

City of St. Helens

CITY COUNCIL

Work Session Minutes

September 16, 2015

Members Present: Randy Peterson, Mayor
Doug Morten, Council President
Keith Locke, Councilor
Susan Conn, Councilor
Ginny Carlson, Councilor

Staff Present: John Walsh, City Administrator
Jon Ellis, Finance Director
Crystal Farnsworth, Communications Officer
Margaret Jeffries, Library Director
Terry Moss, Police Chief (attended for a short time)
Neal Sheppeard, Public Works Operations Director
Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Anya Moucha, Main Street Program Coordinator
Rick Graham, Lieutenant
Anthony Miltich, Sergeant

| | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Others: | Janet Albright | Sally Ann Marson | Larry VanDolah |
| | Genell Grow | Blanche Katz | Sharon Eunger |
| | Cheryl VanDomelen | Victoria Worral | Ed Burgmans |
| | Al Petersen | Yvette Drak | |

Mayor Randy Peterson called the meeting to order at 1 p.m.



Employee Length of Service Award

Lieutenant Rick Graham was recognized for his 25 years of service to the City of St. Helens. He received a certificate and a lapel pin.

Amendment to Agenda

The agenda was amended to include Ordinance 3196 discussion to allow medical marijuana as a retail establishment. It establishes a business license application procedure and requires licensee to enter into a community impact agreement with the City in addition to meeting state licensing requirements. Funds from that agreement are directed to public safety and marijuana related programs. It also eliminates the local tax regulations adopted last year.

It was the consensus of the Council to put this on the agenda tonight for the first reading. If passed, it would take effect 30 days after the second reading.

Visitor Comments

♦ Al Petersen. He is following up on an email sent to the Council. He would like a Planning Commission training. It is important for all boards to receive training as well. The Council was in agreement that this was important.

♦ Ed Burgmans. He operates a company called Alternative Medical Consulting. He works with city governments to bring information from the state capitol to them for implementation of Measure 91. Growers would like a legal market to distribute a safe product. He does not agree with businesses being inside city limits because he has kids. However, is it safer to be inside or outside city limits? Testing should be implemented on products. An advantage of being legal, is that now it can be regulated. He suggests having the citizens of St. Helens vote whether to have a dispensary in town or not. He is offering his services to the City if they have any questions for him or concerns that should be brought to the senate.

♦ Larry VanDolah. He thanked Lieutenant Graham for his 25 years of service. He has been a great officer. He also thanked the Council for addressing the marijuana issue. He will continue fighting until he has his business license in hand. He has concerns on the negotiations involved with the business license rules. Each business will have different impacts and he isn't sure how that process will work. He is concerned about the percentage that the City will seek as part of the contract.

♦ Cheryl VanDomelen. Cheryl passed out a handout on why banning legal weed is bad for Oregon communities. She read a statement into the record. She would like the Council to move forward in a positive manner on the marijuana issue.

♦ Victoria Worral. She is working on a pedestrian/bike reflector project so that people are more easily seen in the dark. The reflectors are only about \$7 and can be the difference between life and death when it comes to being seen. You can see the reflectors from up to three blocks away, even in the rain and dark. She would like support in spreading her cause. She would also like to meet with the Youth Council to ask for their assistance. Free reflectors will be handed out to all the kindergartners at the Lewis & Clark School this year. There are many designs to choose from and are very durable.

Councilor Locke brought forward a request to make October Reflector Awareness month. Council concurred.

Discuss City's Support of Transit District

Transit Director Janet Wright was in attendance to make the request for support. Columbia County Rider staff have been instructed to explore the formation of a district for the transit center. Part of that formation is to go to each local jurisdiction and request their approval/support for the inclusion of their area in a formation of a special district. She would need a resolution by October 21. This would be on the May 2016 ballot.

Discussion Regarding Adult Daycare at Senior Center

Senior Center Manager Cheryl Young was in attendance to provide information that the Council requested at a previous work session. Yvette Drak is a member of the Oregon Care Providers Association which would like to utilize the St. Helens Senior Center for senior care. They would have their own insurance. Cheryl is asking for Council approval to use the building for this purpose. The daycare will operate on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Those days may expand, depending on the number of staff and clientele. There are a number of people that need the care. The time period is proposed to be 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. There would be a maximum of 20 clients proposed for this program that the Center could accommodate. The Oregon Care Providers Association will be liable and responsible for the program. There would be one qualified staff person per six daycare clients. They would not pay rent, but will pay a portion of all other expenses.

Yvette said they are based in Rainier, but this is the only facility that they would have. Clients

will pay \$65 per day.

Discussion ensued about the service. Clients could come from anywhere, they do not have to be specifically from Columbia County. There is no service like this in the area.

Motion: Upon Carlson's motion and Morten's second, the Council unanimously approved the Senior Center to move forward working on the adult daycare center.

Introduce New Main Street Program Coordinator Anya Moucha

City Planner Graichen introduced the new Main Street Program Coordinator, Anya Moucha, to the Council and staff.

Review RFP for VOIP Telephone Communications System

City Administrator Walsh reviewed information related to the RFP.

Councilor Locke questioned the equipment listed. How necessary/relevant are faxes? Can phones be shared? Walsh explained that they did work to reduce lines as much as possible.

Discuss Building Official Position

(Whether or not we want in-house or contract services)

Walsh discussed the open position. He spoke with Scappoose about current shared services. Scappoose is interested in continuing the relationship in a reverse alternate where the City of St. Helens is the holder of the IGA. You can also hire a third party service to provide building services.

Councilor Locke asked if the Building Department is making money. Finance Director Ellis said yes. They have \$82,000 set aside in reserves from savings this year. If we hire someone full time, there should be sufficient revenues to balance out.

Request to Waive Fees for Spirit of Halloweentown Events

Tina Cannard, event coordinator for Spirit of Halloweentown activities, has made a request to the Council to waive the fees for the Spirit of Halloweentown festivities. The fees total approximately \$290.

Motion: Upon Conn's motion and Carlson's second, the Council unanimously waived the Spirit of Halloweentown special use permit fees.

Discuss IT Services

(Whether or not to go out for an RFP)

Finance Director Ellis distributed statistical data to the Council. We pay about \$112,000 to Centerlogic. Over \$40,000 was for software, hardware and licenses. It was a pass-through cost to benefit from their discounts. It is not efficient or effective to change to in-house at this point with current staffing. Ellis reviewed the other local agencies Centerlogic provides IT service for.

Motion: Locke moved to have staff go out for an RFP for IT services. Morten seconded.

Discussion. How much staff time does it take to prepare an RFP? Ellis said he would not have resources to work on the RFP until December. Sheppard said that time works well for them as well. All of the department heads will need to be involved in drafting the RFP.

Vote: All in favor; none opposed; motion carries.

Discuss Utility Billing Conversion

In a memo from Finance Director Jon Ellis dated September 16, 2015...

Request:

Shall City Council direct staff to proceed with conducting a comprehensive review of resources required to meet the goal of converting Utility Billing from bi-monthly to monthly?

Background:

Council has indicated the desire of eventually converting the Utility Billing program from a bi-monthly billing to monthly billing. Staff has initiated some changes in delivery of services to start laying a foundation to initiate such an endeavor. Some of these steps have consisted of:

1. Multi-year meter replacement program (installation of radio read meters, which is approximately 60% complete),
2. Migration of Springbrook Software to version 7 (completed in February), and
3. Outsourcing of bill printing and mailing (completed in June).

However, there still are significant resources required to be able to fully accomplish such a conversion and staff will initiate a more in-depth assessment of resources required upon Council's direction.

The comprehensive project will consist of surveying other municipal utilities who are on monthly billing cycles (hopefully connecting with some cities that have more recently gone through the conversion) to assess how they have addressed concerns associated with resources required, efficiencies derived, and how expectations and outcomes matched (from perspective of in-house and field staff, and citizens). Some of the hurdles that need to be better vetted are:

- Receipting of payments – How to efficiently address volume of bi-monthly payments on a monthly basis? 4,800 payments
- Meter reading – currently takes five employees one week every two months to read meters. How does that get addressed when converting to monthly?
- Shut-offs of 80 – 100 bi-monthly – what to expect on a monthly basis?
- Process and timing of billings versus due date versus shut-off? (i.e. billed on 1st due on 15th shut off on 21st – a lot tighter timelines)
- Transitioning strategy to ease customers from bi-monthly to monthly (i.e. suspend assessment of late fees – limited suspension of shut offs, etc.).

While many Cities make this decision based on the perception of customer service concerns/needs, which usually outweigh costs, it will be good to have a full assessment of needs/requirements, and a well vetted strategic plan prior to pulling the trigger on the final implementation of the program. The outcome of staffs' further assessments, survey, and development of a proposed implementation plan would be reviewed with City Council on October 21, 2015.

There will be additional costs associated with monthly billing. He is looking for the go-ahead from Council to invest time in seriously vetting the process.

Motion: Upon Conn's motion and Locke's second, the Council unanimously approved moving forwarding with monthly utility billing.

4th Quarter Financial Report

Ellis presented his fourth quarter report to Council. A copy of the report and PowerPoint presentation is included in the archive meeting packet. The audit will be wrapped up around Thanksgiving. More money was collected in the General Fund than anticipated in FY 14-15.

Department Reports

Public Works Operations Director Sheppard reported...

- The trail on the waterfront property should be done by end of the day. The gates and signs are installed.

Library Director Jeffries reported...

- Thanked the Council for attending the Library program, "A City Center: Rethinking Downtown." It was an excellent turnout with productive conversation.

Finance Director Ellis reported...

- Tonight's agenda includes a resolution to adopt a term limited pay stipend for unrepresented employees.

Communications Officer Farnsworth reported...

- Tonight's agenda includes a bid award to Landis & Landis for the lift station number seven upgrade project. The contract needs Council acknowledgment to move forward because the contractor did not acknowledge the addendum in their bid. Landis & Landis has submitted an email stating that the addendum will not affect the price of their bid. Council acknowledged moving forward with the bid award.

City Administrator Walsh reported...

- Tonight's agenda includes a Personal Services Agreement with Maul Foster for consulting services for area-wide planning work. He distributed copies of the draft PSA. Consultants will be here on Friday for an orientation bus tour. Council is invited to attend as well.
- Social media indicates that Spirit of Halloweentown is going to be booming. Tina is working hard to meet the demand.
- He attended the national Brownfield conference in Chicago. It was fantastic and exceeded his expectations. The City of Astoria received an award.

Council Reports

Mayor Peterson reported...

- Nothing to report.

Council President Morten reported...

- Staff has been discussing Sand Island camping. Some of the items discussed were collecting fees, offering very controlled camping options and an on-site caretaker. Those concerns will be forwarded to the Parks Commission for review.
- He and Peterson were invited to participate in a KOHI radio show at 9 a.m. on Friday.

Councilor Conn reported...

- Nothing to report.

Councilor Carlson reported...

- She is excited to see the development of the Youth Council. They are very enthusiastic about working in the community. Almost every member signed up to volunteer with the Spirit of Halloweentown and several of them are going to be on the Ford Foundation Leadership cohort coming up.

Councilor Locke reported...

- Chief Moss talked to him about the department's budget and the need for cars and radios. They are \$30,000 under budget right now. Locke asked Council to consider extending the full-time Code Enforcement Officer for a longer period of time.

Executive Session

ORS 192.660(2)(e) Real Property Transactions

Motion: At 2:42 p.m., upon Locke's motion and Carlson's second, the Council unanimously voted to move into executive session under ORS 192.660(2)(e) Real Property Transactions.

Motion: At 2:59 p.m., upon completion of the executive session, Councilor Morten moved to go back into work session, seconded by Councilor Conn, and unanimously approved.

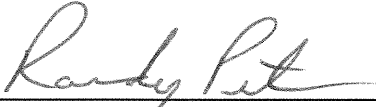


There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:59 p.m.

ATTEST:



Crystal Farnsworth, Communications Officer



Randy Peterson, Mayor