



COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Wednesday, October 01, 2025

APPROVED MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Jennifer Massey
Councilor Mark Gundersen
Councilor Russell Hubbard
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

MEMBERS ABSENT

Council President Jessica Chilton

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Shanna Duggan, Recreation Manager

OTHERS

Art Leskowich	Eddie
Steve Topaz	Debra Korpela
Mary Hubbard	Greg Korpela
Ron Trommlitz	Janelle Adams
Brady Preheim	

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PROCLAMATION

1. Lights on After School Day - October 23, 2025

Mayor Massey read a proclamation designating October 23, 2025, as "Lights on After School Day" in the City of St. Helens. The proclamation emphasized the importance of quality after-school programs for children's education, well-being, and development. It highlighted that after-school programs help children realize their full potential, support working families, address issues like school absenteeism and learning loss, and build stronger communities. The proclamation noted that after-school programs provide a solid return on investment, with every dollar invested saving at least three dollars through increased earning potential, improved school performance, and reduced crime and juvenile delinquency.

Mayor Massey expressed her enthusiasm for the Recreation Program and the opportunities it provides for local youth. Following the proclamation, photos were taken with Recreation Manager Shanna Duggan and Council members.

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

- ◆ Janelle Adams, Columbia Sexual Assault Response Network. Introduced a new local nonprofit focused on providing sexual assault response services in Columbia County. She explained that their mission is to deliver timely sexual assault medical exams, empower the community through

prevention and education, and strengthen support services that prioritize survivor safety, dignity, and healing. Adams noted that currently, adult sexual assault survivors in Columbia County must travel to Portland or Longview for rape kits, often waiting hours in emergency rooms. The organization is working with the Amani Center to develop local services. Adams also mentioned that October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and shared statistics about sexual assault, including that someone in the US is sexually assaulted every 74 seconds. She presented a proclamation for the Council to consider declaring October 2025 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month in St. Helens.

- ◆ Brady Preheim. He expressed concern about the City's plans for the lagoon, stating that filling it would require building a new Wastewater Treatment Plant at a cost of approximately \$170 million, which would offset any income from storing waste from Portland. Second, he criticized the current state of Spirit of Halloweentown, noting that it has diminished significantly and that several expensive assets purchased for the event (including a train and tourism boat) are not being utilized. He questioned where missing haunted house assets had gone and urged the Council to recognize that the event has not been successful and to hold the organizers accountable.

APPROVE AND/OR AUTHORIZE FOR SIGNATURE

2. First Amendment to Agreement with Columbia Pacific Economic Development District for Grant Administration of the Sanitary Sewer Capacity Improvement Project

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to approve '2' above.

Vote: Yea: Mayor Massey, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

3. [Ratify] Agreement with Donovan Enterprises, Inc. for a Utilities Rate Study

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

Councilor Hubbard asked about the purpose of the utilities rate study, noting that the last one was done in 2022. City Administrator John Walsh explained that these studies are conducted every five years to update rates and forecast revenues. He clarified that Donovan Enterprises analyzes income, expenses, growth, capital projects, and SDC revenues to create formulas that model future needs. This helps the City build rates to pay for Capital Projects and ongoing operations without financial surprises.

Walsh mentioned that the contract amount of \$29,350 falls within his signature authority, but as a matter of policy, he prefers to bring all agreements to the Council. He also noted that Donovan Enterprises will present their findings at the October 15 meeting.

Mayor Massey requested confirmation that the study would include a cost cap of \$29,350 and asked if the study would evaluate whether to keep stormwater costs in sewer rates or create a separate stormwater utility. Walsh confirmed both points and added that the study was necessary to comply with DEQ SRF loans as the current model is expiring. Mayor Massey suggested that in the future, the Council should receive past reports and background information before approving such agreements.

Vote: Yea: Mayor Massey, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

4. Agreement with St. Helens Marina LLC for Harbor Master Services (Monitoring and Enforcement of Local Ordinances of the City's Docks and Waterways)

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Hubbard to approve '4' above.

Council discussed what services were covered by the agreement. Walsh explained that it includes monitoring and enforcement of City ordinances related to the City docks on Sand Island, pilings, and infrastructure. The Harbor Master checks the docks daily, ensures people are paying required fees, and addresses derelict vessels. Fines are paid to the City.

Mayor Massey expressed concern about the City's practice of continually renewing contracts without going through an RFP process, suggesting this should be a topic for future Council discussion. She emphasized that her concern was not with this specific contractor but with the general practice of contract renewals without competitive bidding.

Councilor Sundeen mentioned that he had met with Toni Doggett (the current Harbor Master) and suggested having her give a presentation to the Council about her role. He noted that while most people comply with her requests, there are occasions when situations escalate, which prompted a meeting between him, Toni, and Police Chief Smith to discuss the proper process.

Councilor Hubbard noted that the Marina does a good job but pointed out some needed repairs on the island docks. Walsh clarified that while the Marina identifies repairs, the actual work is done by contractors paid by the City, sometimes with assistance from the Oregon Marine Board.

Council agreed it would be beneficial to have regular updates from the Harbor Master about operations.

Vote: Yea: Mayor Massey, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

CONSENT AGENDA FOR ACCEPTANCE

5. Parks and Trails Commission Minutes dated August 11, 2025

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve '5' above.

Vote: Yea: Mayor Massey, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

CONSENT AGENDA FOR APPROVAL

6. Accounts Payable Bill Lists

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to approve '6' above.

Vote: Yea: Mayor Massey, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

WORK SESSION ACTION ITEMS

None

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

Councilor Sundeen reported...

- Shared a historical fact about the courthouse, completed in 1907. The clock wasn't purchased until 3-4 years later, during which the painted clock hands permanently showed the time as 9:15.

Councilor Gundersen reported...

- Visited downtown and mentioned that the gift shop remodel for Spirit of Halloweentown looked good, although he had not attended the festivities yet.

Councilor Hubbard reported...

- He is set up with the proper equipment to follow the police station meetings and would update the Council in the future. Mayor Massey clarified that the due diligence date for the police station project is October 16, not August 24 as initially thought.

MAYOR MASSEY REPORTS

- Expressed appreciation for City staff, particularly City Recorder Kathy Payne and Deputy City Recorder Lisa Scholl, for their behind-the-scenes work.
- Thanked City employees for their efforts despite lean staffing.
- Acknowledged Walsh for his responsiveness to her questions.
- Mentioned her excitement about the upcoming police station due diligence report.
- Looking forward to the Mayor's conference scheduled for the following day to meet with other mayors and discuss common challenges.

- Brought up the need to start planning for the City's 250th anniversary celebration.
- Thanked Art Leskovich and Steve Topaz for their Public Forum presentation and indicated she would follow up with questions on that topic.

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