

# City of St. Helens

## City Council

Work Session Minutes

June 17, 2020

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**Members Present:** Mayor Rick Scholl  
Council President Doug Morten  
Councilor Ginny Carlson  
Councilor Keith Locke  
Councilor Stephen R. Topaz

**Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** John Walsh, City Administrator  
Matt Brown, Assistant City Administrator  
Kathy Payne, City Recorder  
Margaret Jeffries, Library Director  
Sue Nelson, Interim Public Works Director  
Joe Hogue, Police Lieutenant  
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner  
Jacob Graichen, City Planner  
Rachael Barry, Government Affairs & Project Support Specialist  
Crystal King, Communications Officer  
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder  
Dylan Gaston, Police Officer  
Mike De Roia, Building Official  
Tina Curry, Event Coordinator  
Bill Monahan, City Attorney

**Others:** Claire Catt Patrick Birkle Chris Iverson  
Brandon Sundeen Brady Preheim

1) **1:00 P.M. - Call Work Session to Order**

2) **Visitor Comments - Limited to five (5) minutes per speaker**

- ◆ Brandon Sundeen. Voiced his concerns about the condition of the Veterans Memorial Plaza at McCormick Park. Over the past few months, it has been looking really rough. On Memorial Day, he and his family visited memorials. All of them were immaculate except for St. Helens, which was full of weeds, debris, and dead plants. St. Helens Youth Council did a great job this weekend of getting the cleanup started but more needs to be done. That is an important area to always keep maintained.

Council President Morten acknowledged the work done there by the Youth Council. Councilor Carlson added that the students worked in that area for two hours last Sunday. She saw the pictures of how overgrown it looked on social media and moved it to the top of their volunteer list. There needs to be a better process for projects like that that staff cannot get to. The Youth Council could have done it earlier in the spring if they had known about it.

- ◆ Patrick Birkle. He really appreciates Brandon's comments. He suggested that Brandon and some others consider something like a "Friends of..." program that is being used in Nob Hill Nature Park and Dalton Lake Nature Preserve. It could even include the VFW. The reality is, with the budget and future work, the staff is already stretched. The future of St. Helens could see a greater use of volunteers.

Council President Morten acknowledged the existing groups. It is just a matter of time and getting them organized. He agrees that the Parks crew is very busy.

### 3) **Discussion Topics**

#### 3.A Employee Length of Service Award

One employee has reached a milestone in his employment with the City. The following individual will receive a certificate and pin.

#### 5 Years

After serving as a Reserve Patrol Officer, Dylan Gaston was hired as a Patrol Officer in 2015, where he continues to serve.

Congratulations, Dylan, and thank you for your service!

#### 3.B Annual Insurance Report - Chris Iverson of Hagan Hamilton Insurance

Chris Iverson of Hagan Hamilton was in attendance to discuss the proposed insurance rates for the upcoming year.

- The renewal rates went up about \$35,000.
- A lot of new vehicles and equipment were added. Some of the old vehicles were removed.
- Property values were increased.
- The City is growing.
- Cyber liability claims have increased. Because of the large cyber claim the City had, CIS is unable to offer a \$1 million policy for cyber liability. He found another market that quoted \$1 million. The premium on that is \$15,000+. It is a huge premium, but the coverage is very broad. He needs direction from the Council on which way they want to go with it.

Councilor Carlson asked if there were safety options to reduce the auto policy. Chris responded that he is not aware of anything, but he will make an inquiry.

Council was in concurrence to go forward with the coverage with CIS and the cyber liability with the new vendor.

#### 3.C Annual Report from Planning Commission/Historic Landmarks Commission - Jacob

City Planner Jacob Graichen reviewed the report, a copy of which is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

Discussion of holding a joint meeting with the Planning Commission. Graichen will schedule one in the fall.

Councilor Carlson thanked Graichen for his hard work and for holding the peace in the meetings. She appreciates that he keeps the meeting professional and keeps them on track.

Discussion ensued about Code violations. They are typically complaint driven and handled by a combination of Code Enforcement, Planning, and Building.

Councilor Carlson talked about a project that the Youth Council will be doing to take pictures of Historic Landmarks. Graichen envisions the Youth Council will gain appreciation and knowledge of historic structures through the project.

### 3.D Associate Planner Report - Jenny

Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho reported on her activities over the last few months. A copy of her report is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

- Reviewed grants.
- The Millard Road signalization project is on ODOT's list.

<https://www.oregon.gov/odot/projects/pages/project-details.aspx?project=21459>

### 3.E Review Council Goals and Projects

Mayor Scholl reported that they are still moving forward with Council goals. They understand that public needs do not stop because of a pandemic. They are being fiscally responsible. There was a budget increase of only one million dollars. They also have a prudent reserve. The City continues to be cautious and move forward with projects.

### 3.F Review LOC's List of Legislative Priorities - John

City Administrator Walsh reviewed the proposed priorities. He requested the Council review the list and be ready to make recommendations for the top four priorities at the July 15 work session.

### 3.G Set Activities for Public Works Director Recruitment Process - Kathy

City Recorder Payne reviewed her memo. She asked Council for their input on the following questions.

1. How many candidates do you want to interview? Eight in the first round and four in the second round.
2. How do you want to conduct interviews? Zoom for the first round and in-person for the second round.
3. Will the City cover travel expenses? Walsh and Mayor Scholl will make the decision when and if it comes up for each person.
4. Who do you want to be on the panel(s)? Council, Walsh, Brown, and Payne
5. What day(s) shall we set for interviews? Four candidates on July 7 and four on July 8 via Zoom. Each interview will be scheduled 45 minutes apart.

### 3.H Discuss Recommendations regarding OLCC Licensing and Support for Local Businesses - Tina

Even Coordinator Curry reported on 13 Nights on the River:

- Will hold July and August concerts, and add September in place of the June concerts that were cancelled.
- OLCC is not issuing permits for events. She is requesting permission to allow people to bring in their own alcoholic beverages.
- The concert area will be closed for ticket only to restrict the number of people gathering.
- The vendor area will be open for anyone to access.
- Alcohol monitors will be onsite.
- Restrooms will be cleaned every hour.

Mayor Scholl pointed out the mixed emotions in the community about charging for the concerts that have always been free. He understands that the concerts must at least make their money back to pay for the bands. Curry responded that most responses on Facebook were in favor of charging a fee.

Councilor Topaz was adamantly opposed to holding the concert series. We are in the midst of a pandemic and need to be careful. Refunds need to be made to vendors. Curry responded that she has been in contact with the vendors and none of them want their money back. She is following the State rules for outside gatherings and she is willing to make changes as needed.

Discussion ensued. The majority of the Council was in concurrence to move forward with the concerts and allow patrons to bring their own alcohol.

Curry talked about the Luminights drive-thru event. She would like to move forward with holding the event in August, September, and October and move the location to the Veneer Property.

Councilor Carlson is concerned that it is an event that invites people from out of the area to come. The light is also an attractive nuisance. It seems to go against the spirit of the Governor's orders. Councilor Topaz agreed. It will bring a lot of people from out of town. COVID-19 cases are increasing. This is asking for trouble.

Mayor Scholl would prefer waiting to see where they are at in a couple months before deciding. He likes the drive-thru concept.

Curry talked about the need to bring customers to our small businesses. Discussion ensued.

Council President Morten is in support of the event as long as it is safe, and people remain in their vehicles. It will help our community and gives our citizens an activity. It is not just for tourists.

Councilor Locke hesitantly agrees with Mayor Scholl and Council President Morten. There is always going to be the caveat that it could be cancelled. Curry agreed. They can work within the confines of the restrictions and keep it as safe as possible. Restaurants and merchants are open. They are struggling and this will support them.

Discussion ensued. Councilor Carlson is fine with it as long as we are in compliance. A majority of the Council was in consensus to move forward with the event.

Councilor Locke asked how many outsiders will be here to set up and operate it. Curry said there will be 12. They are all in the United States at this time.

**BREAK - 3:00 p.m.**

**4) Department Reports**

Police Lieutenant Hogue reported...

- Nothing to report.

Interim Public Works Director Nelson reported...

- Playground equipment is reopening today. That ruling changed from earlier in the month.

- They are hoping to get a couple of the restrooms open by this weekend. They are waiting on adequate PPE. The first PPE that was received was found to not be suitable for use with cleaning liquid. The new equipment should be received today and tomorrow.
- Working with the Library and the Recreation Center to set up a story book trail. The trail with book pages will wind through the McCormick Park walking trails. Public Works crews will build and install it.
- The Safe Routes to Schools grant project for Columbia Blvd. sidewalks is still moving forward. It should be built by next spring.
- They are staying busy with private and public projects.

Council President Morten expressed his disappointment that summer labor workers were not hired this year since they are short on Parks staff. Mayor Scholl pointed out that the Council made a decision to put all hiring on hold due to COVID-19. Council President Morten did not think that included temporary positions.

Nelson explained that two applications were received for the early hiring announcement. Staff was then advised that any hiring was put on hold until there was more information on the COVID-19 situation. She agreed that was a difficult decision to make. It has certainly impacted Parks maintenance. She talked with Walsh this morning and he has given the green light to move forward with getting some temporary summer workers. Nelson added that they have not had community corrections workers helping in the parks due to COVID-19. Discussion on parks maintenance ensued.

Councilor Carlson asked when the crosswalks on Gable Road will be in place. Nelson responded that they should finish most of the paving tomorrow. After that, they will install striping and legends and install signage. The blinking light at the crosswalk will be installed at the end of this week or next.

Library Director Jeffries reported:

- This is the second week of offering curbside service for hold pickups. It has been working very well.
- There have been a lot of questions as to when the Library is going to open. There's still work being done in the Columbia Center. They have also been trying to address traffic control and cleaning.
- There is a request in the packet to spend up to \$6,500 from the Library Facility Fund for the installation of a commercial air purification system in the Columbia Center. Walsh pointed out that this type of equipment was also installed at City Hall. The expenses are potentially reimbursable through the CARES Act. Council concurred with the request.
- She had previously requested permission to install a sidewalk, update door hardware, and perform emergency upgrades. Yesterday, Roger received the quote for two handicapped door installations, which is just shy of \$5,000. Since the quote was higher than requested, she is seeking permission from the Council again before proceeding. Consensus of Council to proceed.

Assistant City Administrator Brown reported...

- Reviewed items on tonight's regular session agenda. Councilor Topaz asked if getting rid of the Masonic building would balance the budget. Brown said it would not for this fiscal year.
- The Recreation Program and Library have teamed up to put together youth kits. They will be distributed at St. Helens elementary schools, the Food Bank, and by request. He

thanked InRoads Credit Union, United Way of Columbia County, Columbia Pacific CCSO, Northwest Early Learning Hub, OSU Extension Office, Next Adventure, Burgerville, and Columbia Health Services for their contributions. Recreation is still present in the community.

Mayor Scholl asked how the ballfields are looking. Brown explained that City park rules for reservations have been updated to include language for COVID-19. Users will need to sign a waiver form that they will follow the Oregon Health Association guidelines. If anyone becomes sick, the user will be held responsible and not the City. The City's attorney is currently reviewing the language. As soon as it is received, he will have Walsh and Payne review it before it is distributed.

City Recorder Payne reported:

- Reviewed items on tonight's agenda.
- At the last meeting, Council directed staff to discuss janitorial services. They discussed it and recommend entering into a one-year agreement with CBM Systems, LLC. They submitted a bid that was just under \$62,000. That gives the City a year to discuss options, such as creating a Public Works Facilities Maintenance Division. They could hire a couple part-time employees to cover the City buildings. Council concurred.

City Administrator Walsh reported:

- Shout out to Payne for all her hard work on the personnel policies.
- Reviewed items on tonight's agenda.
- He is hopeful for grants for the Waterfront property, but they are also looking at other funding methods.
- Earlier in the week, a small cruise line reached out to us requesting permission to embark passengers since we were already in Phase 2. They would remain COVID-19 compliant. The Governor's office just sent a message that cruise ships are not an allowed activity. However, this cruise line is interpreting that different since they are a smaller line. If they are granted permission by tomorrow, a brand new \$50 million cruise ship will dock in St. Helens to carry people to Idaho. All the insurance is in place and they are paying their docking fees.
- Attorney Bill Monahan is filling in for Tim Ramis. He is here for executive session.

5) **Other Business**

6) **Adjourn - 4:00 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

  
Kathy Payne, City Recorder

  
Rick Scholl, Mayor