



# **COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING**

Wednesday, June 18, 2025

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## **APPROVED MINUTES**

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

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

### **OTHERS PRESENT**

John Walsh, City Administrator  
Kathy Payne, City Recorder  
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder  
Gloria Butsch, Finance Director

### **OTHERS**

Brady Preheim  
Reed Hjort

### **OPEN PUBLIC HEARING – 6:15 p.m.**

### **TOPIC**

#### **1. Fiscal Year 2025-26 State Revenue Sharing & Budget**

Mayor Massey declared an actual conflict of interest due to her husband being a City of St. Helens Police Officer and recused herself from the discussion and vote.

Finance Director Butsch stated that the Budget Committee had approved option number four, which reduced the originally proposed budget by \$3,093,250. The reductions included:

1. No cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for fiscal year 2026 for all employee groups
2. No implementation of a general service fee
3. A General Fund reserve of 6.2% after adding back the full City Council pay

She also mentioned that the approved budget included an increase in the Business License fee for rentals and an impact fee of \$4.95 to be charged for all City-sanctioned event ticket sales. Director Butsch noted that staff was working on the Universal Fee Schedule and planned to have the resolution ready for the Council in July.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- ◆ Brady Preheim. Provided public comment on the proposed budget. He expressed concerns about the budget's assumptions, particularly regarding the lack of a COLA increase for employees. Preheim argued that the budget could not be approved because it assumed there would be no COLA, while the union had not yet agreed to this. He stated that this was potentially fraudulent and illegal, as the agreement with the union should be in place prior to budget approval. Preheim also referenced a previous year's budget issue involving \$3 million for the Project Arcadia property sale, which did not materialize and created a crisis. He urged the Council to learn from past

mistakes and ensure all agreements are in place before accepting a budget that relies on them. Additionally, Preheim commented on Mayor Massey's conflict of interest. He suggested that St. Helens should adopt policies similar to other cities in the area, such as Scappoose and Rainier, which prohibit City Council members from being employees of the City or having immediate family members employed by the City.

**CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING – 6:19 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Kathy Payne  
Kathy Payne, City Recorder

/s/ Jennifer Massey  
Jennifer Massey, Mayor