



COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Wednesday, August 07, 2024

APPROVED MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl
Council President Jessica Chilton
Councilor Mark Gundersen
Councilor Russell Hubbard
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

STAFF

John Walsh, City Administrator	Sharon Darroux, Engineering Manager
Crystal King, Communications Officer	Tory Shelby, Parks Field Supervisor
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner	Tim Underwood, Construction Inspector
Gloria Butsch, Finance Director	Alex Bird, Engineer II
Suzanne Bishop, Library Director	Ashley Wigod, Contracted City Attorney
Brian Greenway, Police Chief	Matthew Kahl, Contracted City Attorney

OTHERS

Rom Trommlitz	Brady Preheim	Brittany Hummel
Brian Pixley	Jane Garcia	Steve Topaz
Al Petersen	Jennifer Shoemaker	Brittany Lapp
Adam St. Pierre	James McFarland	Elise Mickelson
Laura Jenkins-Law	Casie Campbell	

CALL WORK SESSION TO ORDER – 2: 00 p.m.

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

- ◆ Al Petersen. Spoke about his email to Councilors on the proposed design for the new St. Helens entrance sign at Millard Road.
- ◆ Ron Trommlitz. Expressed concerns over the investigations into the failure of the 2-million-gallon reservoir W-449 rehabilitation and the resulting settlement agreement.
- ◆ Brady Preheim. Encouraged Councilors to oppose the jail levy, mentioned the progress of the City's "dirty dirt deal", expressed dismay about a parking lot downtown being designated for employees only, and noted the lack of communication between the City and County regarding contracting broadband services would result in duplicated services. He also cited concerns about the Tourism contract with Treadway and urged the Council not to sign the contract.
- ◆ Steve Topaz. Read aloud quotes that he and others he had spoken which he felt were characteristic of the City Council.
- ◆ Brittany Lapp. Spoke about her conversation with City Administrator Walsh and emails to Councilors about the possibility of partially compensating the Sand Island Sandcastle Competition carvers who had cleared their schedules and booked airfare and hotels before the event was canceled due to the delay in signing the Tourism contract with Treadway.

- ◆ Adam St. Pierre. Reminded the Council that the City's Tourism subcontractor held the liability and responsibility for events, and if a contract existed, the contractor for the Sandcastle Competition would be liable for taking care of the carvers.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. **Employee Length of Service Recognition - Tim Underwood (25), Tory Shelby (15), and Dawn Richardson (5)**

Mayor Scholl presented length of service awards to Tim Underwood, Tory Shelby, and Dawn Richardson and expressed appreciation for all the awardees.

2. **Presentation in Support of the Columbia County Jail Levy - Sheriff Brian Pixley**

Columbia County Sheriff Brian Pixley - gave a presentation in support of the Columbia County Jail Levy which would cost \$0.79 per \$1,000 of assessed value if the levy passed. He noted the frequency of matrix releases before the levy began in 2014, where inmates were released early due to insufficient funding. If the levy did not pass, the jail in St. Helens would become a book-and-release facility.

Police Chief Greenway explained the impacts on the community if the jail were closed, including scaling back the number of offenders that could be lodged, and having to contract with another jail facility, likely in Yamhill or Clatsop County, with prisoner transport for court or medical purposes to be provided by two officers from the St. Helens Police Department. Offenders booked into the St. Helens facility would be released back into the City.

Sheriff Pixley noted the increased food and medical contract costs due to inflation and he urged the Council to consider signing a resolution in support of the Jail Levy.

Questions from the Council were addressed regarding the average occupancy of the jail, confirming the jail had been built using timber revenue, and discussing the 21-cent increase from the previous levy.

The Council and staff shared anecdotes highlighting the impact of having a limited jail facility, and noted people would be laid off if the jail was closed. Sheriff Pixley confirmed the jail was fully staffed, and he described the current procedures for releasing inmates.

3. **Library Department Semi-Annual Report - Library Director Suzanne Bishop**

Library Director Bishop presented the Library Department Semi-Annual Report and 2023 – 2028 Strategic Plan. She reported on Library building use, local partnerships, and the resources and services provided to the community such as a cooling center, a seed exchange program, and a small business resource corner. She described the procurement process for Library resources, announced the pending hire of a new Youth and Makerspace Librarian, and noted the positive impact of Library staff and volunteers on patrons.

Questions and appreciative comments from the Council and staff were addressed regarding the Library's service as a cooling center, the support for small business development in the community, and the Library partnerships with GROW, Columbia Economic Team (CET), and Portland Community College's (PCC) Oregon Manufacturing Innovation Training Center (OMIC).

4. **Utility Bill Leak Adjustment Request for 2560 Columbia Blvd. (Melton) - City Administrator John Walsh**

5. **Utility Bill Leak Adjustment Request for 2304 Columbia Blvd. (Nezbeda) - City Administrator John Walsh**

City Administrator Walsh presented the leak adjustment requests for 2560 Columbia Blvd and 2304 Columbia Blvd, noting that both were multi-month leaks and the adjustment requests, totaling over \$1,000, were based on the average monthly bills from the last three years

6. Review Agreement with Strategic Networks Group, Inc. for Broadband Planning Services - *City Administrator John Walsh*

City Administrator Walsh confirmed Resolution 2017 would be on the agenda for tonight's regular City Council meeting. Resolution 2017 supported the findings of the Broadband eStrategy Report which would be used to work with private partner entities to bring broadband investments to St. Helens. He was not aware of the County working with anyone other than Michael Curri, Strategic Networks Group Founder and President, who had concluded his previous work advancing broadband opportunities in St. Helens and had proposed a personal services agreement with the City not to exceed the amount of \$35,000. City Administrator Walsh stated St. Helens was also in line to receive a portion of the \$682 million in Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) funding coming to Oregon in 2026, and it would be a shame not to pursue those grants.

There was discussion on the surrounding area being practical for private investors, ensuring the City was working with the County, planning to use funds from Community Development and Economic Planning, Michael Curri's work queueing up investors and coordinating with other cities, and proceeding with the BEAD application to set the groundwork to receive funding regardless of what the County did.

7. Discussion regarding St. Helens Welcome Signs on Columbia River Highway - *Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho*

Associate Planner Dimsho presented the City of St. Helens Branding and Wayfinding Master Plan and highlighted the efforts toward creating cohesive wayfinding to direct people from the highway to the downtown area, and the permitting difficulties which delayed the entry sign project until after the Millard Road signal project was completed. She explained the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) would have to approve the entry sign footings, distance from the railroad tracks, and sign content. ODOT thought the previous proposal submitted by the Entry Sign Committee was cluttered and could distract drivers but the proposed design in the Council packet had been shown to ODOT in 2020 and was given their unofficial "blessing." She talked about using breakaway footings, the Lions Club and Kiwanis Club showing interest in being on the signs, illuminating the signs, the need for a new cost estimate, and that it was within the Council's purview to reconsider the entry sign design or locations.

There was discussion about using the removal of the old signs as a bargaining chip with ODOT, the story behind the Community Achievement Award 1956 on one of the old signs, possibly using the Community Development budget to fund the signs quickly rather than waiting for a grant and proceeding with a new cost estimate.

The Council had mixed opinions on whether to match the new entry signs to the current wayfinding signs or create a memorable sign with a striking new design. They discussed putting an entry sign at Millard Road, directing traffic to the Riverfront District, holding a retreat to review the Riverfront Connector and other corridor plans, possibly using a sign to direct traffic to the Hoylton District, and possibly creating a committee to consider new sign designs. They also noted the importance of getting the new entry signs up quickly as the old signs were so embarrassing that people had been painting them.

Associate Planner Dimsho confirmed she would get a free cost estimate for the signs from the fabricator who prepared the shop drawing, although she heard mixed feedback from the Council on whether to use the proposed design or use a new design, and she noted that the permits for the signs would not be requested from ODOT until there was a plan for funding.

Mayor Scholl acknowledged the communications between Dimsho and ODOT regarding the entry sign project had begun six years ago, and he appreciated her diligent work. He also stated he would like to thank the person who had painted the old entry signs.

8. Review Draft Agreement with Treadway Events and Entertainment LLC for Special Event Coordination and Management Services - *City Administrator John Walsh*

Contracted City Attorney Matthew Kahl walked Councilors through a hard copy of the draft agreement with Treadway, highlighting the term length and possible extensions, procedure for budgeting and expenditures, written event summary timeframe requirements, end of event and end of year reporting, using an event funds account and electronic payments rather than cash, ownership of event materials, the ability for the City to do inspections and audits, and other various provisions included in the contract. Attachment A included a description of the scope of work, the Tourism program objectives, compensation paid to the contractor, a description of the four main events in St. Helens with flexibility for other events to be created, and the contractor’s responsibilities, including providing final reports to the City Administrator. Attachment B covered the insurance obligations, and Attachment C included the terms of compensation. He explained the RFP had included incentive pay of 5% of net revenues, and that Attachment C defined and clarified what net revenue was and how the aggregate 5% of net revenue would be calculated.

Questions and comments from the Council were addressed about the extent of the plans being made for the Spirit of Halloweentown event this year, providing written event summaries to Councilors for the first year, creating an inventory list for event materials, net revenue calculation, City staff feeling comfortable with the accounting for this contract, and a duplication error identified in the contract. Kahl confirmed the error would be corrected in the final contract.

City Administrator Walsh noted he would be meeting with Treadway between this meeting and the regular City Council meeting tonight, and he confirmed acceptance of the contract would be on tonight’s agenda for the regular City Council meeting.

There was discussion clarifying vessel ownership and insurance responsibilities in the contract.

9. Report from City Administrator John Walsh

City Administrator Walsh reported progress had been made on the Riverwalk and the Police Station projects. 13 Nights on the River was going well at McCormick Park with five event nights left, and he announced upcoming musical performances for those events. He noted he and Councilor Hubbard had visited the site for Project Arcadia with City Staff and he looked forward to creating a building footprint and working on a purchase and sale agreement. He stated the Council packet contained a grant application for \$61,000 from the Marine Board for repair of the debris boom and dock, and other grants would cover further dock repairs after an electrical fire.

ADJOURN – 4:03 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- Real Property Transactions, under ORS 192.660(2)(e)
- Consult with Counsel/Potential Litigation, under ORS 192.660(2)(h)

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Crystal King
Crystal King, Communications Officer

/s/ Rick Scholl
Rick Scholl, Mayor