

# City of St. Helens

## CITY COUNCIL

Work Session Minutes

February 18, 2015

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**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  
Kathy Payne, City Recorder  
Margaret Jeffries, Library Director  
Terry Moss, Police Chief  
Neal Sheppard, Interim Public Works Co-Director  
Sue Nelson, Interim Public Works Co-Director  
Jenny Dimsho, Assistant Planner  
Carol Green, Accounting Technician  
Crystal Farnsworth, Communications Officer

**Others:** Brent Keller                      Mark Miller                      Dean Cox

Mayor Randy Peterson called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

*This meeting is contained in audio file 021815CCWS.MP3 on file at City Hall.*



### **Visitor Comments**

No visitor comments.

### **Annual Report from City Forester**

Brent Keller from Mason, Bruce and Girard, was in attendance to give their annual report, a copy of which is in the archive packet for this meeting.

### **Presentation of City Employee Raffle Fundraiser Money to Columbia Humane Society**

The City of St. Helens held their annual employee appreciation/recognition banquet on January 30. The City Management Team each donated \$25 towards raffle prizes with the proceeds from the raffle ticket sales going to the Columbia Humane Society (CHS). The raffle raised \$301. CHS Director Dean Cox was in attendance to accept the money.

### **Request from Seniors regarding Senior Center Building and Land**

The Seniors have requested that the City renew the lease for the Senior Center or transfer ownership of the Senior Center building and the land it is on to the Seniors.

Councilor Conn was in favor of extending the lease but not in transferring the building/property.

City Administrator Walsh spoke of possible land use issues and operational concerns. We provide services to the building now. It is on the same piece of property as a City park.

Finance Director Ellis added that the City pays between \$5,000 to 10,000 on maintenance for that building. They are requesting the City continue to pay for the maintenance.

Council President Morten expressed concern that this was only received as a written request and no one from the Senior Center is here to question. City Recorder Payne clarified that Cheryl Young did ask if she should be here. Payne told her this is only for Council discussion and it was not necessary.

Mayor Peterson believes maintenance costs should become the responsibility of the Senior Center if it is transferred to them. He would like to know how they would do that. Councilor Locke pointed out the grants that the City has been involved with for improvements. How would that work in the future?

Council President Morten was also concerned about the long term feasibility of the organization. Organizations come and go. The Council is here to stay. He would like to hear from the people in favor of attaining the Senior Center.

Councilor Conn really appreciates what the seniors have done. This is a City asset, and she would need to be convinced that it's a good idea to turn over a City asset.

Councilor Carlson is aware of other groups who have been denied use the building. If we provide maintenance, we should be allowed use of the building. They are on better financial ground now then they have been in the past.

The City pays for water and sewer for the property and maintenance of the parking lot.

Councilors Conn and Carlson volunteered to meet with representatives of the Senior Center to discuss the request.

### **Parks Commission Recommendation on Softball League's Request**

The Girls Softball League went to the Parks Commission and City Council to ask about getting a percentage of reimbursement on the money they spend on upgrading the fields that they could use to pay their permit fees. Council President Morten asked that the Parks Commission weigh in on the request before the Council made any decisions. The Parks Commission discussed it at their meeting on February 9.

The Parks Commission voted to recommend that the Council not allow reimbursements for the work they do on the fields because they would end up having to let every other league do that too and it would probably get to a point where we wouldn't even get permit fees anymore because they would all be "working it off" and the Commission feels it would just become a big mess.

Councilor Locke expressed that it would be a nice way to increase volunteers. Councilor Conn agreed that it would be an incentive to volunteer.

Mayor Peterson would prefer to give credit for work done as part of the Parks Master Plan. He does not agree with giving credit for maintaining the fields. They need to work with the Parks Department for maintenance.

City Recorder Payne pointed out a possible issue with financially compensating them for volunteer hours. However, equipment and supplies could be a reimbursable expense.

After discussion, it was determined that Council President Morten would bring this back to the Parks Commission for further review and discussion.

### **Request from Arts & Cultural Commission re: Phase 2 of Gateway Sculpture Project**

*Presented by Library Director Margaret Jeffries.*

**Summary:** The Arts and Cultural Commission requests that City resources be dedicated to identifying and writing grants to implement Phase Two of the Gateway Sculpture Project on the Highway 30 McNulty Creek Bridge while the knowledge base and collaborative relationships of all the contributors to Phase One are still intact. Duplicating this effort many years down the road, while fundraising is accomplished, will likely result in many hours being spent to re-create that same knowledge and cooperation.

**Background:** At the Thursday, February 5 Arts and Cultural Commission meeting, a motion was passed to recommend to the City Council that the City dedicate staff time to the Arts and Cultural Commission to identify and write grants for the Gateway Sculpture Project Phase Two. This motion was passed following a discussion about the best approach to proceed with Phase Two. The Commission recognized that fundraising this time would be a six year effort if the needed funds were accumulated at the previous rate. This longer time frame is due to the fact that there are no reserves dedicated to this project so the full project cost would have to be raised this time. Any pause in committing to this next phase would further push out the time frame for implementation.

The implementation of the Gateway Sculpture Project - Phase One represents several years of collaboration by the current members of the ACC with ODOT, engineering firms, local vendors, the artist and City departments. This knowledge base and these cooperative relationships will be lost through attrition in all of the organizations involved if a long term fundraising approach is adopted to accomplish Phase Two.

There was no objection from the Council to use staff time to apply for grants, if there is available staff, whether that is another RARE worker or current employee.

### **Request from St. Helens Community Foundation**

St. Helens Community Foundation President Robert Salisbury has requested that the City waive the permit fees associated with 13 Nights on the River. He also is asking for the City to pay the cost of annual insurance for the Foundation.

Councilor Carlson was under the impression the City would no longer provide insurance for community events. Councilor Conn would like to continue supporting them.

**Motion:** Locke moved to waive the permit fees for 13 Nights on the River and give them \$4,000 towards their insurance. Carlson seconded the motion.

Discussion.

**Vote:** Locke, Carlson and Peterson in favor. Morten and Conn did not vote. Motion carries.

City Recorder Payne will report back to the foundation on the decision.

### **Recommendation for Brownsfield (IPG) Grant Steering Committee**

The City has been offered funding assistance from the State's Business Oregon Department to continue work on the St. Helens Waterfront Redevelopment Project. The Integrated Brownfield Redevelopment Grant (IPG) provides \$25,000 in funding resources to further the City's work

initiated by the AIA SDAT visit in May 2014. The project will build on the recommendations developed from the SDAT report and further framework and implementation strategy for redevelopment of the City's waterfront. The project has two phases which include a Community Exploration component and an Economic Impact Study. The specific project tasks and deliverables are detailed in the attached Scope of Work. The project is heavily weighted on the Community Exploration effort with an emphasis on public engagement.

A Steering Committee is proposed to guide the engagement process and staff has recommended the following list of representatives for Council confirmation. Please review the recommendations for discussion at the February 18 Council work session and the Grant Agreement will be on the evening agenda for authorization.

Proposed Steering Committee

Planning Commission - Al Petersen  
Parks Commission – Howard Blumenthal  
Arts Commission – Diane Dillard  
Tourism/Maritime - Chris Finks  
Chamber of Commerce/SHEDCO – Natasha Parvey  
Port of St. Helens – TBD  
Columbia County Economic Team CCET – Chuck Daughtry  
Cascades Tissues – Eric Porchinow  
Public Health - Ashley Baggett  
City Councilor – TBD  
City Councilor – TBD

Ex Officio Members

Business Oregon – Denny Houle  
ODOT Rail – Cary Goodman  
ODOT Transportation – Pete O'Farrell

Councilor Conn volunteered to serve on the Committee.

**Municipal Court 2nd Quarter Report**

Over this last quarter the Municipal Court has transitioned in a new Municipal Court Clerk, Julie Metz. She comes to us from Columbia County, where she worked as the Court Clerk in the County's Justice Court. She is very highly motivated and energetic and we look forward to her championing Court operational improvements. We also look forward to working closely with Malinda Duran who is the new Police Support Specialist in enhancing the flow of information which is so critical to the daily operations of the Municipal Court. The Court is entering into a very unique opportunity for enhancing operations.

Based on the trend reports (see archive packet), while traffic violations are trending down, there has been an uptick on criminal cases (misdemeanors) filed resulting in an increase to Court's workloads. This increase reflects the Police Department's recovery from their staffing shortages due to injuries and turn-over. We anticipate that as the Police staffing is stabilized, criminal cases and traffic citations filed will continue to increase further impacting workloads in Municipal Court. The goal is to try to address most these challenges with enhanced efficiencies in operations.

The increase in workloads has resulted in the increase in support staffing provided by Finance to keep court adjudication and collections rates up. During the rightsizing of Court operations (staffing) in 2012, support staff decreased to only a half day per week with the goal of

eliminating outside support completely. However, with the recent turnover in staff combined with increase in criminal case filings, the need to support staffing has grown to three days per week. We are optimistic that we will be able to lower outside support to two – two and a half days per week by the end of this fiscal year. The right sizing of staffing in 2012-13 may have been appropriate for then-existing conditions but with the workload increasing, additional support is required.

Full Court is the Court operations software that tracks adjudication of cases, collections of fines, calendaring and helps increase work flow. The software will no longer be supported in Justice Systems after July 1, 2015, placing the Court at risk. The City Council has authorized an upgrade in Fiscal Year 2014-15, however with the change in staffing, the implementation has been delayed and hopefully will be on track in FY 2015-16. Based on a number of improvements to the operating system, Court is optimistic that it will reduce support hours provided by Finance as well as bringing back the SO (Sentence Order) listing that was suspended when rightsizing court in 2012.

### **Request to Extend Temporary Part-time Office Assistant Position**

Staff request the continued utilization of a term limited Office Assistant position through April 30, 2015. Currently, with working through the transition of Court with their applicable 18% increase in case loads, balancing an employee request to work part-time (24 hours per week versus 40), and catching up on backlog projects, staff is requesting the continued support of a term limited Office Assistant. This will allow more time to better assess staffing level requirements.

#### **Background:**

City Council, at their Work Session on November 19 approved the Finance Division's request to hire a term limited Office Assistant position to fill in for required office coverage from December 1, 2014 through February 28, 2015. The position is being funded from existing appropriations in personnel services (savings) and the Springbrook Migration Project budget. Further, staff stated that between November and February 28, staff will be assessing processes and services to potentially absorb workloads and/or develop a new part-time position (20 hours per week).

Council was in consensus to approve the request.

### **Mid-Year Financial Report**

Finance Director Jon Ellis presented his FY14-15 Mid-Year Report, a copy of which is available in the archive packet for this meeting. He handed out the slides for tonight's special meeting and a budget calendar and a Five-Year Forecast.

### **Review Scrivener Changes to Building Department Fees Resolution**

Finance Director Jon Ellis reviewed scrivener errors that were discovered during the Springbrook upgrade last week. They are minimal changes and are included in the archive packet for this meeting.

### **Department Reports**

**Finance Director Ellis** reported...

- He over budgeted for the Springbrook upgrade by about \$20,000.
- Tonight's agenda includes a resolution for transferring appropriations for the pedestrian bridge.
- Tonight's agenda also includes a resolution to establish a reserve account for police special events and training.

### **Discussion on Smoke-Free Community Possibilities**

Councilor Carlson was unable to attend the Smoke-Free Community public forum. She has recently heard that all state and federal parks are now smoke-free. All of CCMH properties are smoke-free as well.

Council President Morten really appreciated Jenny's testimony emphasizing the mission of the Parks Master Plan. In the past, citizens have come before the Parks Commission requesting smoke-free designations in the parks. The amount of cigarette butts on the Library property is appalling. Library Director Jeffries expressed her desire for the Library to become a smoke-free zone.

Councilor Conn brought up several people who testified during the forum that they were self-policing and did not leave cigarette butts on the ground nor smoke around children. Unfortunately, not everyone exercises that kind of restraint.

Councilor Locke said it's a smoking and littering issue. You can see where they dump their ashtrays right beside their vehicle. Cigarette butts are also found around the park. He still gets cancer treatments every three months. The room is full and half of the people are there because they smoked cigarettes.

Mayor Peterson spoke of the two options. 1) There was a recommendation to form a committee to review the smoking ordinance. 2) We decide what we want to do. More than just the parks need to be reviewed. He would be interested in forming a committee. It should include smokers, non-smokers, Public Health, and a city representative. He is not in favor of banning the sale of cigarettes in the city. We have the obligation to represent smokers and non-smokers on public property. The overwhelming evidence is that there are more non-smokers than smokers in the community.

Councilor Conn agreed with forming a committee. She would like them to investigate what other cities have done. Council President Morten agreed with forming a committee as well. Councilor Locke would like the Youth Council involved.

City Administrator Walsh will work with Public Health to form a committee.

### **Review Council Operating Rules and Procedures**

City Administrator Walsh does not have a staff recommendation. It was continued to the next Council work session.

### **Review Draft Resolution for Creation of Youth City Council**

Councilor Locke distributed an updated draft resolution.

There was further discussion of a Youth City Council. Eventually, Councilor Locke would like their meetings to broadcast live. There is a lot of interest in the schools. This is for 6-12 graders. Council President Morten wants to be sure this does not jeopardize the work done by the Library Youth Board. He requested to continue involving Council and staff.

### **Department Reports** (continued...)

**Police Chief Moss** reported...

- We have a new roof on the Police Department.
- We have open positions for a Police Officer and Sergeant. That closes Friday.

**Interim Public Works Co-Director Nelson** reported...

- Sand Island restrooms are done and they are fantastic!
- Utility project on the docks is nearing completion. It should be done mid-March.
- Telemetry upgrade for the water filtration facility is moving along swiftly.
- Godfrey Park storm drain project bids will open on March 3.
- Getting ready to start the water line replacement project.

**Interim Public Works Co-Director Sheppard** reported...

- Nothing to report.

**Library Director Jeffries** reported...

- Teen gaming night has been very popular. She showed the Council a picture of the Library Board members testing the equipment.
- Have held two sessions of ukulele lessons. Thirteen musicians attended.
- Eight people are attending the Mahjong class.
- The Every Child Ready to Read workshops is going very well. The third session will be held tomorrow night.

**Finance Director Ellis** reported...

- The next CAT Board meeting is Monday. Does the Council want to attend to discuss low income utilities? Councilor Locke said he will go.

**City Recorder Payne** reported...

- She and Walsh have discussed creating a mural on the back wall. It is currently being reviewed by the Arts & Cultural Commission.
- The City of Banks has a public notice window. We display our notices on bulletins boards inside the building but have nothing outside. She would like to use the Council Chambers windows to display meeting agendas and notices.

**City Administrator Walsh** reported...

- Thanked Council for the opportunity to participate in the Catalyzing Community Prosperity Conference. He reviewed the poster titled "Clues to Rural Community Survival."

**Council Reports**

**Mayor Peterson** reported...

- He received an email from one of the churches in town. They offered to bring the Council lunch prior to their March 18 meeting. After discussion, it was determined Peterson will follow-up with the church group for more information.

**Councilor Conn** reported...

- Grateful to be able to attend the Catalyzing Community Prosperity Conference. It was great for so many of us to attend.
- Suggested anyone who has concerns about the educational component of the teen gaming nights talk to Youth Librarian Nathan Jones. He can explain the value.

**Council President Morten** reported...

- Due to the Parks Commission meeting date confusion, the interview process for new members will be continued to the next Parks Commission meeting.
- He is happy to see the Sand Island restroom upgrades completed. It will be much more sanitary and inviting to individuals using that park.

**Councilor Carlson** reported...

- She walks at night and noticed that all of the lights on the S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street hill by Jay Tappan's house are all out. Interim Public Works Co-Director Sheppard will look into it.
- She requested the bark dust in McCormick Park under the swing sets be replenished.
- The swings at Godfrey Park barely swing and the noise they make is horrible.
- Are the barricades by the disc golf course permanent? Sheppard said there are cement barriers there now and they are permanent. It was a recommendation from the Parks Commission.
- There have been several incidences recently involving tire slashings and disconnecting fuel lines. Have we ever promoted crime alerts or neighborhood watch alerts?
- She also enjoyed the Catalyzing Community Prosperity Conference. We are always struggling to make our community special. The one thing that struck her is the lack of culture here. Kids don't know how our town was founded.
- She will be doing the NAMI walk. Sergeant Rick Graham is as well.

**Councilor Locke** reported...

- Since he's known as a micro-manager, he gave Chief Moss a direct order that he does not want to see police officers talking on their phones while they are driving. He ordered all the department managers to tell their employees that they should not be talking on their phones while driving either.

**Executive Session**

**ORS 192.660(2)(e) Real Property Transactions**

No executive session needed.

**Other Business**

No other business to discuss.



There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:17 p.m.

ATTEST:

  
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Kathy Payne, City Recorder

  
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Randy Peterson, Mayor