

City of St. Helens

City Council

Work Session Minutes

April 15, 2020

This meeting was held electronically via Zoom.

Council Members Present: Doug Morten, Council President
Keith Locke, Councilor
Stephen R. Topaz, Councilor
Ginny Carlson, Councilor

Council Members Absent: Rick Scholl, Mayor

Staff Present: John Walsh, City Administrator
Matt Brown, Assistant City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Brian Greenway, Police Chief
Sue Nelson, Interim Public Works Director
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
Margaret Jeffries, Library Director
Rachael Barry, Government Affairs & Project Support Specialist
Crystal King, Communications Director
Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner
Mike DeRoia, Building Official
Heidi Davis, Building & Administration Secretary
Christina Sullivan, Community Development Administrative Assistant
Shanna Duggan, Recreation Manager
Jamie Edwards, Administrative Billing Specialist
Ed Trompke, City Attorney
Tina Curry, Event Coordinator

Others:	Linda Prichett	Dan Brown	Brady Preheim
	Heidi Oliver	Chelsea Strautman	Diane Dillard
	Jaime Smith	Patrick Birkle	

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

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

- ◆ Steve Burg, American Property Management. They own the property at 445 and 201 Port Avenue. He has concerns about the CCMH proposal. He was told that it would be to gather homeless people and put them in a camp at McCormick Park. There was a homeless camp there years ago that created vandalism and crime. He doesn't see how this is going to help amidst the COVID-19 crisis. They're concerned about the crime and health aspect.

- ◆ Jaime Smith. She is here to speak about the CCMH homeless proposal as well. There has not been a clear ask of what they want. Parks have closed due to COVID-19. It seems ridiculous to open the parks to camping again. She has heard that it could potentially bring people from Portland. There are families in our County who need help. If this is approved, what is the process for ramping down the use and supporting our community members?
- ◆ Diane Dillard. She is in opposition of the proposal for using McCormick Park as a homeless camp. She is not in opposition to the City finding camping space but not at McCormick Park. There is space on the Boise property and the hospital property. That park just received a \$25,000 donation for a new playground. That park is used by so many people. Our children and citizens do not need to be exposed to trash and unused needles. When those people leave, there will be a cleanup that will cost a lot of money. She encourages the Council to vote no at this time.
- ◆ Chelsea Strautman. She is interested in hearing the McCormick Park proposal from CCMH. From her understanding, it is just to open the shower facilities to the homeless. She's in support of helping unsheltered families. She is working on a grant proposal to get funding for unsheltered families, specifically for women and children who are fleeing domestic violence situations. She is working collaboratively with local agencies to help find a solution. She is in support of opening shower facilities.
- ◆ Brady Preheim. He is here to comment about the proposal for McCormick Park. He understands that the CDC guidelines mandated the closure of park restrooms. Opening them for showers could be a detriment to homeless. If one is infected, it could spread to more. He is opposed to a homeless camp at McCormick Park. There needs to be a better solution for appropriate housing. How many homeless people are there in the County and how many would need housing?
- ◆ Heidi Oliver. Her daughter lives next to McCormick Park and the City just received a grant for new playground equipment. Who is funding the homeless camp? She sees a lot of people migrating from Longview, Washington, and there's a homeless camp on Industrial Way. Those people do not want help. They have destroyed the area. There are apartments going in, our infrastructure is not up to par, and why do we have an area for homeless? We can't even take care of what we have. We should not provide space for homeless coming from outside the area.

3) **Discussion Topics**

3.A Homeless Pandemic Response - McCormick Park - Linda Prichett, CCMH
CCMH Clinical Director of Residential and Specialty Services Linda Prichett reported that Columbia Community Mental Health (CCMH) is looking at various aspects of their COVID-19 response. One area of concern is the unsheltered population in Columbia County. They have been working closely with Community Action Team (CAT) and Columbia County Public Health. She is requesting use of the showers at McCormick Park, Monday – Friday, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. They will also be handing out grab and go food during that time, as well as hygiene kits. They never intended to bring people in from outside of Columbia County. They just want to provide the service for people in the community. The Library and other services have closed, which has disrupted their ability to take care of their needs. They are working with Public Health to learn how to properly clean the restrooms. They would put everything in place to make sure they're not creating a vector to spread disease.

CAT Executive Director Dan Brown reported that this has never been about bringing people in from outside of the community. They have already established some restroom facilities and handwashing stations. They are providing meals several days a week. This request is to give them a place to shower. They will adhere to social distancing requirements, create a sign-up sheet for showers, and follow Public Health guidelines for cleaning between the uses.

Linda said they will conduct screenings of people using the showers. If they are ill, they will provide them additional services. There will be staff on site during the operation hours.

Council President Morten asked why they selected McCormick Park. He talked about other shower facilities that they could have considered, such as Columbia View Park, fairgrounds, County facilities, etc. He's concerned that once they move into McCormick Park, it could be hard to move them out. Linda responded they chose McCormick Park specifically because of the showers. They are looking for a centrally located park for easy access. She understands that the showers at Columbia View Park are not operational due to a fire. Council President Morten asked if they have considered mobile showers that could be brought in. Dan responded that they did investigate it. It would cost \$62,000 month.

Councilor Topaz recommended borrowing a portable shower facility, rather than using the restrooms in City parks. The homeless population have a bad reputation of not leaving the area very nice. A lot of people are opposed to this proposal.

Councilor Carlson has seen McCormick park frequently used while maintaining social distancing. She doesn't want to take anything away from citizens. The Council has taken a stand to keep parks smoke-free. It took us years to cleanup after closing camping in McCormick Park. She is hesitant to put City assets at risk. Dan responded that they plan to adhere to any park regulations. Linda agreed, they want to follow all park rules. She supports the non-smoking rule.

Councilor Locke has not heard that there will be no camping there. Linda responded that they are not asking for camping for their unsheltered population at McCormick Park. They are asking for use of showers, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m., Monday – Friday, or only Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Councilor Topaz talked about camping off Old Portland Road already taking place. This is going to add another burden.

Councilor Locke asked what the status is of the men's restroom at Columbia View Park. City Administrator Walsh reported that the repairs have been made. It was ready to open when all the park restrooms were closed. Linda is not set on McCormick Park. They would be happy to use Columbia View Park if it is available.

Council President Morten asked how long this will continue and what their financial situation is for staffing and cleanup. Linda responded that they have funding and staffing available for this program. She can't answer the question about timing. That will be based on the Governor opening the State again. They don't intend to continue the use indefinitely.

Council President Morten suggested Linda and Dan check with the School District about using their facilities as well. They would have more shower stalls available. Councilor Topaz suggested checking with the National Guard Armory as well. Linda responded that County Commissioner Alex Tardiff was going to investigate schools. She doesn't know their availability at this time. Dan expressed concerns about using schools. They can't as easily control where

they go in a school or locker room. The smaller the facility is, the better for cleaning between use. They can investigate the use of the National Guard Armory.

Interim Public Works Director Nelson reported that the showers at Columbia View Park are coin operated. The electrical has not been checked on the fire damaged side of the restrooms.

Walsh explained that the park restrooms were closed before the State mandate for the safety of staff. They were being vandalized, toilet paper was being stolen, and it was challenging to keep them clean. The expectation for City staff to maintain them is a concern.

Chief Greenway reviewed Police Department concerns.

- Suggested using funds to bus people to Multnomah County, where they also offer shelter.
- From his experience, there will be residual effects after the pandemic ends or the showers close. They will start camping at or around the park.
- Who is going to police the problem? The Police Department is already short staffed. If one of their officers gets infected, they will have to be quarantined for 14 days. That could shut down the department in a matter of 72 hours.
- It could also lead to problems with Hepatitis C.
- He spoke with officers and they are not in support of this proposal. They are in support of helping the housing challenged individuals but not bringing them into an area that is hard to police during the day.
- He suggested other facilities, such as the high school, CCMH facilities or showers on their property.
- They have seen a spike in domestic violence and just don't have the resources to police this.

City Attorney Trompke is concerned about City staff and risk assessment when cleaning showers. He wants to make sure City employees and volunteers are not exposed to hazardous work conditions, which could result in a civil liability. He would want to make sure that the people cleaning receive special cleaning instructions and training, which would also involve having the proper PPE. He supports Chief Greenway's suggestion to take people to an appropriate facility where they can receive shelter, shower, and other services.

Deliberations will be held either tonight or at the next Council work session.

3.B Communications 3rd Quarter Report - Crystal

Communications Officer Crystal King reviewed her report. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet.

Councilor Carlson has noticed a lot of businesses doing curbside pickup. She worries about businesses and how this is affecting them. She suggested King support our Main Street businesses by creating a list of businesses that are still open. Walsh talked about all the resources on the City's website that King has kept updated. Tourism is on pause, but Tina is working to promote businesses on social media to help them survive. Councilor Topaz asked if King could report on the needs of the Food Bank. King said there are resources on the City's website related to the Senior Center and Food Bank. Her only concern with promotion of businesses is the need to coordinate efforts with the Chamber. Walsh added that the City has sent a letter to local businesses listing available resources.

3.C Financial 3rd Quarter Report – Matt

Assistant City Administrator Brown reviewed his report. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet. Departments have been asked to refrain from any unnecessary spending. The last slide shows that building is still occurring. They have reached a five-year high. Planning, Building, and Engineering are all staying busy.

Councilor Carlson clarified that projected revenue is on target. The next report will show the shortage. Brown agreed.

Councilor Topaz asked about the last half of the year. Brown will review that in the proposed budget at tomorrow's Budget Committee meeting. They are being cautiously optimistic by estimating anticipated revenue and not filling open positions.

Councilor Carlson asked about the school excise tax. Brown reported that school districts have the option to apply a 1% excise tax to building permits. Each quarter, Brown issues a check to the school district. The last check was around \$70,000, which was larger than previous checks because of the increase in residential building. They receive 99% of the tax. The City retains 1% for processing fees. The funds do not come out of General Fund. It's a fee paid by the applicant.

3.D Review Request for Proposals Document for Janitorial Services - Matt

Assistant City Administrator Brown reviewed the RFP. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet. Discussion ensued about additional cleaning during the pandemic. City Recorder Payne reported that the current contractor has increased cleaning services.

3.E Discussion Regarding RFP Process for IT Services - Matt

Council President Morten brought this to the attention of Walsh and Brown after being approached with a concern about how the RFP was handled. Brown reported that the City released an RFP for IT Services in November 2019. They did not complete the RFP. An automatic renewal was done with Centerlogic in January 2020. At that time, the IT incident occurred at the City, which made them more aware of some of the issues they were having. They reviewed the RFPs again, and discussed at the last Council meeting about moving away from Centerlogic and moving to MorePower. Attorney Trompke explained that there are limits to how large of a contract the City can enter into without starting the process over. At the last meeting, Council directed staff to enter into a contract with MorePower. That can proceed but it should come back to Council for final approval.

Council President Morten asked if Brady Preheim could have the opportunity to speak since he brought up the concern. Brown reported that Brady did not submit a response to the RFP. If they invite him to speak, it would be inviting a member from the public to speak. Trompke added that only submitters can file objections. The City needs to extend the time period with the concurrence of the bidder and then the final details can be worked out and brought back to Council for final approval. Brown added that MorePower is fine with extending their proposal.

3.F Library Department Requests - Margaret

Library Director Jeffries reviewed her report. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet. The temporary closure of the Library gives them a unique opportunity to work on maintenance projects. She is requesting Council authorization to spend:

- \$22,300 from the Library Facility Fund for Columbia Center interior painting, floor coverings, and a minor light replacement.

- \$14,150 from the Library Facility Fund for the installation of a sink and vinyl plank flooring in the Library's new makerspace.

Councilor Carlson asked Jeffries to bring back an update of the Strategic Plan and what they've been able to accomplish. Jeffries will do that.

Council concurred with Jeffries' requests.

3.G Review of Council Goals

Walsh reported that the Strategic Workplan 2020-21 and City Council Team Agreement are a culmination of several months of meetings with Council. Copies are included in the archive meeting packet.

Discussion of serial meetings ensued. Attorney Trompke advised the Council not to communicate with more than one or two Council members, especially in an email or running into someone in a coffee shop. You can disclose the interaction at the next meeting but it's better to avoid the situation.

Discussion of Goal Area 4. Councilor Topaz would like to include community input for property development. Walsh pointed out the extensive community involvement that took place during the Waterfront property development review. Councilor Carlson would like to see local agencies involved more. Walsh added that he does have frequent conversations with local agencies. Goal Area 1 does emphasize collaboration with agencies. Councilor Carlson suggested Walsh vocalize the agency communications during his reports. Consensus to include this in the Executive Summary.

4) Department Reports

Interim Public Works Director Nelson reported...

- Public Works is functioning with altered schedules. They are practicing safe protocols.
- Crews have been working on projects at the Library.
- Obtained the Blazers MODA Assist Program Grant! The exact amount is not known yet. MODA will be adjusting the award amount since the season was shortened. She anticipates more than \$26,000 to purchase all-inclusive play equipment for McCormick Park. Thank you to Communications Officer Crystal King, Recreation Manager Shanna Duggan, and Parks & Trails Commission Chair Carmin Dunn for all their work to promote the competition.
- Council President Morten added that Nob Hill Nature Park received a \$500 grant from Portland Garden Club.

Chief Greenway reported...

- Columbia County has 14 cases of confirmed COVID-19. No deaths in the County.

Library Director Jeffries reported...

- Continuing to offer virtual story times twice a week.
- Vendors are offering subscription content for free.
- Instituted a free digital library card. It allows you to get digital books, magazines, and music.
- Made policy changes to extend material due dates and library card expiration dates.
- Need to start making plans for re-opening the Library.

Assistant City Administrator Brown reported...

- Finance, utility billing, and court are working almost every day.
- Reviewing business licenses in the Municipal Code for updates.

Event Coordinator Curry reported...

- Thanked Greenway and his officers for a recent quick response.
- Tourism has shifted to local tourism. She has been contacting businesses.
- She is going to do a Food Adventures Program to offer cross-promotion to food businesses.
- Other businesses will be included in the Explore Local app.
- A Heart Hunters program will begin next week. Hearts will be placed on all businesses.
- Working on a new Physical Distancing family activity.
- Working on Keep Your Distance Dinner Parties. It's a promotion with restaurants and food providers to encourage people to get food from the same restaurant and have a dinner party online.
- Thanked Parks and Public Works crews for their help.
- Have a crew of people helping clean out park area.
- Businesses can contact her to help get information out.
- Working on a plan to help businesses list their hours operations.
- Working on the permits for the Masonic building.

Councilor Carlson reported that independent films are being released and can be streamed. Their profits are being split with independent theaters, including Columbia Theater. She would like Curry to include ways for businesses to share how we can support them. Curry confirmed she will provide that service. Businesses just need to contact her.

Communications Officer King reported...

- The www.discovercolumbiacounty.com website and Columbia County Events Facebook website are excellent resources for business promotion. She will coordinate with Curry on promotion.

City Recorder Payne reported...

- Nothing to report.

City Administrator Walsh reported...

- COVID-19 is consuming a lot of time for the Communications Officer, Department Heads, and the whole organization. Everyone is doing their part to stay safe and continue providing essential services. He is participating in weekly conference calls. They are starting to change discussions from response to re-opening.
- City Hall is closed but Community Development is still very busy.
- Working on the resubmittal application for the BUILD grant. Rather than the boardwalk, the focus will be on the roadway infrastructure.
- The Nike funded 5th Street Trail was very nicely done. He encouraged everyone to check it out. Thank you to Youth Corp and Public Works for their work on the project.

5) **Council Reports**

Councilor Locke reported...

- Nothing to report.

Councilor Carlson reported...

- Having Zoom meetings with the Chamber of Commerce. Moving forward with an all-volunteer team. They have a very active Ambassador program.
- Thank you to staff for closely monitoring the budget.
- Thank you to all the staff continuing to work every day. She understands the pressure.

Councilor Topaz reported...

- The Food Bank needs volunteer drivers.
- Judy Thompson is still planning to ring the bells on 4th of July.
- He was upset by two documents he recently read that were not made very public.
 - The failed Waterfront boardwalk grant application. It was supposed to be a matching fund grant. The matching amount was listed as the tipping fees from the lagoon. It made it sound like the lagoon will be a dump. Things didn't match when you read the document from Maul Foster about the lagoon.
 - The reservoir fixup project. A lot of chlorinated water is being dumped down the stream. He questioned it and was told it was okay. He asked Brown how much it costs for the material to get rid of the chlorine. That resulted in Brown turning him into the Ethics Committee for bothering him. Further down the road, there was an article in our utility bill about the chlorine that comes from the reservoir. He investigated it. The sample of water, taken in a mason jar, 100 yards from the outflow compared to the outflow from the chlorination unit. The water sample was running about five gallons a minute. It was dumped into the stream 100 yards from the outflow, which is 100 yards from the valve. We have a whole bunch of missing chlorine. Plus, we don't know how much water was in the reservoir. It's a big pond and you don't know how much chlorine comes off the surface. He's finding a lot of misinformation and is getting upset.

Council President Morten has been informed by Water Filtration Facility (WFF) Supervisor Howie Burton that hardly any chlorine goes into our drinking water. Nelson does not know off the top of her head what the typical residual is from the finished water at the WFF. She can get the information. The reservoir that has the defective liner was drained into a roadside ditch. They de-chlorinate it before it gets to the ditch. It was tested in multiple locations alongside the ditch. It runs in the ditch before going into Milton Creek. That discharge location is about a half mile away from the reservoirs.

Councilor Topaz said the water level was about four feet when the reservoir was dumped. When the sample was taken it was only about an inch. Width was about 18 inches. He has been informed by the EPA that a permit is needed to dump large amounts of water. Nelson responded that she has been in contact with the EPA and no regulations have been violated. Discussion ensued. Council President Morten suggested Councilor Topaz work with Public Works to take a sample. Councilor Topaz responded that he tried to do that, and it didn't work well. Nelson clarified that he tried when work was being done and only essential personnel were allowed on site. Councilor Topaz was invited again but the invitation was never reciprocated.

Council President Morten reported...

- Interviewed a couple Public Works and Parks staff to see how they feel about opening McCormick Park for a homeless camp. They feel they would be put in danger. He recalls camping in McCormick Park and in public space was outlawed because of all the needles and debris left behind. That ordinance is being taken seriously. They are trying to keep staff and citizens safe. Parks are still open to the public. People are keeping

their distance. Why are the City parks a focus for homeless? There are so many other options to pursue.


6) **Other Business**

7) **Adjourn – 3:55 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:


Kathy Payne, City Recorder


Doug Morten, Council President