



COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Wednesday, February 19, 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
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
Joe Hogue, Acting Police Chief
Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner/Community Development Project Manager

OTHERS

Reed Hjort	Brandon S.	Temperance Albrecht
Joseph Hall	ReAnn Martin	Justin Albrecht
Beverly S.	Trent Albrecht	Tammy Maygra
Brady Preheim	Jenni Gilbert	Roger
Joe	Arthur	Mitzi
Steve Topaz	Adam St. Pierre	

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Massey recognized Joseph Paul for his public service and military contributions. She highlighted his extensive military service from 1985 to 2002, including branches served, rank, primary roles, deployments, and awards. Mayor Massey also noted Mr. Paul's public service and community engagement, including his involvement with various organizations and advocacy for veterans. She invited Mr. Paul to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

- ◆ Joseph Hall. Presented a display of military service medals to the City of St. Helens in honor of veterans in the community. He explained the significance of each medal, which ranged from a World War I service medal to a POW/MIA medal. Hall noted the historical context for each, such as the first women's service medal awarded during World War II. He mentioned ongoing projects, including helping veterans secure awards they were initially denied and working on a Medal of Honor case. Hall also shared how he assists veterans by researching and locating lost medals, offering his services at no cost to the veterans or their families.

- ◆ Tammy Maygra. Addressed the Council regarding comments made about false information on Facebook. She stated that while someone was accusing her of spreading falsehoods, she wanted to assure the Council that everything she posted was indeed factual. To support her claim, Maygra referenced the approved minutes from January 29, 2024, where discussions were held about what would happen if a levy for the police station failed. She pointed out that Councilor Hubbard had asked about the implications and that Councilor Gundersen had agreed with an increase of 69¢ per thousand, noting that if it failed, they could add it to the utility bill. Maygra then played audio clips for the Council to corroborate the accuracy of her statements.

In addition to defending her previous comments, Maygra expressed concerns about potential restrictions on public comments, emphasizing the importance of transparency and open dialogue. She remarked on the Council members' responsibilities to listen to the public, highlighting that they receive compensation for doing so. Maygra reminded Mayor Massey of her previous advocacy for public accountability and transparency, urging that the Council should continue to uphold these values. She also mentioned the importance of free speech in the public forum, cautioning against any attempts to limit it.

- ◆ Brady Preheim. Supported Maygra's statements and expressed strong opposition to censoring public comments, emphasizing the significance of First Amendment rights and the Council's duty to listen to the public regardless of their personal opinions. He cautioned that if Council members were unwilling to accept public criticism, they should consider resigning. Preheim conveyed gratitude towards Acting Police Chief Hogue, regarding him as a "hometown hero" for his whistleblowing efforts and urged the Council to consider making his position permanent.

Furthermore, Preheim addressed the issue of media representation in executive sessions, noting the scarcity of local news outlets and suggesting that KOHI should be recognized as a legitimate media source. He highlighted the absence of other media channels within the community and stressed the need for transparency and open communication. In a related discussion, Preheim clarified the ownership of a truck, refuting claims made in prior discussions by presenting the title to the truck, thereby disproving allegations and urging the Council and others to thoroughly verify facts before disseminating information.

- ◆ Jenni Gilbert. Expressed deep disappointment with what she perceived as Mayor Massey's lack of leadership and criticized the Council's decision to redact names in a police investigative report. She argued that this lack of transparency was concerning and urged the Council members to remain vigilant regarding ongoing issues within the City. Gilbert emphasized the necessity of supporting the Police Department, which she felt had been let down by recent actions. She also reminded the Mayor of her past actions when leading public calls for accountability and transparency, pointing out a perceived inconsistency in the Mayor's current conduct. Gilbert underlined the importance of maintaining open channels of communication and honesty, urging the Council to continuously uphold these values in their governance.
- ◆ Adam St. Pierre. Discussed the police investigative report in detail, highlighting specific sections and providing clarification on certain points. He expressed concern about the comprehension of the report by some media sources, noting that the report included complex information that might not be fully understood by the general public. St. Pierre referenced specific pages from the report, such as pages seven and eight, to outline instances where he believed actions were being misinterpreted. He emphasized the importance of understanding the Chief's actions mentioned in the report, which involved attempts to instigate the writing of an anonymous letter to the City

Council. St. Pierre criticized the lack of comprehension surrounding the context and implications of these actions and the report as a whole. Additionally, he provided examples from the report to support his concerns about misinformation, highlighting quotes that illustrated flawed interpretations by particular media sources within the community.

ORDINANCES – Final Reading

- 1. Ordinance No. 3307:** An Ordinance Amending the St. Helens Municipal Code Chapters 17.16, 17.32, 17.80, and 17.96 Pertaining to Oregon House Bill 3395 (2023) Regarding Single Room Occupancies, and Other Housekeeping Amendments

Mayor Massey read Ordinance No. 3307 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Sundeen at adopt Ordinance No. 3307. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

RESOLUTIONS

- 2. Resolution No. 2037:** A Resolution of the Common Council of the City of St. Helens Adopting an Executive Session News Media Attendance Policy and Replacing in its Entirety Resolution No. 2001

Mayor Massey read Resolution No. 2037 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to adopt Resolution No. 2037. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

- ~~**3. Resolution No. 2038:** A Resolution Adopting the City of St. Helens Governing Policy, and Superseding Resolution No. 1838~~

Removed from agenda.

- 4. Resolution No. 2039:** A Resolution to Adopt Financial Policies for the City of St. Helens, Superseding Resolution No. 1806

Mayor Massey read Resolution No. 2039 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Council President Chilton to adopt Resolution No. 2039. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

REQUESTS FOR APPROVAL TO ATTEND EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

5. Consideration of Application from Tammy Maygra to Qualify as a Representative of the News Media to Attend Council Executive Sessions

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to deny the application of Tammy Maygra to qualify as a representative of the news media to attend Council Executive Sessions.

Council President Chilton initiated the discussion by highlighting the findings from the City Attorney's report, which were instrumental in evaluating the application. The key concern raised was whether Ms. Maygra represented a well-established institution, as this was a crucial criterion for media representation in executive sessions.

Council President Chilton expressed her agreement with the attorney's assessment, emphasizing the importance of distinguishing between fact and opinion in reporting. Councilor Sundeen echoed these concerns, acknowledging the attorney's recommendation as a guiding factor in his decision. He reiterated that the application did not sufficiently meet the established criteria, specifically pointing out the lack of institutional backing.

During the discussion, the Council considered the broader implications of allowing individuals without clear affiliations to participate in executive sessions, recognizing the need for consistent standards in recognizing media representatives. The consensus was that while Maygra's application demonstrated her

interest, it fell short of meeting the necessary requirements for approval. The Council's decision to deny the application aligned with the City Attorney's recommendation, as well as underscored the Council's commitment to maintaining rigorous standards for media access, ensuring that those who qualify represent recognized institutions with a clear mandate to deliver factual and unbiased reporting.

Re-stated Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to deny the application from Tammy Maygra to qualify as a representative of the news media to attend Council Executive Sessions. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

6. Consideration of Application from FAFODDS to Qualify as a Representative of the News Media to Attend Council Executive Sessions

Mayor Massey stepped out of the room since she is a member of FAFODDS. Council President Chilton presided over this agenda item.

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Hubbard to deny the application from FAFODDS to qualify as a representative of the news media to attend Council Executive Sessions.

Council members acknowledged that FAFODDS had provided evidence of their nonprofit status; however, significant concerns remained about the institution's organizational structure and designated roles.

Councilor Sundeen mentioned that although the organization demonstrated their nonprofit status, they lacked clear institutional backing, which was a necessary criterion for approval. He emphasized that having a formally structured organization with designated roles was essential for media representation in Executive Sessions. Council President Chilton agreed, noting that the absence of clear roles and the undefined nature of the institution made it difficult for the Council to consider them a legitimate news outlet under the established guidelines.

The Council also discussed the importance of distinguishing between fact and opinion within reporting and stressed that established media organizations with a structured framework are expected to deliver factual and unbiased reporting. This emphasis on rigorous criteria was to ensure that those who are granted access represent recognized institutions committed to these journalistic standards. Council's decision to deny the application aligned with the City Attorney's recommendations, underscoring their commitment to maintaining high standards for media representation and upholding the integrity of Executive Sessions.

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

Mayor Massey returned to the room.

7. Consideration of Application from Maxine Bernstein of the Oregonian to Qualify as a Representative of the News Media to Attend Council Executive Sessions

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Council President Chilton to approve the application from Maxine Bernstein to qualify as a representative of the news media to attend Council Executive Sessions.

It was noted that Ms. Bernstein had presented proper credentials, affirming her status as a journalist for the Oregonian, a well-established news organization. Council members acknowledged the Oregonian's longstanding reputation and organizational structure, which helped ensure adherence to journalistic standards of factual and unbiased reporting.

Council President Chilton highlighted the importance of clear institutional backing for media representatives, which Ms. Bernstein clearly met through her affiliation with the Oregonian. She emphasized that having reporters from reputable media outlets present during Executive Sessions enhances transparency and encourages accountability. Councilor Sundeen concurred, reiterating that the Council's decision was consistent with established criteria focusing on institutional recognition and the journalist's credentials.

The Council recognized her qualifications and the credibility of the news organization she represents. This decision underscored the Council's ongoing commitment to transparency and open communication with established media outlets, ensuring that factual information reaches the community accurately.

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

APPROVE AND/OR AUTHORIZE FOR SIGNATURE

8. Fourth Amendment to Contract with Moore Excavation, Inc. for S. 1st Street - St. Helens Street Intersection Improvements Project, R-685

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to approve '8' above.

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

9. Extension of Agreement with Mayer/Reed, Inc. for Riverwalk Project Phase I and Columbia View Park Amphitheater

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

APPOINTMENTS TO CITY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

10. Appoint Trina Kingsbury to the Planning Commission

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to appoint Trina Kingsbury to the Planning Commission. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

CONSENT AGENDA FOR ACCEPTANCE

11. Library Board Minutes dated January 13, 2025
12. Library Board Subcommittee Minutes dated February 1, 2025
13. Parks & Trails Commission Minutes dated January 13, 2025

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to approve '11' through '13' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

CONSENT AGENDA FOR APPROVAL

14. City Council Minutes dated December 11, 2024, January 31, 2025, and February 5, 2025
15. Request for Proposal for Water Reservoir Site Selection and Design
16. Accounts Payable Bill Lists

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to approve '14' through '16' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

WORK SESSION ACTION ITEMS**Project Arcadia**

The Council briefly discussed the amendment, emphasizing its importance for the progression of Project Arcadia. Council President Chilton highlighted the need to adjust certain details in the existing agreement to better align with the project's scope and objectives. This would ensure a smoother transition and implementation process as they advanced with the project. The Council was in agreement that the amendment was crucial for maintaining the momentum of the development plans. The discussion underscored the collaborative efforts between the City and Arcadia Paper Mills LLC, aiming to foster economic growth and enhance community facilities.

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve and authorize for signature Amendment No. 1 to Purchase and Sale Agreement with Arcadia Paper Mills, LLC. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

Council Meetings

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Council President Chilton to move Visitor Comments for the Regular Session to the end of the meeting rather than the beginning.

The Council engaged in a discussion about the proposed change in the placement of visitor comments within the meeting agenda. This change aimed to start meetings on a positive note, fostering a better atmosphere which is more focused on staff appreciation and recognition of hometown heroes. Council President Chilton elaborated on the decision, emphasizing that the move would create a more engaging and open environment for public dialogue at the end of the meeting. They clarified that this adjustment was not intended to limit public participation or free speech but to restructure the flow of the meetings to enhance morale and productivity, as highlighted during strategic planning sessions. The Council collectively agreed that visitor comments would still be welcome, albeit at a different point in the meeting to ensure that meetings conclude on a high note, enabling better overall interactions and responses to citizen concerns.

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

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Council President Chilton to have City department/division reports included in the Work Session packets once a month in a condensed version on a Council approved template. **Vote:** Voting Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to have reports from community agencies be annual rather than semi-annual. **Vote:** Voting Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to add "*Clearing Confusion and Setting the Facts Straight*" on the Work Session agendas before Visitor Comments.

Councilor Sundeen explained that the addition would serve as a dedicated time for staff to address any misinformation or misunderstandings that may have arisen from previous meetings. This structured opportunity for clarification was aimed at increasing transparency and ensuring that accurate information is readily available to both the Council and the public.

Council President Chilton added that this agenda item would allow staff at least two weeks to formulate responses to any statements or discussions from the prior meeting that required clarification. By providing

a clear timeframe for addressing issues, the Council hoped to maintain an open line of communication with the community and to foster trust between the City and its residents.

The Council underscored the importance of this addition as a means to counteract the spread of misinformation, particularly in the digital age where rumors and inaccuracies can quickly proliferate. By including this segment in the Work Session agendas, the Council aimed to create a reliable resource where the public could find verified information and clarification on City matters.

Acknowledging that it would not be a forum for back-and-forth dialogue, the Council clarified that this item was about setting the record straight and providing factual information for public consumption.

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

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

Councilor Sundeen reported...

- Discussed Parks and Trails Commission's activities, including upcoming work parties.
- Highlighted an opening on the Parks and Trails Commission for new members.
- Asked Acting Police Chief Hogue to elaborate on the Police Department's new wellness program.
 - Outlined improvements in officer wellness through new initiatives.
 - Described concerted efforts to provide fitness instruction and facilitate lifestyle changes within the Department.
 - Emphasized the positive impact of new equipment donations and improved officers' health over time.

Council President Chilton...

- Provided details on event planning, covering 13 Nights on the River, Fourth of July celebrations, and Spirit of Halloweentown.
- Announced new sponsorships and event specifics, as well as plans for gift shop expansion.

Councilor Gundersen...

- Reported on the process and selection of a new candidate for City Boards and Commissions.
- Praised the high caliber of the applicants who have shown interest in these positions.
- Mentioned the installation of new garbage cans planned for downtown.

Councilor Hubbard...

- Expressed support for the newly appointed Planning Commission member.
- Highlighted the appointee's local background and the diversity they will bring to the Commission's decision-making processes.

MAYOR MASSEY REPORTS

Acknowledgement of Staff Work: Mayor Massey thanked City staff for their dedication and hard work, especially during the recent severe weather conditions. She highlighted the efforts of Public Works and Police Departments to ensure community safety and maintain essential services.

Council's Direction: Expressed enthusiasm for the Council's proactive approach towards improving operational efficiency. Praised Council initiatives aimed at enhancing governance and addressing long-standing community issues.

Police Department Concerns and Interim Chief Position: Discussed the ongoing efforts to address and resolve internal concerns within the Police Department, including conducting assessments and making necessary adjustments. Emphasized a commitment to fostering positive changes, focusing on improving departmental culture and operations. Highlighted the interim chief position, noting the conversations with Acting Police Chief Joe Hogue to address various issues and enhance Department

performance. Reaffirmed the Council's dedication to providing strong leadership support to the department during this transitional period.

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURN – 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully transcribed by ABC Transcription Services LLC and submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Kathy Payne
Kathy Payne, City Recorder

/s/ Jennifer Massey
Jennifer Massey, Mayor