

# City of St. Helens City Council

Work Session Minutes

September 18, 2019

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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, Finance Director  
Crystal Farnsworth, Communications Officer  
Brian Greenway, Police Chief  
Sue Nelson, Interim Public Works Director  
Margaret Jeffries, Library Director  
Shanna Duggan, Recreation Coordinator  
Tina Curry, Event Coordinator

**Others:** Patrick Birkle  
Christine Menges  
Nicole Thill

- 1) **1:00 P.M. - Call Work Session to Order**
- 2) **Visitor Comments - Limited to five (5) minutes per speaker**
  - ♦ Patrick Birkle. He appreciates the timeliness of packets being published and available to the public. He requested a report with an update specific to the Boise property and the marijuana facility. He knows Councilor Locke is a liaison to that company and sometimes gives updates.

Councilor Locke stated that he is working on a report. Mayor Scholl added that they are working to delineate the wetlands, which is the first step in the development of the property. There has been cleanup of the property. Patrick appreciates that information but also requested a printed report included in the packet. Interim Public Works Director Nelson added that Public Works occasionally does work there, which is included in the monthly Public Works report. Discussion ensued. Mayor Scholl added that the marijuana facility has been licensed for 10 months now. They made a payment last month per the lease agreement. Records are available through OLCC.

3) **Discussion Topics**

3.A Employee Length of Service Award

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

## **20 Years**

**Jon Eggers** came to work for the City in September of 1999 as a Patrol Officer where he served up until July 1<sup>st</sup> of this year when he was promoted to Sergeant.

**Congratulations, Jon, and thank you for your service!**

### **3.B Review Request from Shoestring Community Players**

Mayor Scholl reviewed the letter received from Shoestring Community Players regarding expenses. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet. The letter does not include their current savings account balance.

Mayor Scholl suggests going back to the way they used to give money through the State Revenue Sharing (SRS) process. Council President Morten pointed out how it changed when the recession hit. The SRS funds went into the General Fund for City use and would be donated on a case-by-case basis. Discussion ensued. There were concerns about whether this funding would be sustainable. The Council needs to be accountable for funds they grant. The Council supports the Shoestring Community Players but needs more information before making a decision. Consensus of Council to wait until the next meeting for a representative to come talk with them.

### **3.C Update on Recreation Program - Shanna and Matt**

Recreation Coordinator Shanna Duggan reported on what the Recreation Program has been doing the last six months:

- Held 12 week-long summer camps; 11 of them were at the Recreation Center and one was a soccer camp at the high school. They had 83 kids come through the program. Kids came from as far as Rainier and Beaverton.
- Open gym on Sundays all summer.
- The soccer on the high school turf field averaged between 18 – 30 kids.
- July was tennis.
- August was basketball. That averaged about 30 people. It was a very popular event.
- Tween and Teen Nights.
- Youth Tennis began this summer for ages 4-13. Each session almost sold out.
- Parent Cafes' were held in partnership with Public Health and CCMH. About 20 parents attend. It is a safe support group for parents.
- Community Game Nights
- Movie Nights in the Park
- Bingo
- After School Program finished in June. They are permanently set up in portables this year. There are 40 kids currently enrolled.
- There are open times for home schoolers, developmental disability group, and veterans.
- Partnership with Griffin's Place. It is a nonprofit focused on 14+ with intellectual or developmental disabilities. About 25 people attended the first one. Most were from Columbia County who had to previously drive to Hillsboro for these services.
- Partnership with CCMH Spark Program.
- Play groups began again today.
- Helped with soccer registration in August.

Coming up for the Recreation Program:

- Middle school after school program. The School District has some funds available to assist. The goal is to have various activities at the same time so the program isn't one-size-fits-all. She and Recreation Assistant Ryan Ward will meet the middle school students during lunch to see what they want.
- Youth Basketball is now under the Recreation Program. It brings in about 300 kids each season. It now includes three year olds through sixth grade.
- Junior Recreation Assistant program is in the works. It's good experience and helps them make connections with other youth.
- The Recreation Program employed nine high school students over the summer. Several have graduated and left for college.

Duggan talked about the good feedback they have received. The programs are becoming more popular with more requests for additional classes all the time. The last six months has been very successful.

Mayor Scholl thanked Duggan for the great work they are doing. It's a small investment for the community as a whole.

Council President Morten asked if the Recreation Program is sustainable to operate on its own. Finance Director Brown reported that the after-school program is sustainable as of right now. They hope it continues to grow and become more profitable to pay for other programs. They are trying out the Basketball program this year and hope to have over 300 kids participate. It's a trial period to see what expenses come up. They try to offer programming for free while staff is already at the building so that there is no additional cost to hold the program.

Councilor Topaz said this is more community than recreation, as far as importance. He sees the recreation piece being a platform for the community. We'll need at least two years to see where it will go. He'd like to see more communication to the community about what is being offered.

Mayor Rick encourages people to stop at the building when they see vehicles there. They should introduce themselves and see what's going on. Brown also noted that just because you see two cars out front doesn't mean there aren't 30 or 40 kids inside the building. He gets questions about that a lot. With programs like after-school and summer camps, parents might drop off their kids and leave. Discussion of wrapping the Recreation Program van. Council concurred.

### 3.D Review Pretreatment Coordinator and Bailiff Job Descriptions

Interim Public Works Director Nelson reviewed the Pretreatment Coordinator job description. The person formerly in that position left to take a position with another city. They made changes to the job description to better fit DEQ requirements.

Finance Director Brown reviewed the Bailiff job description. It is a combination of job descriptions from other cities who have bailiffs. Police Officers are currently working the position until someone is hired.

#### 4) Department Reports

Chief Greenway reported...

- The St. Helens School District will be hosting 400 National Guard soldiers at a Mobilization Ceremony on Sunday, October 13. The governor might be in attendance. He will report more at the next work session.

Interim Public Works Director Nelson reported...

- Fire hydrants have been painted.
- Crews are now helping set up Spirit of Halloweentown.
- There will be some cleanup around City Hall over the next few days.
- Working with Columbia River Fire & Rescue to flush fire hydrants. It will probably be more of a public works undertaking than a fire district task. She will update the Council when they have a better idea of the schedule.

Finance Director Jeffries....

- Invited to be on the Board for the Law Library. Attended her first meeting yesterday.
- Going to Vernonia tomorrow for a meeting of all Columbia County library directors.
- The library is hosting a genealogy conference on Saturday. It's an all-day event with two tracts.
- On October 1, the library will be hosting speakers from the Oregon Historical Society and the Mazamas. They are going to present a short history on mountaineering and outdoor recreation in the pacific northwest with a glass lantern slideshow from the 1920s.
- Hosting author Amy Stewart on October 22. She writes fiction and nonfiction.
- The Columbia County Museum Association is presenting a program for the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of the John Gumm School at 7 p.m. in the auditorium. There is a tour at 4 p.m. of John Gumm building.

Finance Director Brown reported...

- The financial audit is almost complete. Normally, someone from the audit team presents the audit to the Council. Does the Council want them to come? Council said yes. That will probably happen in December.
- He and Nelson have begun reviewing the storm utility fees. There are a number of customers who were not being charged for it and the Council directed staff to review those accounts to make it more equitable. Nelson and her intern reviewed 300-400 properties to determine if they were inside City limits. They are working with the consultant to re-write the Code. It will probably come to Council in January or February for an updated Ordinance proposal.

Communications Officers Farnsworth reported...

- Nothing to report.

Event Coordinator Curry reported...

- Spirit of Halloweentown update:
  - Working on Plaza.
  - One slot still to be confirmed for the pumpkin lighting.
  - Public Works has been very helpful getting everything set up.
  - New vendors and restaurants this year.
  - Heather Epperly is working with the police chief, fire marshal, and Hudson Garbage Service for the parade.

- The City is sponsoring three different floats in conjunction with the parade. They are working on providing entertainment along the parade route so people aren't as antsy waiting for the parade to arrive.
- Some props have been replaced with more durable options to last longer.
- Ticket sales look good.

Councilor Topaz asked what the date is for the parade. Curry responded that it's October 5<sup>th</sup>. It is coordinated by American Family Insurance and Guild Mortgage. It's not a City event. It will end downtown, followed by the pumpkin lighting, and then the announcement of winners.

Mayor Scholl thinks the City Mac Truck should be decorated and entered. Council agreed to participate.

Discussion of increased safety. Chief Greenway reported that the Police Department has a plan to make the parade route safer. Last year's parade brought more out-of-state plates than in-state.

Curry placed a packet of information a few weeks ago in all councilors boxes. She will be putting updated packets in their boxes as the agenda changes.

City Administrator Walsh reported...

- Impressed with our Recreation Program and Duggan's report. It's had a good community impact. He hopes it can remain sustainable.
- He addressed the property development inquiry that was made at the beginning of the meeting.
  - Last year, a transportation grant was submitted for \$15 million. That was highly recommended but did not get funded. They have resubmitted a new and improved grant application this year for \$12 million. They should find out in December if they received it. It's not uncommon to have to submit three times before a grant is awarded.
  - They have looked at doing things internally to move forward such as removing fences, planting grass, etc.
  - Working with the developer on what can be done to move forward.
  - Working with senators and the State on repurposing the lagoon. It's still theoretical.
  - Working on a community engagement plan to share information with the community.
  - There is a resolution included in tonight's packet for a grant for the St. Helens Industrial Park to do conceptual designing of the master plan.
  - Part of the challenge with the lease and sales agreement issue is selling a donut-shaped hole of the property, along with utility issues.
  - The RV Park is still being looked at.
- Attending the LOC conference next week. He will be participating on a panel on energy services.

## 5) **Council Reports**

Councilor Topaz reported...

- He reviewed the emergency terrorism procedures for City Hall that were done by Brown. He did not see police chief's name listed in contributing to the report. The report seems like a band aid.

- He suggests the City stop the waterfront, lagoon, and development of the housing behind Starbucks, Legacy, and DMV. All of these things were reviewed based on the one location, not how they're connected to the whole community. There are two things that were upsetting. Gable Road – how do we get to Highway 30? Adding apartments behind Starbucks will make it even more dangerous for students to cross the street to the high school. He wants to stop these projects, which will tick off a lot of people. ODOT, federal government, the railroad, and the developers all need to sit together in one room to figure this out.

Councilor Carlson reported...

- There's a process for Planning and laws that allow people to develop their property according to Code.
- Suicide Prevention Walk on Saturday in Scappoose.
- Harvest Festival on Sunday at the Caples House in Columbia City.
- Would like to see regular reports from all businesses and organizations that the City leases to or in the process of selling to; such as what the Senior Center and CCET do.

Councilor Locke reported...

- He and Walsh have met with Cascades a few times recently. They are now on their fourth manager in two years. They have also lost or changed all their other managers. It's not easy to do business when people keep changing. The marijuana facility is using all of the infrastructure that Cascades has because the City doesn't have other infrastructure. They are working on an agreement between everyone. The contract gives them six months to get everything figured out.

Council President Morten reported...

- Brad Hendrickson will give a Sand Island camping report at the next meeting. He suggested the report be given in the evening to allow Parks & Trails Commission members the opportunity to attend. Council concurred.
- New banners to replace the ones on the Highway should be here. Nelson added that the City is not able to put the banners up on the Highway themselves because they don't have the correct lift.
- He would like to differ with Topaz's remarks about stopping development. Stopping the momentum of everything they have accomplished to focus on issues with the Highway shouldn't happen. The last Transportation System Plan (TSP) was done in 2011. He suggested asking the consultants to review the plan for updates. There is due process in working those issues out. Morten spoken with Senator Betsy Johnson about supporting an overpass on Highway 30. She says not on her life. There will be push back, particularly from people you wouldn't think would give push back. To stop the momentum of all the stuff our staff is diligently working on is not proper. He won't support that. But he would support looking at it.

Topaz agrees. He got everyone's attention by saying to stop everything. He doesn't care how it gets done, but it does need to get done. It will be a political nightmare.

Walsh added that the City has pushed the Port on the rail study to include us on impacts to railroad.

Mayor Scholl reported...

- They are working with senators, representatives, county commissioners, and partner agencies to make things happen. He understands the importance of partnerships.
- The Chronicle would like to know if the City would like to sponsor the Little Spooks Parade again this year. Councilor Carlson pointed out the fee for parade cleanup. She would like to know if the City will show as a sponsor in the headline, because it only said The Chronicle's parade last year.
- There's a lot of progress in the City. People don't always like change. We work on a very tight budget. We receive less money from taxes than many of the surrounding agencies to keep up with growth. Our staff and council get conflict from all angles, and they do a good job of doing the most they can with the limited resources they have.

6) **Other Business**

7) **Adjourn – 2:41 p.m.**

### **Executive Session**

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

  
Crystal Farnsworth, Communications Officer

  
Rick Scholl, Mayor