



# **COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION**

Wednesday, June 18, 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	Jose Castilleja, Police Sergeant
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder	Sharon Darroux, Engineering Manager
Gloria Bishop, Finance Director	

### **OTHERS**

Brady Preheim	Reed Hjort	L. Riggs	Kanale Tumlinson
Breezy Riggs	Carmel C.	Erin Salisbury	Adam
Randy Sanders	Marci Sanders	Steve LeSollen	T.M.
Antonia Doggett	Tammy Blakely	Jessica Anderson	Arthur Leskowich
Keith Anderson	Nick Hellmich	Justin Boyles	Joe
Willow Bill	Howard Blumenthal	Tammy Maygra	Brittany
Margaret Trenchard-Smith			

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

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

### **PROCLAMATION**

1. Appreciation of Local Businesses and Residents for their Patience and Support During the St. Helens Streets and Utilities Extension Project

Mayor Massey expressed gratitude to the business owners in the Riverfront District for their resilience and commitment during the recent infrastructure improvements. She acknowledged the disruptions they faced over the past few years, including detours, renovations, and rework. Mayor Massey emphasized that their support helped complete major infrastructure improvements and laid the foundation for a stronger, safer, and more vibrant waterfront for generations to come.

Mayor Massey also read an email from Jason Morris, a business owner who couldn't attend the meeting. In his email, Morris expressed appreciation for the community gathering space and looked forward to future events. He thanked the Council for addressing concerns throughout the project and hoped for continued communication in the future.

Councilor Sundeen thanked the business owners for their support and noted their contribution to making St. Helens a great place to live.

Council President Chilton expressed gratitude for everyone's patience and acknowledged the long duration of the project. She emphasized that the improvements were intended to benefit the businesses.

Councilor Gundersen echoed the sentiments of gratitude and stated that the development would make the area better off.

Councilor Hubbard recognized the challenges of dealing with hundred-year-old infrastructure and thanked the small businesses for their perseverance.

City Administrator Walsh highlighted the excitement of seeing the waterfront project come to fruition after 15-20 years of planning. He noted that St. Helens had successfully implemented the infrastructure improvements, unlike some communities that only plan without developing.

Mayor Massey then read a proclamation expressing appreciation for the local businesses and residents. The proclamation detailed the scope of the project, including modernizing critical infrastructure, expanding and upgrading water, sewer, and stormwater systems, and improving safety and accessibility. It acknowledged the significant impacts on downtown businesses and residents, including street closures, detours, and construction-related challenges. The proclamation commended the extraordinary patience, resilience, and flexibility shown by residents, visitors, and small businesses throughout the project.

After reading the proclamation, Mayor Massey invited everyone to take a group picture in front of the waterfront to commemorate the occasion.

Communications Officer King took a moment to thank the business owners for their kindness throughout the project, even when facing disruptions and challenges.

Break to take a photo.

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

- ◆ Howard Blumenthal. Requested the Council speak louder due to a hum in the back of the room.
- ◆ Nick Hellmich. Announced the third annual South 4<sup>th</sup> Street barbecue benefiting the Columbia Pacific Food Bank. He invited everyone to attend and bring donations of peanut butter, cereal, or canned meat. Hellmich also expressed concerns about the preamble to public comments, stating that he felt it violated the First Amendment by restricting speech.
- ◆ Erin Salisbury, president of St. Helens Main Street Alliance. Thanked the Council and staff for the proclamation recognizing small businesses downtown. She emphasized that about 25 separate business owners were present at the meeting to show their partnership with the City and their long-term commitment to making business better in St. Helens.
- ◆ Dr. Margaret Trenchard-Smith, President of the Kiwanis Club of St. Helens. Thanked the Council for their help with logistics for the upcoming parade. She mentioned the parade theme "Show us Your Wheels" and announced a partnership with the Columbia Pacific Food Bank to collect donations during the event. Trenchard-Smith also provided an update on the Kiwanis Club's recent activities, including giving thesauruses to third graders, books to kindergartners, helping with various community events, and awarding scholarships to high school seniors.
- ◆ Willow Bill. Congratulated the Council on completing the waterfront project. He shared a story about the Flying Eagle Canoe and its journey to Lake Tahoe. The Flying Eagle will be traveling to Minnesota and returning to St. Helens by the following July 4. He suggested creating a permanent place for the Flying Eagle in the park and designing a mural on the wall below the beer garden.

- ◆ Brady Preheim. He acknowledged the visionary role played by Rick Scholl in pushing for the Riverfront development but also highlighted his concerns regarding the project's financial burden. Preheim criticized the new tourism contractor, suggesting shortcomings in their engagement with community activities compared to their predecessor. He voiced his concerns about a nondisclosure agreement that was made concerning the hiring of a new police chief. He questioned its necessity and secrecy. He also emphasized that the city attorney represents the City and not individual members.
- ◆ Tammy Maygra. Expressed disappointment with the City's response time to public record requests. She also shared concerns about Treadway's involvement in community events. She agreed with Hellmich about restricting speech during public meetings.

### **ORDINANCES – First Reading**

- 2. Ordinance No. 3311:** An Ordinance to Annex and Designate the Zone of Certain Property at 35262 Fir Street

Mayor Massey read Ordinance No. 3311 by title. The final reading will be held at the next meeting.

- 3. Ordinance No. 3312:** An Ordinance to Annex and Designate the Zone of Certain Property at 58909 Firlok Park Street

Mayor Massey read Ordinance No. 3312 by title. The final reading will be held at the next meeting.

- 4. Ordinance No. 3313:** An Ordinance Adding Chapter 12.36 to the St. Helens Municipal Code Establishing a Pavement Cut Moratorium on Newly Constructed or Resurfaced Streets

Mayor Massey read Ordinance No. 3313 by title. The final reading will be held at the next meeting.

### **RESOLUTIONS**

- 5. Resolution No. 2040:** A Resolution of the Common Council of the City of St. Helens Authorizing a Transfer of Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Mayor Massey read Resolution No. 2040 by title.

Mayor Massey declared an actual conflict of interest since her husband is a St. Helens Police officer.

**Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to adopt Resolution No. 2040. **Vote:** Yea: Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen; Abstained: Mayor Massey

- 6. Resolution No. 2041:** A Resolution of the Common Council of the City of St. Helens, Oregon, Adopting and Appropriating Funds for a Supplemental Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Mayor Massey read Resolution No. 2041 by title.

Mayor Massey declared an actual conflict of interest since her husband is a St. Helens Police officer.

**Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to adopt Resolution No. 2041.

During discussion, Council President Chilton raised a question about COLA increases for the City Council mentioned in the resolution. Finance Director Butsch explained that the supplemental budget was adjusting for the actual COLA increases for fiscal year 2025, which were different from the initial estimates when the budget was adopted.

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

**7. Resolution No. 2042:** A Resolution of the City of St. Helens Declaring the City's Election to Receive State Revenues for Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Mayor Massey read Resolution No. 2042 by title.

Mayor Massey declared an actual conflict of interest since her husband is a St. Helens Police officer.

**Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to adopt Resolution No. 2042. **Vote:** Yea: Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen; Abstained: Mayor Massey

**8. Resolution No. 2043:** A Resolution of the Common Council of the City of St. Helens, Oregon, Adopting Budget, Making Appropriations, and Levying and Certifying Taxes for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2025

Mayor Massey read Resolution No. 2043 by title.

Mayor Massey declared an actual conflict of interest since her husband is a St. Helens Police officer.

**Moton:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to adopt Resolution No. 2043.

During discussion, Councilor Hubbard raised a question about the increase in business license fees. Finance Director Butsch explained that the fees were changing from a yearly charge to a monthly charge, as approved and recommended by the Budget Committee. Councilor Hubbard expressed concern about the significant increase, noting it appeared to be a 185% increase. Council President Chilton acknowledged the substantial increase but suggested it could be revisited if needed.

**Vote:** Yea: Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Sundeen; Voting Nay: Councilor Hubbard; Abstained: Mayor Massey

**9. Resolution No. 2044:** A Resolution of the St. Helens City Council, Establishing the City Employee Compensation Schedule for Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Mayor Massey read Resolution No. 2044 by title.

Mayor Massey declared an actual conflict of interest since her husband is a St. Helens Police officer.

**Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to adopt Resolution No. 2044.

During discussion, Councilor Sundeen asked how this resolution related to the ongoing compensation study. City Administrator Walsh explained that regardless of the study's findings, the City had limited resources for the current year.

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

**10. PUBLIC COMMENT - Increasing Utility Rates**

- ◆ Howard Blumenthal. Expressed concern about the impact of rate increases on those living on Social Security and asked the Council to keep this in mind when making decisions.

**Resolution No. 2045:** A Resolution to Establish Water, Sewer, Storm Drainage Utility Rates and Charges, and Administrative Rules

Mayor Massey read Resolution No. 2045 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to adopt Resolution No. 2045.

During discussion, Council President Chilton asked for a summary of the resolution. Finance Director Butsch explained that the proposed rates were part of the budget approved by the Budget Committee and based on a rate study conducted in 2021. She mentioned that an updated rate study would be presented in the fall.

**Vote:** Yea: Council President Chilton, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen; Abstained: Mayor Massey

### **11. PUBLIC COMMENT - Increasing Community Public Safety Fee**

- ◆ Howard Blumenthal. Asked for clarification on the amount of the increase. It was confirmed that the increase would be 30 cents, bringing the total fee to \$10.30. Blumenthal expressed relief that the increase was not as high as rumored.
- ◆ Brady Preheim. Stated his opposition to the Public Safety Fee, arguing that it should have been voted on by the public. He expressed concern about the City's financial situation and the potential for future increases in the fee. They cannot afford to build a police station without industry. There are lots of other cost-effective ways to remodel.

### **Resolution No. 2046: A Resolution Adopting a Community Public Safety Fee**

Mayor Massey read Resolution No. 2046 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to adopt Resolution No. 2046. **Vote:** Yea: Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen; Abstained: Mayor Massey

### **12. PUBLIC COMMENT - Increasing Garbage & Recycling Rates**

- ◆ Brady Preheim. Expressed dissatisfaction with Hudson Garbage, questioning their recycling practices and suggesting that the recycling program might be a "scam." He stated that he had personally observed garbage and recycling being dumped into the same truck and questioned whether any actual recycling was taking place.
- ◆ Kanale Tumlinson, Hudson Garbage, responded to Preheim's concerns. He explained that their trucks have a split body, with 60% for recycling and 40% for garbage. Tumlinson detailed the process of how materials are collected, separated, and processed, emphasizing that all recycling collected in St. Helens and Columbia County goes to a sorting facility in Portland.

### **Resolution No. 2047: A Resolution Establishing Garbage & Recycling Rates and Superseding Resolution No. 2003**

Mayor Massey read Resolution No. 2047 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to adopt Resolution No. 2047.

During discussion, Mayor Massey expressed concern about the 3.5% rate increase, suggesting it was steep for citizens. She proposed challenging Hudson Garbage to offer additional benefits or services to the City in exchange for the increase. Council President Chilton agreed, noting that the Council had never previously questioned or denied rate increases for the company.

City Administrator Walsh offered to meet with Hudson Garbage to discuss options for the City. It was noted that the City is currently in a franchise agreement with Hudson Garbage.

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

### **APPROVE AND/OR AUTHORIZE FOR SIGNATURE**

### **CONSENT AGENDA FOR ACCEPTANCE**

13. Urban Renewal Agency Budget Committee Minutes dated May 16, 2024

14. Budget Committee Minutes dated May 15, 2025
15. Library Board Minutes dated May 12, 2025
16. Parks & Trails Commission Minutes dated May 12, 2025

**Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Council President Chilton to approve '13' through '16' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

#### **CONSENT AGENDA FOR APPROVAL**

17. City Council Minutes dated June 4, 2025
18. Accounts Payable Bill Lists

**Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Hubbard to approve '17' and '18' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

#### **WORK SESSION ACTION ITEMS**

None

#### **COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS**

Councilor Sundeen reported...

- Expressed excitement about the reopening of the downtown park.
- Shared an interesting history lesson about St. Helens from 100 years ago. In June of 1925, Columbia Street, now known as S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street, was undergoing significant construction and work. At that time, it was primarily a residential area. Downtown St. Helens was centered around the Strand, with not much activity on Columbia Street.

He highlighted the transformation taking place during that era: old buildings were being torn down to make way for new developments. He specifically pointed out that the construction was making room for a new bank building, which is now known as Beyond the Forest. He mentioned that this building is approaching 100 years old.

He also shared an anecdote about an elderly man witnessing the construction, who remarked that he was present when those buildings were first erected. This man recounted the few structures that once lined Columbia Street, such as the old Masonic building and the Meeker residence. The Meeker residence, being the oldest home in St. Helens, used to be located directly across from the Plaza on S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street but has since been moved to S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, now recognized as the Knighton House.

Councilor Sundeen reflected on how the changes 100 years ago were shaping the city's landscape, and he drew a parallel to the continuous evolution occurring in St. Helens today.

Council President Chilton reported...

- Expressed excitement for the upcoming parade, Community Day in the Park, and the ribbon cutting for the waterfront.
- Highlighted the importance of community events in bringing residents together.
- Gave a "shout out" to Willow Bill for his authentic personality and contribution to the community.

Councilor Gundersen reported...

- Thanked the small business owners for their perseverance through the recent construction and development downtown.
- Acknowledged the challenges faced by businesses during infrastructure projects.
- Praised the resilience and commitment of the business community in St. Helens.

Councilor Hubbard reported...

- Emphasized the importance of small businesses in making the City great and cautioned against overtaxing small businesses, recognizing their role in the local economy.
- Stressed the need for balanced economic growth that considers the challenges faced by small businesses.

#### **MAYOR MASSEY REPORTS**

- Thanked City staff for their hard work in preparing for the meetings.
- Reminded everyone about the youth programs available at the Recreation Center.
- Suggested implementing a more forward-looking calendar system for Council meetings to provide advance notice of upcoming agenda items.
- She has been working on a draft ordinance for side-by-sides in the City, which she had passed on to City Administrator Walsh for review.
- Expressed excitement about the upcoming Kiwanis Community Parade, despite the potential for rain.

#### **PROACTIVE ITEMS**

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **ADJOURN – 8:13 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