

City of St. Helens CITY COUNCIL

Work Session Minutes

January 6, 2016

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

Members Absent: Ginny Carlson, Councilor

Staff Present: John Walsh, City Administrator
Jon Ellis, Finance Director
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Margaret Jeffries, Library Director
Neal Sheppard, Public Works Operations Director
Sue Nelson, Public Works Engineering Director
Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Jenny Dimsho, Assistant Planner

Others: Nicole Thille Amanda Renner

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



Visitor Comments

No visitors commented.

Discuss Recommended Charter Amendment

As presented in a staff report dated December 17, 2015, from City Planner Graichen.

Annexations involve many things such as a land use decision process, compliance with State law, and compliance with provisions in a government's charter.

Based on State law (Oregon Revised Statutes), a vote before the electorate is required in *some* circumstances. Put simply, the state law requires a combination of signed petitions or consents to annexation; otherwise a vote is required. However, for some local jurisdictions, their charter necessitates a vote regardless of state law. St. Helens is one of those cities.

St. Helens has only been one of those cities since the late 1990's, however. In the packet, is documentation from 1997 that shows the catalyst behind the change to include an electorate vote for all annexations in St. Helens.

Staff proposes that St. Helens eliminate this provision. Scappoose did so earlier in 2015.

Pros for the change:

- ✓ Less staff time (especially for the city recorder)
- ✓ No annexation has ever been denied by voters (to the best of my knowledge)
- ✓ Less uncertainty

- ✓ Less cost to applicants or the County (to pay for the election process)

Cons against the change:

- ✓ Do you think this is a necessary democratic process that should be kept?

This month, department head staff discussed the matter and supports the change. I also presented the idea to the Planning Commission at their December 8, 2015 meeting and the Commission supports the change.

Though some annexations require a vote, most if not all, in the last several years (all since I've been with the City since 2007) have been via consent from property owners where no election would be required by state law.

This action would require a vote to change the city's charter (I assume). Staff seeks the Council's guidance on the matter to proceed.

Mayor Peterson asked if the change was an initiative on the ballot or a Council decision. Graichen explained that it was an election vote. It would need to be voted on again to remove it.

Mayor Peterson recalls it being changed when Wal-Mart wanted to locate on property near Millard Road and Highway 30. It would be interesting now to see how voters would vote to remove it.

The Council was in consensus to eliminate the provision. A public forum will be held and media publications will be released.

Review Preliminary Budget Calendar

Finance Director Ellis reminded the Council that six Budget Committee meetings were held last year. Feedback from our volunteers was to have fewer meetings. He proposes going back to the standard three or four meetings. Mayor Peterson and Councilor Conn concurred with the proposal.

Council President Morten found last year's format valuable. It gave the Council an opportunity to hear from each department and time to consider each request. He understands it was cumbersome for some of the volunteers. Councilor Locke agreed with Morten. It gives them more time to review the proposal.

Ellis will return with a final calendar for review at the next meeting.

Review Proposed Job Description for PW Building Maintenance Utility Worker which replaces the PW Utility Craftsman Job Description

Public Works Operations Director Sheppeard reported that the position became vacant as of December 31, 2015. This is a good opportunity to review the job description and orient the job duties towards building maintenance.

Council had no objections.

Review Proposed Changes to Accounting Assistant and Office Assistant Job Descriptions

Finance Director Ellis reviewed the proposed changes. Council had no objections.

Discuss Timing of Recruitment for Finance Director Position

Staff requests further direction from City Council as to the recruitment of the Finance Director position.

In June 2016, Finance Director Ellis will be retiring his position with the City. To assure a timely transition of the position, staff wishes to further vet possible scenarios and receive direction from City Council.

Possible Scenarios:

- 1) Back fill the Finance Director position a month prior to projected retirement date.
 - a. Recruitment timing:
 - i. Initiate recruitment process on March 1, 2016 to coincide with the Spring Conference of the Oregon Government Finance Officers Association (OGFOA) spring conference (March 6, 2016).
 - ii. Close date for recruitment on April 15, 2016
 - iii. Selection by May 13, 2016
 - iv. Start date June 1, 2016
 - b. Retiring Finance Director be reassigned to work special projects in the month of June and orientate new Finance Director accordingly.
 - c. Potential increase in personnel cost to FY 15-16 budget would be \$12,500 which could be allocated based on ICAP (GF \$2,000) or based on the assigned special projects.
- 2) Back fill the Finance Director position, whereby timing would allow newly hired Finance Director to participate in some of the budget meetings. This means one of two things:
 - a. Back fill position from sometime in April or
 - b. Compress the budget committee process to the month of May and back fill position from the 1st of May.
 - c. Potential increase in personnel cost to FY 15-16 budget would be \$25,000 to 37,500 which could be allocated based on ICAP or based on the assigned special projects.
- 3) Time the recruitment and hiring of new Finance Director to have position filled in July 2016 and contract with retiring Finance Director. Total costs unknown at this time – based on further analysis.
- 4) Other Potential Alternatives, Contracting out position, IGA with other agency, different timing for recruitment, restructure organization?

Discussion of amount of overlap needed between a new Finance Director and Ellis's retirement. Council concurred with scenario one. The position will be posted in February.

Department Reports

Public Works Engineering Director Nelson reported...

- Thanked the Public Works crew for their hard work during the storm events. She attended the Columbia County Traffic Safety Committee meeting this morning. They discussed the recent storm events. County Commissioner Heimuller complimented the City on how well the streets were taken care of during the events. He was impressed with the responsiveness of our crews.

Public Works Operations Director Sheppard reported...

- Suggested everyone be prepared for a tornado or earthquake, since that is all we have not had recently.

Library Director Jeffries reported...

- The Library received a \$2,000 grant from the Columbia County Cultural Coalition. It will be used with additional funds from the St. Helens Public Library to purchase a new microfilm reader. We have a lot of microfilm of local newspapers that are not available to digitize.

Finance Director Ellis reported...

- Staff is assessing the need to bring in an account temp until the part-time Office Assistant is hired. The backlog is impacting court. They have been down half a person since August.

City Recorder Payne reported...

- Graichen asked if the Council would be willing to hold a 5:30 p.m. public hearing on February 3. There is already one scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Council concurred. Mayor Peterson may not be at that meeting. He is having knee surgery the day before.

City Administrator Walsh reported...

- He received all positive feedback about the decorated Plaza and Christmas ships. The only casualty was the cardboard Elsa did not survive the rain and wind. The décor will be taken down over the next couple weeks.
- He will be contacting Tina Curry to submit a proposal for 4th of July, both with and without fireworks.
- The area-wide planning grant is moving along. Steering committee meetings will begin in mid-February. The composition of the advisory committee was discussed. Rather than it being a two-member Council representation, does the entire Council want to be involved? Council concurred.
- The phone system will be demonstrated next week.

Council Reports

Mayor Peterson reported...

- Kudos to the Public Works crews, City Hall staff and Library staff who persevered through the weather.

Councilor Conn reported...

- She serves on the CIT steering committee. They had a technical conference call yesterday and will continue to have them monthly. A coordinator will be hired as soon as possible.

Council President Morten reported...

- Thanked everyone for getting most of their evaluations completed. They need to be submitted no later than this month.
- Thanked Public Works. The roads look great. They have done a remarkable job on the stormwater runoff. The heavy rains and icy weather seemed to be handled very effectively.
- Congratulated Marc and Jim on their retirement. He represented the Council at their retirement party last week. He was impressed with all the work they completed and their years of service.
- He requested the Council hold a retreat. Council concurred. They will review the governing policy, evaluations, goals and other items to be determined. Councilor Conn will search for a location. It will tentatively be held on February 10.

Councilor Locke reported...

- Police Chief Moss is not here because they are conducting police officer interviews today. We are still short-handed. Staff has been working a lot of overtime.
- Asked Ellis what the status is of back payments for water and court. Ellis will report back at the next Council meeting.
- Asked what the status is of the Council phone lines. Payne reported that she changed the message on that line indicating that it is no longer in use, they can press '0' to be transferred to her.
- He asked for his personal email address to be added to the distribution list. Payne told Locke that the other Councilors have their City email forwarded to their personal email address. Locke agreed to do that.

Other Business

City Administrator Walsh reported that Marc Knudsen repaired all the chairs that were missing feet in the Council Chambers as part of his final projects before retirement.



There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:54 p.m.

ATTEST:



Kathy Payne, City Recorder



Randy Peterson, Mayor