

# City of St. Helens City Council

Work Session Minutes

April 1, 2020

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*Meeting was held electronically via Zoom.*

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

**Staff Present:** John Walsh, City Administrator  
Matt Brown, Assistant City Administrator  
Kathy Payne, City Recorder  
Margaret Jeffries, Library Director  
Brian Greenway, Police Chief  
Sue Nelson, Interim Public Works Director  
Mike DeRoia, Building Official  
Rachael Barry, Government Affairs & Project Support Specialist  
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder  
Heidi Davis, Building & Administration Secretary  
Shanna Duggan, Recreation Manager  
Christina Sullivan, Community Development Administrative Assistant  
Tina Curry, Event Coordinator  
Ed Trompke, City Attorney with Jordan Ramis  
Matthew Kahl, City Attorney with Jordan Ramis

**Others:** Anna Del Savio, Spotlight Newspaper  
Patrick Birkle  
Margretta Brinson  
Jessica

- 1) **1:12 P.M. - Call Work Session to Order**
- 2) **Review Guidelines for Electronic Public Meetings**
- 3) **Visitor Comments - Limited to five (5) minutes per speaker**
  - ◆ Patrick Birkle. Kudos to the City Council, administrative staff, and all employees for the way they have responded to these trying times. He gave a big shout-out to Public Works for their work on the 5<sup>th</sup> Street trail. [His audio was lagging and made it very hard to understand him.]

#### 4) Discussion Topics

##### 4.A IT Future Upgrades Discussion - Matt

Assistant City Administrator Brown discussed with the Council an issue the City has been having with Centerlogic. A third party came in to evaluate our system, which has brought on more questions. It has become increasingly frustrating to work with Centerlogic. After the 30-day waiting period, he recommends ending the contract that was recently signed. More Power submitted a proposal at the same time as Centerlogic. Brown has been pleased with their interactions and capabilities and recommends entering into a contract with them.

City Administrator Walsh expressed how impressed he was with More Power. City Recorder Payne added that More Power has been very responsive. Their knowledge, experience, and willingness to partner with the City has been very impressive. More Power has been very descriptive of what they could provide as well as what our system needs. The relationship with our IT Specialist is very important to them, which has not been reflective by Centerlogic. More Power will be a much better working partner.

Discussion ensued. Council agreed with staff's recommendation.

**Motion:** Upon Topaz's motion and Carlson's second, Council unanimously approved disbanding from Centerlogic and moving to More Power.

##### 4.B Review New Job Descriptions for Administrative Billing Specialist and Recreation Program Specialist - Matt

Brown reviewed the job descriptions. They are included on tonight's agenda for approval. Copies of the job descriptions are included in the archive meeting packet. The Administrative Billing Specialist is the Utility, Billing and Court Specialist job revamped. There is no salary change. The Recreation Program Specialist is a part-time, 0.75FTE. They average 30 hours per week. This position would be eligible to be a union member.

Councilor Topaz noted the 35 lb. weight limit listed under physical demands. He pointed out the federal guidelines of 50 lbs. for a male and 35 lbs. for a female. Brown will investigate it and make changes if needed.

There were no other concerns.

##### 4.C Review Ordinance Vacating a Portion of Umatilla Street Right of Way - Jenny

Associate Planner Dimsho reported that the ordinance is included in tonight's agenda. A copy of the ordinance is also included in the archive meeting packet. The public hearing was held in August. It was on hold until their water line was moved.

##### 4.D Associate Planner Report - Jenny

Associate Planner Dimsho reviewed her report:

- The Food Bank project is moving forward. The renovation building permit has been submitted.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> Street Trail boardwalk has been constructed. It looks really cool. She is really happy about how easy Public Works has been to work with
- Working on personal service agreements (PSA) with Walsh.

- PSA with Kittelson & Associates to assist with the BUILD grant application cycle. They will help prepare cost estimates, cost benefit analysis, and help prepare a site plan for road improvements.
- PSA update with Alta Planning + Design for two different Parks and Recreation grants that will be submitted next week.
- PSA for Urban Renewal Agency incremental tax financing update.

4.E Review Dedication Deed to Public from St. Helens Place Apartments, LLC for Property off Matzen Street - Jacob

City Planner Graichen showed the Google Earth view of the property. The ROW dedication reflects the progress of the project. They want to acquire occupancy as the construction happens. A sidewalk was placed around a fire hydrant, causing the sidewalk to go into the property. This is an easement for that part of the sidewalk.

Discussion ensued about the development. There are 18 buildings and 204 units.

4.F Review Annual Recommendation to Adjust Cascades Reserve Allocation - Sue

Interim Public Works Director Nelson reported that this is done annually. The Technical Advisory Committee meets and makes a determination based on the use of the secondary lagoon. They determine the percentages used and make an adjustment to the amount that Cascades will pay towards the secondary treatment. This year, it stayed almost exactly the same as last year, dropping to 79.2%. The last couple of years, it has been fairly consistent. It is part of our use agreement with them. This is included on tonight's agenda for a decision.

4.G Legislative Update - Rachael

Government Affairs & Project Support Specialist Barry reported that this can come off the agenda. The Oregon Legislature is going to meet in special session. They will be discussing aid for struggling communities. There will be a legislative ask from the League of Oregon Cities (LOC) to allow us to continue our operations. There may be an ask for flexibility in the 120-day rule for land use decisions.

4.H Tourism and Events Discussion - John

Walsh reported that the Council needs to decide today if they are going to have fireworks on July 4. Curry added that she and Walsh have been discussing postponing events. She recommends postponing fireworks until the Christmas Ships Parade time. Given the fact that June is also likely going to be closed, it is going to put a tremendous stretch on us to get things in place by July 4. She thinks it creates more stress on people in general.

Councilor Carlson pointed out that Portland canceled the Waterfront Blues Festival over a week ago. She doesn't think people should be crowding together.

Mayor Scholl likes the idea of moving fireworks to Christmas. He recommends smaller shells and allowing people to move closer to the fireworks. It makes it more intimate.

Councilor Topaz agreed with cancelling events on July 4 but would still like to do fireworks. He suggests opening the Waterfront property for parking in the evening, having a smaller show, but show the flag on the 4<sup>th</sup>. Curry expressed concerns about the inability to raise funds. Businesses can't financially give right now. Councilor Topaz pointed out that no one has been asked to donate. He wants to publicly announce that we're in trouble. The community needs to

know how they can help. He suggested setting up a donation drop drive thru. Curry said she could set up a few places to donate but they do need to order the fireworks by a certain day.

Discussion ensued about a fireworks deadline. If they don't raise enough money in time, they could put it towards fireworks during the Christmas Ships. Walsh will contact Western Display Fireworks about a deadline and inquire about storing the fireworks until Christmas if they don't have time to raise the funds.

Curry reported that she still plans to hold 13 Nights on the River. It may not start until August. She will need to work with the musicians to find out the best schedule for them. They already have sponsors and vendors lined up.

Curry reported that the Luminight Lantern group is willing to postpone their display until August, September, and October. That would be better for including it in Spirit of Halloweentown activities. They would also be flexible to moving it to next year, if needed.

Curry reported that there is potential grant money from Travel Oregon and Travel Portland that must be reallocated due to cancelled events and projects. Mayor Scholl expressed the importance of local events to help recover from the financial hardship.

Discussion ensued about keeping the public informed about postponing events.

#### 5) **Department Reports**

City Administrator Walsh reported...

- The City has done a lot to social distance employees and the public. Staff has been able to be more productive. Mayor Scholl gave a shoutout to Building Official Mike DeRoia. He has done a phenomenal job catching up the Building Division. Walsh agreed.
- He spoke with the City Forester about the harvest. All the bid documents are ready to go. He's concerned about the market with the uncertain times right now. He's taking some time keep an eye on it.
- We have received several applications for the Public Works Director position. It was announced open until filled. He requested direction from the Council on how to proceed. It was the consensus of the Council to postpone the first review for 45 days.
- He talked about the debrief from the Independence waterfront project tour. Tokola is still ready to work with us. Council President Morten talked about how it benefited the City by not being able to develop sooner. Right now, is a good time to review the options and considerations. Discussion ensued as well as review of the area map.

Interim Public Works Director Nelson reported...

- Tonight's agenda includes an IGA with the City of Scappoose for Public Works Infrastructure Inspection Services. Scappoose has been contracting out for inspection services for all their Public Works projects. They no longer have a need for a full-time inspector and requested assistance.
- Water Filtration Facility Supervisor Howie Burton is retiring at the end of April. He agreed to work contractually until his position is filled. The position is key to the facility operation. She requested permission to fill that position. Council President Morten stated for the record that it is of the utmost importance that the community has safe drinking water. Council was in consensus to move forward with filling Howie's position and allowing him to work contractually until his position is filled.

- Have reviewed the 95% N. Vernonia Road sidewalk drawings and sent them back for minor revisions.
- Currently reviewing the 90% S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street intersection drawings. There will be some minor revisions.

Council President Morten appreciates Nelson's written and verbal reports. He asked what the status is of filling the Parks Specialist position. Nelson reported that they conducted interviews and selected a candidate. Unfortunately, they did not pass all the required tests. They have since offered the job to the second candidate, who is an existing Parks employee. He has accepted the position. He will have a one-year probation. Morten asked if there will be an arborist on staff. Nelson explained that they do have an arborist they contract with, and they also encourage staff to obtain additional certifications. However, that requirement was not part of the application process.

Councilor Topaz asked for an update about the leaks in the two-million-gallon reservoir. Nelson responded that there is currently no water in the reservoir. The original contractor has put together a proposal to install a different type of liner. The liner that was installed does not function correctly and it is their responsibility. The City has agreed to the installation.

Library Director Jeffries reported...

- Since closure of the Library, they have taken several actions to serve library patrons.
  - An email was distributed to all patrons notifying them of the changes.
  - Due dates for materials have been extended and fines will not be applied.
  - Library card expirations have been extended, allowing them to continue to check out digital applications.
  - Introduced a digital library card that's available to ALL members of the community. You can apply for it online. It gives access to e-books, audio books, streaming music, and digital magazines. Most of their vendors are providing free access during the crisis.
  - The Youth Librarian has been creating virtual story times.
  - Formed a social media team to identify, create, and post content for things you can do from home.
  - Some staff are still working in the building, and some are working remotely. They are trying to minimize contact with each other.
  - Incoming materials, such as book drop-offs, are set aside for a quarantine period.
  - They have chosen not to offer a curbside pickup of library materials. Some libraries have elected to do that.
  - They have been in discussions with Public Works about conducting maintenance projects in the building while the public is not there. She would like to see interior painting done before replacing carpet.

Police Chief Greenway reported...

- Nothing to report.

Mayor Scholl asked if there has been an increase in domestic violence. Greenway said domestic violence and DUIs have increased. Officers are out there 24/7. They have contingency plans in case one of their officers gets the virus. The White House briefing reported grim times over the next two weeks. This should not be taken lightly. Social distancing is real. Stay home and wash your hands.

Councilor Topaz asked if they have enough masks and gloves. Greenway responded that they have been in contact with Columbia County Public Health Director Anne Parrot. There are plans to get more. They have also been in contact with Sheriff Pixley to support each other if needed.

Council President Morten asked if Greenway is satisfied in terms of standard operating procedures for disinfecting and cleaning facilities and vehicles. Greenway said no. They do not have the cleaning material or staff to clean the office or vehicles. They are doing the best they can to keep the officers safe. There is a shortage of proper cleaning equipment.

Councilor Carlson asked if patrol vehicles are no long being shared under the new lease agreement. Greenway said no. The leasing program has helped greatly but there is still one vehicle per every two officers. They are disinfecting as best they can when they come on duty.

Councilor Carlson asked if the Police Department orders their own cleaning supplies or does someone else do it. Greenway said the Police Department orders their own. They need more industrial strength wipes and cleaner that first responders use. The fire department does have a supply that they can use as well. Local first responders are working together as a team.

Mayor Scholl suggested Brown contact the Portland based distillery that's making hand sanitizer to see if they can get some for the Police Department. Council President Morten suggested contacting the local distillery as well. Brown will reach out.

Assistant City Administrator Brown reported...

- The Informational Budget Committee meeting is tomorrow night at 6:30 p.m. It will be held via Zoom.

City Recorder Payne reported...

- Nothing to report.

## 6) **Council Reports**

Councilor Locke reported...

- Announced the scores for the MODA Assist program. St. Helens is in the lead!
- He would like to see drive thru procedures improved for cleanliness. Councilor Topaz suggested the Health Department reach out to the restaurants.
- Stay safe!

Councilor Carlson reported...

- She is very encouraged with how the school district has been responding to this situation. Her son was contacted by a teacher today to check on him, not just about schoolwork but to see how he has been doing personally.
- She attended a Chamber Board meeting yesterday. They have closed the building but are moving forward with the Ambassador program. They have a dozen people who really want to help small businesses be successful.
- She's an essential worker. She works with people who have not left their home since March 12.
- They need to be careful of the mental health concerns during the crisis.

Councilor Topaz reported...

- There are a lot of people going hungry. The Food Bank is doing everything they can to supply food. Please share the resource with anyone who needs it.

- Did the Fire Marshal approve the use of the Masonic Building? There is a lot of plastic being stored in there.

Council President Morten reported...

- Kudos to staff and crews on how they are working together. He hopes that City Hall is safe and clean. He was down there earlier and saw that people were distancing. He hopes everyone feels safe as well.
- It's very insightful to do this Zoom meeting to allow for social distancing.
- The Parks & Trails Commission wants to have a meeting on April 13. He told them that he would ask the Council. Nelson does not think it sets a good precedence. Non-essential commissions and boards have been told not to meet. Mayor Scholl suggested revisiting it in May. Councilor Carlson agreed that May will give staff more training in how to conduct a meeting.

Mayor Scholl reported...

- Good work staff on moving forward.
- Citizens are cared about and not alone. This has been very difficult for everyone. He can empathize. We are okay and will get through this. He asked community members to reach out if their needs are not being met. They're not alone and are cared about.

7) **Other Business**

8) **Adjourn – 3:35 p.m.**

#### **Executive Session**

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

  
Kathy Payne, City Recorder

  
Rick Scholl, Mayor