

City of St. Helens

City Council

Work Session Minutes

December 20, 2017

Members Present: Mayor Rick Scholl
Council President Doug Morten
Councilor Susan Conn
Councilor Ginny Carlson
Councilor Keith Locke

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: John Walsh, City Administrator
Matt Brown, Finance Director
Margaret Jeffries, Library Director
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Sue Nelson, Public Works Engineering Director
Neal Sheppard, Public Works Operations Director
Terry Moss, Police Chief
Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Tina Curry, Event Manager
Peter Watts, City Attorney from Jordan Ramis
Angela Johnson, Paralegal from Jordan Ramis

Others: Agnes Petersen Julie Thompson
Steve Topaz Nicole Thill

1) **Call Work Session to Order**

2) **Visitor Comments**

- ◆ Agnes Petersen. She noticed that the contracts for the judge and prosecutor are on the agenda again for discussion. Several months ago, a number of people spoke in opposition of doing away with Municipal Court. As a matter of due process, you need to notify those interested if you're going to enter into that discussion again. She does not have any current cases with Municipal Court but has seen them in action and they are doing a great job. Court is even back in the black. Please take time to think about it.
- ◆ Peter Watts, City Attorney. He came by to deliver cookies and meet the Council. He and Angela have worked together for over 12 years. He currently represents six cities in five different counties. He thanked the Council for the commitment to public service. He talked about his experience with a City turning over Municipal Court responsibilities to Circuit Court. The needs are going to be different for every City. Some things to consider are:
 - The atmosphere in a Municipal Court is very different than Circuit Court. Circuit Court is much more intimidating.
 - The difference in how infractions are being handled.

- ◆ Tina Curry. Reported on the Christmas Tree lighting event.
 - Served about 400 cups of cocoa. Tina made a donation to the Columbia Humane Society to operate the cocoa station.
 - There were a lot of people here for the Christmas Ships and for pictures with Santa and Mrs. Claus.
 - People enjoyed the fire.
 - It was successful.
 - Thanked everyone for the opportunity.

Moving forward with the museum building and the Wauna Credit Union gazebo sign.

- ◆ Steve Topaz. The Council showed no interest in creating jobs or education during his last presentation. Oregon is 18th from the bottom of new job creation. The main reason was excessive fees. He recommends against increasing and adding fees.

3) **Discussion Topics**

3.A Discuss Proposed Land Use Fees

City Planner Graichen reviewed the proposed fees. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet. Councilor Carlson requested a comparison of surrounding City fees. Graichen will report back with that tonight.

3.B Discuss Proposed Utility Rates

Finance Director Brown reviewed the proposed utility rates. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet. Councilor Carlson was opposed to charging residential renters more of a deposit. She suggested it be based on payment history. Finance Director Brown pointed out that these policies will only be in effect until the monthly billing begins in April. Council President Morten would like to leave the deposit and adjustments to Brown's discretion but wants a regular follow-up. Council concurred.

Public Works Operations Director Sheppard pointed out the fee for tampering with meters. He suggested adding a fee for the shut off as well. That part is labor extensive. Brown agreed to add that.

3.C Review Proposed Budget Calendar and Appoint Budget Officer for FY18/19

Finance Director Brown reviewed the proposed budget calendar. The April Budget Committee meetings were moved to the 17th and 24th.

The Council was in consensus to appoint Brown as the Budget Officer.

3.D Discuss Contracts with Judge and Prosecutor

Finance Director Brown reviewed the Court report. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet. He estimates the fiscal year ending with \$369,000 in revenue. The cost to operate Court is \$371,000. He understands that improvements still need to be made. This is the six-month review. He recommends keeping Court open.

Councilor Conn asked what progress has been made with investigating County programs. Brown has been in discussions with the County about the agreement for use of their work crew. Conn also mentioned the program to help people get their drivers licenses back sooner to return to work. Brown will look into it and bring back more information to tonight's meeting.

Councilor Carlson is glad to see movement in the right direction.

Councilor Locke is not completely satisfied that we are moving in the right direction. After talking to some of our officers, they would prefer one Court in town. He recommends a six-month contract and then move Court to the County. Councilor Conn agreed that it needs to be considered.

Council President Morten has heard the negative side from people who have to deal with Court. They come out frustrated. He would like to give it another six months and re-evaluate.

Brown will continue to report back to Council on progress.

3.E Request from Library Director Regarding Staffing Needs
Library Director Jeffries reviewed her request. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet.

The Council was in concurrence to allow the \$6,000 re-appropriation to hire a part-time Library Assistant. The other request for an additional part-time Library Assistant for two years should be discussed at the Budget Committee meeting for FY2018/19.

4) Department Reports

Police Chief Moss reported...

- He suggested the Council determine what outcome they are looking for with Court. It should not be based on the experiences with the Police Department. He hopes that it based on how the public is treated.
- They are currently conducting background investigations for three applicants to fill two police officer positions. Physical agility testing will take place next week.
- In the process of hiring two reserve officers. Lt. Hogue will kick-off the reserve academy in January.
- Officer Claus has been very busy. He became an overnight sensation since arresting the Abominable Snowman.
- Donut Day was successful. It brought in 3,700 pounds of food and over \$2,000.

Public Works Engineering Director Nelson reported...

- Tonight's agenda includes a grant agreement with the Oregon State Marine Board for a repair of a boat used to access Sand Island.

PW Operations Director Sheppard reported...

- Requested advertising that Christmas trees can be recycled at the Parks Department. Donations will be accepted for the Food Bank. Council concurred.

Councilor Carlson asked about the paint marks on Gable Road near the high school. Sheppard responded that it's survey marks in preparation for the Gable Road project. Nelson added that construction is scheduled to begin the summer or fall of 2019.

Library Director Jeffries reported...

- Continue to host National Novel Writing Month. The group has been very productive. Last year, our writers had the eighth highest per capita word count in

the nation. This year, it looks like they'll be fifth. She is pleased to have that relationship.

Councilor Carlson asked if the Library has ever tried a young adult book group. Jefferies responded that they have not recently. They are currently working on an adult book group. Maybe a young adult book group could be next. The school district is promoting Oregon Battle of the Books. The Library is supporting that program by supplying multiple copies of the books that kids can check out.

Finance Director Brown reported...

- The City purchased a live feed camera. He was able to get it working and broadcast. Azimuth will be running the wiring to record from the roof.
- Comcast live is working again. Thanked the Council for their patience through the AV and room upgrades.
- Received the GFOA Budget Award again this year!
- Reminded Mayor Scholl he needs to appoint a new member to the Budget Committee.

City Recorder Payne reported...

- Comcast video is up. Unfortunately, audio is not working. Hopefully, it will be working by the next meeting.
- Granicus is live streaming from the website. She is working with AHA to make the link more visible.

City Administrator Walsh reported...

- He does not have anything new to report for executive session.
- Distributed a letter to merchants to leverage tourism. Would like to talk about what can be done better to benefit them.
- The collaboration with the school district for a combined parks and recreation is being discussed.

5) **Council Reports**

Councilor Locke reported...

- He suggested forming a subcommittee to review what has been discussed about Court and bring back a recommendation to Council. Council President Morten agreed that would be beneficial after Brown's six-month report. For now, he suggested conducting a survey of people who have gone through the court system. It would give the subcommittee facts to base their recommendation. Locke agreed and added the need for a survey of merchants, attorneys, neighbors of nuisance violations, etc. After discussion, Council directed Brown to report back with comparisons of other cities that have made the transition and a list of stakeholders.
- This year's Christmas Ship dinner was the largest ever. They brought the largest fleet he's ever seen and continued the parade for over three hours.
- He didn't hear about any problems with electricity at the docks. He asked Nelson if she heard anything. Nelson responded that she did not. The on-call staff did not receive any calls.
- Has concerns about work that was done for the new RV spaces at the marina:

- The bluff has been sheared off and is pavement at the bottom now. There's nothing to break a fall if someone falls off the top. He suggested a fence at the top of the bluff.
- A cement retaining wall was built with a driveway going up. The old blocks are partially blocking the trail and don't fit in with what was put there.
- The sidewalk just below his house is marked to be removed in preparation for more RV spaces. That sidewalk gets used a lot and should not be removed too soon before the new one comes in. Nelson said the City is unable to control when it is taken out and put back in. If they make a dangerous situation, they will have to close the sidewalk. She will pass the concern on to the owner and contractor.
- Asked if the Grimm Halloween props are still on the Waterfront property. Staff confirmed they are still there.
- Has been dealing with the Mill site development. Is it okay that he works with Cascades? His wife does work for them. Council President Morten suggested that Locke check with the Ethics Commission. Walsh confirmed that he has been in contact with the Ethics Commission. Councilor Carlson encouraged Locke to keep Walsh updated on what's going on. Mayor Scholl agreed.

Councilor Carlson reported...

- Youth Council has been busy. Their president will be here tonight to report.
- A PTO was just formed at St. Helens Middle School. They are working on Christmas gifts for the Backpack Program. There are 25 kids who participate. She thanked the bowling alley, Yo Place, Dutch Bros., and the movie theater for contributing. They are also adopting teachers to support them by purchasing supplies.

Councilor Conn reported...

- Thanks to Scappoose Community Club for their donation of holiday decorations.
- Attended a meeting with the Regional Services Director, Councilor Locke, and Walsh. They talked about economic development in St. Helens; including the industrial park, the waterfront property, and Armstrong.
- There was property damage at the Library that is being investigated.
- The Christmas Tree lighting went very well.

Council President Morten reported...

- Thank you to Public Works for the holiday decorations.
- Set goals with Public Works for the coming year and reviewed last year's projects.
- Finished the Godfrey Park Outfall project. Asked Nelson how much grant money funded the project. Nelson responded that there were no grant funds for the storm project. The overall sewer and storm drain was funded through an outright grant for \$2 million and a zero interest loan of \$2 million. That was almost half of the funding. Morten appreciates the oversight staff provides on projects.

Mayor Scholl reported...

- The Spotlight wrote an article about Scappoose having the second lowest sewer rates in Columbia County. Columbia City has the lowest sewer rate. He directed Brown to investigate why Columbia City is so much lower when their sewer is delivered to our wastewater treatment plant? Sheppard pointed out that homeowners in Columbia City periodically pump their own holding tanks out. That's an added cost.
- Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

6) **Executive Session**

No executive session.


7) **Other Business**

8) **Adjourn**

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:


Kathy Payne, City Recorder


Rick Scholl, Mayor