



# COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Wednesday, June 04, 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  
Kathy Payne, City Recorder  
Crystal King, Communications Officer  
Jacob Graichen, City Planner

Ashley Wigod, Contracted City Attorney  
Doug Treat, Police Sergeant  
Dylan Gaston, Police Officer

### OTHERS

Amanda McFeron	Brady Preheim	Jenni Gilbert
MaryAnne Anderson	Adam St. Pierre	Ron Trommlitz
Dan Thenell	Steve Toschi	Rick
Brad	Joe	KOIN 6

### CALL REGULAR SESSION TO ORDER – 7:06 p.m.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

- ◆ Jennifer Gilbert. Addressed the Council, expressing appreciation for Lieutenant Hogue's 28 years of diligent service to the community. She voiced significant concerns about retaliation, political silencing, and manipulative behavior within the Council. Gilbert highlighted her disapproval of the Council's conduct, criticizing their allowance of a "vindictive woman" to exercise undue influence over decisions, and suggesting that there might have been tampering with evidence. Gilbert passionately argued that what happened to Lieutenant Hogue wasn't just wrongful but was both political and personal, stating that the actions taken against him were public and politically motivated. She called emphatically for the resignation of Council members, saying that the community was watching more closely than ever and warned that their actions would not go unnoticed or unchallenged.
- ◆ Brady Preheim. Talked about the politicization of the positions of finance director and chief of police. He accused the Finance Director of having lied, citing two specific instances regarding payments and a missing sum of \$100,000, asserting that the Council was aware of these lies as they had been recorded. Preheim alleged that Hogue had courageously come forward as a whistleblower. He expressed his view that Hogue deserved to be offered the position of police chief, emphasizing the need for the Council to reconsider their previous decisions and urging them to "add a zero" to any future considerations involving Hogue.

- ◆ Adam St. Pierre. Expressed gratitude toward the Council for adhering to a thorough and professional process in selecting a new police chief. He commended the Council for seeking guidance from the Oregon Police Chiefs Association and for adhering to their recommended protocols. St. Pierre acknowledged that the Council had engaged professional help to ensure objectivity and expertise in the selection process, a move he appreciated.
- ◆ Dan Thenell, speaking on behalf of the St. Helens Police Officers Association, extended his gratitude to the Council for their handling of the police chief search process. He articulated that the Association was pleased with the outcome and overwhelmingly supported Matt Smith as the best candidate for the position of police chief. Thenell emphasized that the selection process facilitated by the Council was well-executed, stating that Smith's election was crucial in preventing personnel turnover within the Police Department.
- ◆ Steve Toschi. Expressed his disagreement with the fairness of the procedures undertaken against Hogue. Toschi posited that the St. Helens Police Officers Association had a hand in influencing the selection of Jennifer Massey as a mayoral candidate, suggesting potential bias and compromise within the process. He further outlined his concerns about existing divisions within the Police Department, exacerbated by politics, and questioned the role of the Association in the internal matters of the department.

## DELIBERATIONS

1. Annexation of Property Located at 35262 Fir Street (Greg & Amanda McFeron)

Council President Jessica Chilton expressed support for moving forward with the annexation, subject to legal approval of the waiver. City Planner Jacob Graichen explained that the waiver had been in the file since 1999 but was not attached to the staff report. Contracted City Attorney Ashley Wigod advised that since the applicant wants the annexation, the City wants it, and nobody is objecting, it would be fine to approve.

**Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve the annexation of 35262 Fir Street. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

2. Annexation of Property Located at 58909 Firlok Park Street (Bradford & Teresa Pyl)

**Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve the annexation of 58909 Firlok Park Street. **Vote:** Voting Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

## ORDINANCES – *Final Reading*

3. **Ordinance No. 3309:** An Ordinance to Amend the City of St. Helens Zoning District Map for Certain Property at 1771 Columbia Boulevard from the General Commercial, GC Zone to the Houlton Business District, HBD Zone

Mayor Massey read Ordinance No. 3309 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Hubbard to adopt Ordinance No. 3309. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

**APPROVE AND/OR AUTHORIZE FOR SIGNATURE**

4. Lease with Columbia Learning Center for Makerspace Expansion

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

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

5. Lease with St. Helens Senior Center

**Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Gundersen 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 ACCEPTANCE**

6. Budget Committee Minutes dated May 1, 2025

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

**CONSENT AGENDA FOR APPROVAL**

7. City Council Minutes dated May 21, 2025
8. OLCC Licenses
9. Accounts Payable Bill Lists

**Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve '7' through '9' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard (for '7' and '9'), Councilor Sundeen; Abstain: Councilor Hubbard (for '8')

**WORK SESSION ACTION ITEMS****Chief of Police Appointment**

Mayor Massey declared a potential conflict of interest due to her husband's employment as a St. Helens Police Officer, and abstained from discussion and voting.

**Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to confirm the City Administrator's appointment of Sergeant Matthew Smith as the Chief of Police, contingent upon the successful completion of a comprehensive background investigation and psychological and medical examination, as appropriate.

Wigod explained the process for selecting the new police chief, which involved guidance from the Oregon Association of Chiefs of Police and an evaluation panel consisting of five members, including chiefs from other cities, the Columbia County Sheriff, a police association representative, and Councilor Hubbard.

Councilor Hubbard expressed his satisfaction with the selection process, noting its thoroughness and lack of bias. Other Council members echoed their support for the process and the selected candidate.

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

**Acting Chief of Police Appointment**

Mayor Massey reiterated her potential conflict interest as previously stated.

**Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to confirm the City Administrator's appointment of Sergeant Matthew Smith as the Acting Chief of Police effective upon

the retirement of Interim Chief Joe Hogue and until such time as the Council confirms the appointment of Chief of Police or otherwise directs. **Vote:** Yea: Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen; Abstain: Mayor Massey

### **Re-appointment to Columbia Foundation Board**

**Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Hubbard to appoint Councilor Gundersen as a City representative on the Columbia Foundation Board. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

### **2MG Reservoir – Walker Report**

Council addressed a request from Ron Trommlitz regarding the release of a report on reservoir defects. Councilor Gundersen read a statement explaining the decision to release the Walker report in the interest of transparency.

**Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to release the Walker report. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

### **COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS**

Councilor Sundeen reported...

- Expressed appreciation for the Budget Committee's efforts and dedicated staff, highlighting their hard work.
- Reported on the Parks and Trails Commission's recent events, noting a successful cleanup at the Japanese Gardens in McCormick Park and commended the ongoing positive activities in the Commission.
- Commended Joe Hogue for his nearly 30 years of commitment and service to the St. Helens Police Department, emphasizing Hogue's role in providing stability during challenging times and expressing admiration for his dedication.
- Looking forward to working with Matt Smith in the future.

Councilor Chilton reported...

- Talked about upcoming community events to highlight positive developments in the City, mentioning the return of 13 Nights on the River and Community Day in the park, and encouraging resident participation.
- Emphasized the importance of focusing on growth and positive changes within the community and expressed gratitude to those working to enhance the quality of life in St. Helens.

Councilor Gundersen reported...

- Nothing to report.

Councilor Hubbard reported...

- Nothing to report.

### **MAYOR MASSEY REPORTS**

- Shared excitement over upcoming community events like the Kiwanis Community parade on June 21 and Fourth of July celebrations.
- Congratulated Matthew Smith on his selection as the next police chief, expressing confidence in his capabilities.
- Acknowledged Joe Hogue's 27-year career with the Police Department, praising his dedication to public safety.
- Articulated enthusiasm for the progress on the new police station and the Council's determination to see the project through.

- Thanked City staff and fellow Council members for their commitment, professionalism, and collaborative efforts towards City advancement.
- Congratulations to St. Helens High School Girls Softball for their win.

**PROACTIVE ITEMS**

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**ADJOURN – 7:48 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