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Wednesday, April 01, 2026

## 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  
Kathy Payne, City Recorder  
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder  
Shanna Duggan, Recreation Manager  
Mike De Roia, Building Official

Suzanna Bishop, Library Director  
Jana Wiersma, Librarian I/Youth Services & Makerspace  
Brenda Herren-Kenaga, Librarian I/Patron Services  
Ashley Wigod, Contracted City Attorney

### OTHERS

Brady Preheim            Robyn Toschi  
Nick Hellmich            Ben Tiscareno  
Robyn Toschi            Steve Toschi  
Adam St. Pierre        Ashley Stanley  
Sherrie Ford            Max Wheeldon  
Mitzi Ponce

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

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

### DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Contracted City Attorney Wigod explained the requirements for declaring conflicts of interest. She outlined the difference between potential and actual conflicts, noting that Senate Bill 983, adopted in 2025, permits local public officials to participate in discussions and vote on city budgets even if the budget includes compensation for themselves or a relative, provided they announce an actual conflict of interest first.

Mayor Massey declared an actual conflict of interest because her spouse is employed by the City as a police officer, and since the budget includes compensation and benefits for City employees, she announced her conflict under ORS 244.120 as amended by Senate Bill 983. She stated that she may participate in discussion and adoption of the local budget after making this disclosure.

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

- ◆ Nicholas Hellmich addressed the Council regarding the St. Helens Library, which his family visits regularly. He expressed concern about potential cuts to Library hours, noting that his two-year-old son has developed advanced vocabulary through their weekly library visits. He advocated strongly for the Library, stating "I think it's a sign of a failed society if we can't operate a library."

While acknowledging budget constraints, he suggested that if cuts were necessary, the Parks and Trails Commission could be considered for elimination due to its dysfunction and costs to the City. Hellmich also announced the fourth annual S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street barbecue on June 13 at 2:00 p.m., which will raise funds for the Library through a 50/50 raffle, and invited the community to come together during this contentious period.

- ◆ Ben Tiscareno acknowledged the financial pressures facing the Council and the difficult decisions regarding program cuts. He emphasized that the programs being considered for cuts, the Library, Parks, and Recreation program, impact families who form the bedrock of the City. He urged the Council to make any necessary cuts short-term and to be mindful that these decisions would affect how families view the City and their future voting on general fees.
- ◆ Robyn Toschi commented on Community Day in the Park, referencing her email from last year questioning whether the City should proceed with the expensive event given budget constraints. She noted that Council members had assured her the event would be funded through tourism, but pointed out that tourism had committed to contributing \$300,000 to the General Fund during last year's budget meeting. She stated that unless tourism delivers the full \$300,000 plus the additional \$10,000, Community Day in the Park should not proceed and should be rolled into the Fourth of July celebration instead.
- ◆ Steve Toschi challenged statements that all departments were operating within budget, specifically citing police overtime projections of \$268,000 over budget currently and \$539,000 by June's end. He argued that Mayor Massey should not participate in police budget discussions due to conflicts of interest beyond her husband's employment, referencing the police union's endorsement and work stoppage during the election. Toschi criticized what he called "theater" in bringing police representatives to answer questions while other department heads didn't receive the same opportunity. He urged the Council to require Police Chief Smith to operate within budget or lose his job, arguing that every other department has been cut while only police budgets continue to increase.
- ◆ Brady Preheim corrected what he called lies about tourism funding, stating that tourism money can be moved to the General Fund as it's a City account. He clarified that the expected tourism contribution is actually \$465,000, not \$300,000, including a \$5 fee on ticket sales worth approximately \$165,000. He questioned why this money hadn't been transferred and challenged claims about fireworks funding restrictions. Preheim criticized the police chief's discussion of 12-hour shifts when the proposal was for 5-day, 8-hour shifts, and questioned what laws would be broken by schedule changes. He also inquired about arbitrage fees and whether an additional \$1.2 million is now owed for the police station project.
- ◆ Adam St. Pierre criticized Brady Preheim's media show and questioned Council members' potential participation in it. He defended 10-hour police shifts, explaining how staggered shifts can provide 24-hour coverage with maximum staffing during peak crime periods. St. Pierre dismissed Steve Toschi's criticisms as bias against police, referencing Toschi's previous "piggy" article.

Mayor Massey responded to the public comments by expressing frustration with the spread of misinformation despite efforts by subject matter experts to provide accurate information. She clarified that she is not a spokesperson for any single department but speaks for all City departments.

**ORDINANCES – First Reading**

1. **Ordinance No. 3323:** An Ordinance Amending the St. Helens Municipal Code Chapters 2.08 and 17.36, and Creating Chapter 2.10 regarding the Planning Commission and Historic Landmarks Commission Operational Regulations

Mayor Massey read Ordinance No. 3323 by title. The final reading will be at the next meeting.

**RESOLUTIONS****2. PUBLIC COMMENT - Increase in Building Department Fees**

- ◆ Adam St. Pierre acknowledged that building fee increases are necessary but warned they would damage construction in Oregon, which he described as already being "a desert" with many construction workers unemployed. He stated that while the increases are unavoidable, they won't help the struggling construction industry.

**Resolution No. 2069:** A Resolution to Set Building Department Fees

Mayor Massey read Resolution No. 2069 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to adopt Resolution No. 2069. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

**AWARD BID/CONTRACT**

3. Award the St. Helens Dock Bull Rails Replacement, Project No. M-544, to Paramount Iron Works as the Lowest Responsive Bidder in the Amount of \$71,263.44

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

**APPROVE AND/OR AUTHORIZE FOR SIGNATURE**

4. Agreement with MorePower for Information Technology Services

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

**CONSENT AGENDA FOR ACCEPTANCE**

5. Parks & Trails Commission Minutes dated February 9, 2026

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

**CONSENT AGENDA FOR APPROVAL**

6. City Council Minutes dated March 18, 2026
7. Animal Facility License
8. OLCC Licenses
9. Accounts Payable Bill Lists

**Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve '6' through '9' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

**WORK SESSION ACTION ITEMS****Balancing the Budget**

**Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to direct staff to implement a balanced approach to General Fund reductions, including reduced furloughs of approximately 10%, targeted layoffs consistent with collective bargaining agreements, and continued reductions in non-essential spending, in order to achieve a balanced budget. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

**Reducing Council Stipends**

Contracted City Attorney Wigod explained the conflict of interest requirements for voting on council compensation, referencing Senate Bill 983 which permits local officials to vote on compensation matters after declaring conflicts.

Each council member declared actual conflicts of interest due to the motion pertaining to their compensation as elected officials.

**Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to update the budget and reduce Council stipends by 10% beginning April 21, 2026. (next pay period) **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen; Abstaining: Council President Chilton

Mayor Massey confirmed with Wigod that Senate Bill 983, effective in 2025, was what allowed Council members to modify their stipends, whereas previously they could not.

**Reducing Council Meetings to Once Per Month**

**Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to hold Council meetings once per month on the third Wednesday of the month, rather than twice per month, beginning in May, and direct staff to prepare a resolution to amend the Council Operating Rules and Procedures. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

**COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS**

Councilor Sundeen had no report.

Council President Chilton had no report.

Councilor Hubbard had no report.

Councilor Gundersen had no report.

**MAYOR MASSEY REPORTS**

Mayor Massey thanked City staff members City Recorder Payne and Deputy City Recorder Scholl for their efforts in preparing meeting materials and all City employees for their work during challenging times. She emphasized that decisions are not made lightly and the Council will fight for all departments while working to improve economic vitality through revenue generation.

She noted that the current Council wasn't in place when many of the historical budget decisions were made that led to the current situation. Massey committed to continuing citizen education about the budget process, acknowledging its complexity.

Mayor Massey specifically thanked Library Director Bishop and Recreation Manager Duggan for attending the meeting to advocate for their employees and answer questions. She praised their dedication, calling

the library "the bedroom of our community" and emphasizing the vital importance of both the library and recreation programs.

Massey highlighted Nick Hellmich's words about community unity, expressing hope that the community could focus on positive change rather than division and conflict. She acknowledged her own growth as a new mayor entering a contentious situation and committed to giving her best effort.

She thanked all citizens who had communicated about the importance of the library, noting that while it's difficult to respond to everyone, all input is valuable and read by Council members. Massey encouraged continued citizen engagement and ended by promoting Hellmich's barbecue fundraiser.

**PROACTIVE ITEMS**

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**ADJOURN – 7:33 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