

City of St. Helens

CITY COUNCIL

Work Session Minutes

March 18, 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
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Margaret Jeffries, Library Director
Terry Moss, Police Chief
Aaron Kunders, WWTP Superintendent
Crystal Farnsworth, Communications Officer

Others: Judy Thompson Steve Topaz Bob Salisbury
Mark miller Blair Walter Christina Sullivan
Steve LeSollen Al Petersen Tiffany Smith
Judge Ted Grove

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



Visitor Comments

♦ Judy Thompson, representing SHEDCO Board. The SHEDCO clean-up day is April 18. They are hoping the City will adopt an area for clean-up, in particular an area by the Chamber. They are also requesting assistance with borrowing and purchasing supplies.

Councilor Carlson is also on the SHEDCO Board. She spoke with Parks Field Supervisor Thad Houk. The Parks Department is unable to assist on a weekend but can help during a week day.

Council President Morten will talk to Interim Public Works Co-Directors Neal Sheppeard and Sue Nelson about the request.

♦ Steve Topaz. There is an ugly set of four concrete blocks in front of the disc golf course parking area. It's a big mud puddle right now. He requested the City fill that area with crushed rock and re-open the parking.

Council President Morten said it is no longer a parking lot for safety reasons. Topaz requested the City re-think that decision. There is no signage for the disc golf course. Morten will work with staff to post signage. Councilor Locke added that the parking there was only temporary while the course was being built. The builders knew that and have informed other users where to park.

♦ Blair Walter, representing Chamber of Commerce Board. There is a new collaborative effort of the Chamber, SHEDCO, the City, and St. Helens Community Foundation to work together.

Communications have greatly improved. The Chamber and SHEDCO are already planning a float together in the parade. Congratulations to Judy Thompson for winning First Citizen of the Year Award!

Councilor Carlson thanked Blair and Tiffany for their work. She is hearing great things about their leadership.

♦Al Petersen, representing SHEDCO Board. The collaboration of those groups is going to be positive for the community. He provided the Council with information about how other cities have collaborated resources and funds. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet.

Discuss Request from St. Helens Community Foundation

This item was first discussed at the February 18 Council work session. The Council asked that Bob Salisbury, Foundation President, attend to talk about the request to cover the Foundation's insurance for the year.

Bob thanked the Council for their support and leadership. The Foundation supports community events and ideas. He reviewed the events they have been involved with. They are requesting \$4,439 to cover insurance costs for 13 Nights on the River and 4th of July.

Motion: Conn moved to fund the \$4,439 to cover the insurance cost. Locke seconded.

Discussion. Councilor Carlson appreciates all the Foundation does for 13 Nights on the River. She would like to see them move towards financial independence. There are a lot of nonprofits doing good work. They come in here asking for money and we tell them no. We need to have a policy to make it fair. She is fine with giving them the money because she knows they're working on a collaboration. Councilor Conn would like to continue working together.

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

Staff Recommendation to Cap Business License Late Fees

The City of St. Helens currently assesses a late renewal fee for those businesses that fail to renew an annual business before February 1st of the license year (established by Res. 1520). The late fee is assessed at \$20.00 per month after February 1st with no cap. The base fee for a resident business license is \$55.00 per calendar year. After three months of a delinquent status, a license would accrue a late fee of \$60 (more than the cost of the yearly renewal fee). When delinquent for one year, the late fees equal \$220 (four times the cost of the original license fee).

Business licenses are renewed on a calendar year schedule. Renewal notices are sent to businesses in October or early November with a due date of December 31. A one-month grace period is given before late fees are assessed on February 1. At least a week prior to the first late fee being assessed, any business that has provided the City with a valid email address receives an email reminder of the grace period deadline. City staff has also utilized the Gazette, e-Newsletter, and social media to remind businesses of the upcoming deadline. After February 1, a late fee is assessed on all past due licenses and a late notice letter is mailed. On March 1, any remainder resident business licenses that are still delinquent are assessed another late fee and a final notice letter is mailed.

In order to promote a more business-friendly environment (in line with Council Goal 4 – Facilitate Economic Development Activities) and help facilitate compliance with local business

license rules, City staff proposes setting a cap on late fee accruals of three months per calendar year (\$60 per year).

Councilor Locke asked if we know why they are not paying. Crystal said it varies. Sometimes she'll send an officer out and they'll say they didn't get the renewal or they had a change of address and phone number.

The Council was in concurrence with staff's recommendation. Staff will come back in April with a resolution to amend the business license late fee.

Discussion on Senior Center Request to Extend Lease

City Administrator John Walsh will contact the Senior Center and report back to the Council.

Discussion on Street Right of Way Vacation Procedure

As presented by City Planner Jacob Graichen via memo dated March 10, 2015.

At the last street vacation request before the Council, there were some questions from the Council as to why the Planning Commission was providing recommendations to the Council for these matters.

In many years of reviewing right of way vacation requests, a recommendation from the Commission was not a regular aspect of the process. This changed sometime after the St. Helens Marina Vacation request in 2012 (file VAC.1.12), where the Council asked for a recommendation from the Commission. Since 2012, staff has treated a recommendation from the Commission for vacations as par for the course.

The key question here is whether or not the council would like a recommendation from the Commission for all street vacation requests before the hearing before the Council or just on a case-by-case basis as determined by the Council.

With regards to law, the City's codes say little about street vacations and nothing about process to review them. Thus, we base our process and decisions on ORS Chapter 271. ORS Chapter 271 does not require Planning Commission recommendation, though it doesn't say it's prohibited either.

Reviewing the powers and duties of the Planning Commission per SHMC 2.08.080, making a recommendation to the Council on right of way vacation requests seems to fall within something appropriate for the commission, albeit, not necessarily mandatory.

Council President Morten would prefer that it go directly to the Council. He would like to allow the Council the flexibility to ask the Planning Commission to consider it. Sending it to the Planning Commission for the marina property was not intended to set a precedence.

Councilor Locke does not favor one way over the other. He would like to be sure that whoever votes on it be very familiar with the property.

Councilor Carlson prefers that they go to the Planning Commission for a recommendation. They look at it differently than the Council does.

Mayor Peterson asked if it is possible for Jacob to review the street vacation and judge whether it is going to be controversial or not. He can then recommend if it should go to the Planning Commission first.

The Council was in consensus with bringing street vacations to the Council, unless Jacob thinks it will be controversial. At that point, he can bring it to the Council and recommend sending it to the Planning Commission for review first.

Discuss Issue Regarding Nuisance Properties

Police Chief Moss prefaced the discussion with a story about 155 Kelly Street. The previous owners left the property and state. It is technically still in their name. The property is not quite bank owned but will soon be. Squatters have taken over the house. It has not had running water in over a year and there is no electricity. Neighbors complain about the squatters dumping their waste in the backyard. It's a mess. The Police Department knows who lives there and has made contact with them. There is a conflict with City Codes to do anything about it. Other cities and counties have ordinances that allow for a building inspector or police officer to post it as a nuisance property and forbid residence until the issues have been addressed.

Council was in consensus to fix the Code so that we can post the property as a nuisance and forbid residence.

Technical Advisory Committee Recommendation on Cascades Reserve Allocation

As presented by Public Works Interim Co-Director Nelson via memo dated April 1, 2015.

At the March 11, 2015 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting with Cascades and City staff, the issue of Cascade's reserve allocation was discussed. As anticipated, the loading from the mill has increased from the 2014 figures because of the addition of a second paper machine. Last year the reserve was set at 38.2%. Data for the past year shows that the actual loading increased to an average of 52.9% (see table).

2014-15					
	BE BOD Ave lbs/day	PE BOD Ave lbs/day	Total Ave lbs/day	BE %	PE %
Mar-14	5473	2164	7637	71.66	28.34
Apr-14	494	2069	2563	19.27	80.73
May-14	357	1625	1982	18.01	81.99
Jun-14	581	1333	1914	30.36	69.64
Jul-14	723	1134	1857	38.93	61.07
Aug-14	645	869	1514	42.60	57.40
Sep-14	1412	1036	2448	57.68	42.32
Oct-14	1032	1519	2551	40.45	59.55
Nov-14	7258	1572	8830	82.20	17.80
Dec-14	771	2053	2824	27.30	72.70
Jan-15	2412	2252	4664	51.72	48.28
Feb-15	1097	2221	3318	33.06	66.94
Totals	22255	19847	42102	52.9	47.1
Averages	1854.58	1653.92	3508.50	52.9	47.1

Recommendation:

Adjust the Mill reserve to 52.9% per the recommendation of the TAC. This number is based on the average loading from the Mill compared to the loading from the City's primary lagoon as outlined in Section 9.2.3 in the Operation and Use Agreement. Per the Agreement, Boise (Cascades) pays either the reserve minimum or for actual loading, whichever is higher.

WWTP Superintendent Kunders was in attendance to answer any questions the Council has.

Motion: Upon Conn's motion and Morten's second, the Council approved the Mill reserve to be adjusted to 52.9%. Councilor Locke abstained due to his wife working for Cascades.

Public Hearing Process on Appeal of Weed Abatement Action

Finance Director Jon Ellis reported that notices were sent to two properties to begin the lien process. One of the owner's paid in full. The other one is protesting. A public hearing will be held on the evening of April 1.

FY2015-16 Budget Preparation Update

Finance Director Jon Ellis reviewed his memo.

In the preparation of the budget the following assumptions are being made to facilitate completion of the draft budget. Some of these assumptions will need to be brought back to City Council in the next couple of months in the form of reports / resolutions that will require Council Authorization.

Compensation Plan Changes

The budget will be utilizing the below listed modifications to the compensation plan:

- Add to base salary the stipend of the co-chair Public Works Directors and retitle positions to Public Works Engineering Director and Public Works Operations Director
- Adjust compensation of the Building Official to reflect market
- Assumes Stipend of 5% if Building Secretary receives Building Tech Certification

Position	BU	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
		Monthly Salary Range				
Engineering Supervisor	Non-Rep Mgmt	\$5,551	\$5,834	\$6,127	\$6,431	\$6,757
Public Works Supervisor	Non-Rep Mgmt	\$5,551	\$5,834	\$6,127	\$6,431	\$6,757
Building Official	Non-Rep Mgmt	\$5,551	\$5,834	\$6,127	\$6,431	\$6,757
Building Official	Non-Rep Mgmt	\$6,102	\$6,407	\$6,728	\$7,064	\$7,417
Public Works Engineering Director	Non-Rep Mgmt	\$6,164	\$6,472	\$6,796	\$7,135	\$7,492
Public Works Operations Director	Non-Rep Mgmt	\$6,164	\$6,472	\$6,796	\$7,135	\$7,492

Retirement Pay Outs

Historically, the City has been funding retirement payouts of vacation and VEBA (sick leave payout) on a pay as you go with the assumption that there would be sufficient personnel costs savings during recruitment to absorb such payouts. In FY 2015-16, there are eight employees that become eligible to retire (total potential payout of \$147,000), but at this time only one retirement appears date certain. The proposed FY 2015-16 continues the standing practice of not appropriating for retirement costs. However, the cautionary note is there is an increasing potential of not absorbing retirement costs with salary savings resulting on a draw from contingencies (via re-appropriation).

Backfilling Positions

The proposed FY 15-16 Budget currently funds only the backfill for retirement of a Police Sergeant (for one month). While there may be other retirements of key positions, whereby there is a desire and potential business need to backfill the position prior to the employee's retirement, the budget does not try to address these potentials. As incidents arise, staff may propose, and if authorized by Council, may result from the draw on contingencies (via re-appropriation).

City Council Compensation

Budget reflects continuation of the \$500 per month cap that Council elected in 2011. Per Resolution 1490, Council members could receive \$660 to \$990 per month (pegged at 10%, 12% or 15% of the County Commissioners' compensation). The annual savings from the cap is \$16,290.

Other factors of interest

- PERS costs – rates increased 6.2% or approximately \$63,000 annually (reduction from the anticipated 10% plus).
- Medical costs - increased 7.5% on average or approximately \$83,000 annually (anticipated at 6% but definitely better than the double digits of the past decade).
- General liability / Auto / Property insurances increased an average of 7.24% or \$17,800.

Motion: Locke moved to remove the cap on the Council's compensation.

Discussion. Council President Morten recommends amending the motion that all Council members receive the same stipend. Councilor Carlson agreed. Ellis will plug the numbers in the budget and review those during the budget cycle.

The motion was taken back.

Department Reports

Police Chief Moss reported...

- Since we last met a couple weeks ago, one of our brand new police officers was not meeting his training requirements and had to be let go.
- We will start the assessment process for six sergeants tomorrow.
- We will be testing for police officers on Saturday. He requested to hire two from this opening. The Council was in consensus.

WWTP Superintendent Kunders reported...

- Nothing to report.

Library Director Jeffries reported...

- She received a resignation from our longest serving Library Assistant. Elisa Mann has been noted in the Library for her exemplary customer service. She will be a great loss. She is a graduate student in Library Science.
- They have had to call on their Library Council liaison, Board members and Friends of the Library for assistance as they have become short-staffed.
- Last night they had a program in the auditorium with Pat Courtney Gold. She talked about Columbia River Native women and their role in a matriarchal society. Thirty-six people attended.

Finance Director Ellis reported...

- The Police Department does not have a maintenance program for heating and air

conditioning. With contracts expiring for the other buildings, he would like to take this time to go out for an RFP. There were no objections from the Council.

City Recorder Payne reported...

- Nothing to report.

City Administrator Walsh reported...

- The term for retirees leaving the workforce is "silver tsunami." It's an impressive number right now.
- We started this meeting with a presentation from Judy Thompson, representing SHEDCO. She requested clean-up assistance, as well as soil and plants. Judy was here because Main Street Program Coordinator Liz Esposito had to leave. SHEDCO members have really stepped up in her absence. There is budget savings with her leaving. **Motion:** Upon Conn's motion and Carlson's second, the Council unanimously approved donating \$449 to SHEDCO to purchase soil and plants for clean-up day.
- The reorganization is going well.
- Had the first Waterfront Redevelopment meeting. It was well attended, positive and encouraging.

Council Reports

Mayor Peterson reported...

- He and Council President Morten met with Boise yesterday to talk about the properties. He gave John a pat on the back for receiving the \$200,000 EPA grant.

Councilor Conn reported...

- Attended the March 5 Arts & Cultural Commission meeting. They are pursuing a mural project on the Post Office building.
- There is an opening on the Arts & Cultural Commission.
- Attended the March 10 Col-Pac meeting.
- Attended the March 11 St. Helens Community Foundation meeting. Willow Bill led a presentation about an upcoming trip in the eagle canoe. They are looking for funding and a long-term location for the canoe.

Council President Morten reported...

- He is impressed with Councilor Locke's efforts to encourage our teens, Council and departments to become involved in the Youth Council. He asked Library Director Jeffries to talk about the Teen Advisory Board and Teen Gaming Night happening tonight. Jeffries talked about how fun the gaming night has been. It has been well attended. Morten would like to find ways to involve youth in the Parks Commission.
- Judy Thompson's efforts are very much appreciated. Having the Garden Club involved in the triangle project proved to be very positive. A collaboration of Public Works and volunteers is essential. He will talk to Neal, Sue and Thad about helping with the clean-up day.
- He missed the last Council meeting. He was able to get his educational credits accomplished for his profession as well as visit friends and family.

Councilor Carlson reported...

- Youth Council has been fun. The group is excited and anxious to do stuff.
- SHEDCO was hit hard with Liz Esposito leaving. Volunteers met with Liz and have really taken over what needs to be done to make events happen. They have put in a lot of volunteer hours. She appreciates all their efforts. There will be a duck race in McCormick Park in June.

- The traveling Vietnam Memorial wall arrived in Rainier yesterday.
- April 2 is Autism Awareness Day. She encouraged everyone to wear blue to show support.

Councilor Locke reported...

- He has asked Chief Moss to run a background check on him. He would like to be able to show the school it has been done since he's working with the Youth Council.
- The Youth Council is coming along fairly well. There were 11 at the first meeting, 22 at the second meeting and 10 at the third meeting. It has been a learning experience. He's going to try to meet every week in April to create a regular schedule. They really want to see the Teen Court be revived.

Executive Session

ORS 192.660(2)(e) Real Property Transactions

Motion: At 2:37 p.m., upon Carlson's motion and Morten's second, the Council unanimously voted to move into executive session under ORS 192.660(2)(e) Real Property Transactions.

Motion: At 3:30 p.m., upon completion of the executive session, Morten moved to go back into work session, seconded by Locke, and unanimously approved.

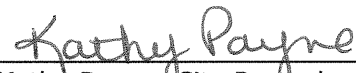
Other Business

No other business.




There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:31 p.m.

ATTEST:



Kathy Payne, City Recorder



Randy Peterson, Mayor