

# City of St. Helens

## CITY COUNCIL

### Special Session Summary

January 27, 2021

*This meeting was held at the Recreation Center.*

**Members Present:** Rick Scholl, Mayor  
Doug Morten, Council President  
Patrick Birkle, Councilor  
Stephen R. Topaz, Councilor  
Jessica Chilton, Councilor

**Staff Present:** John Walsh, City Administrator  
Rachael Barry, Government Affairs & Project Support Specialist  
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder

**Others:** None



At 5:10 p.m., Mayor Scholl opened the Special Session.

Presentation and handout materials were distributed. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

#### **Council reviewed what they are looking forward to in 2021:**

Mayor Scholl

- Getting back to normal
- Fishing
- It will get worse before it gets better
- Resiliency

Councilor Chilton

- Having sports back for her kids and herself
- Upcoming projects, such as Waterfront Property development
- Learning more about Council and representing neighbors
- Offered another position at work to do adolescent addiction counseling. She is excited about working with teens.

Councilor Birkle

- Re-opening
- Seeing his 82-year-old dad again
- Normalcy after the vaccine kicks in
- Meeting in the Council Chambers again
- Starting a new 1<sup>st</sup> grade teaching job
- Walking around St. Helens a lot with his wife
- Getting out and meeting more employees

Council President Morten

- Misses going to parties
- Misses people

- Misses eye contact
- Missed Thanksgiving and Christmas
- Happy with where the City is at
  - Additional access to the water
  - Waterfront development
- Have a great staff who works well with the Council
- Have a great mayor with enthusiasm
- He feels really good about where the City is. It took time to see the changes. Dreams have turned into reality.
- Important for new members to know they can make a difference

#### Councilor Topaz

- Thankful for pandemic
  - Gave Council time to take a second look at what was important
  - Saw the importance of getting together
  - Re-examined some of the things they planned
  - More interest in cleaning the Waterfront property
  - Slate has gotten bigger
  - Thinking too small in the past
  - Realization of how much we need each other
  - Realization of how much we need better schools
  - Realization of how much we need jobs

#### City Administrator Walsh

- Misses human interaction. It is lost with face masks.
- Increased Recreation programs
- The City did not take a lot of chances 10 years ago. We are doing that now. Public involvement helps steer the future.
- Not going to miss artificial sound in sports
- He was a builder for 10 years. He got burnt out on that and began working for local government. He has a passion for Community and Economic Development.
- He has worked for Centralia, WA; Pacific, WA; Myrtle Point, OR; and now St. Helens. Not long after he began working in St. Helens, Boise shut down.

#### **What do you hope to get out of the retreat?**

##### Government Affairs & Project Support Specialist Barry

- Build more 'Us' – there is so much opportunity

##### Mayor Scholl

- Effective Council, working on City business in a professional manner

##### Councilor Chilton

- Get to know everyone
- Understand boundaries and vision

##### Councilor Birkle

- Human adult interaction
- Keep in mind that everyone is in this for the same purpose

##### Council President Morten

- Building trust and respect
- Council is a team and will be together for at least a couple years

#### Councilor Topaz

- He tends to shake things up. He gave a brief history of what lead him to that.
  - Had to ruffle feathers to get the truth out
  - Had to work together to get a single project done
- There are a lot of needs and talent in town. People do not want to volunteer. They need to figure out how to get them involved.
- He is not a happiness type of guy but wants to get things done.

#### City Administrator Walsh

- A notion and culture of trust. It starts at the top and trickles down.
- Big things are exciting but little things matter.
- Leadership at the top coming together.

### 1. **Mission, Vision, and Goals**

**Vision** – To provide quality, effective and efficient service to our community.

#### **Mission** –

- Develop and preserve the highest possible quality of life for residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Provide a safe and healthy environment within a sound economic framework.
- Provide leadership which is open and responsive to the needs of the community and works for the benefit of all.

During disagreements or doubt, refer back to the mission.

#### **Goals**

- Effective and efficient organization.
- Community and civic engagement.
- Livable and safe community.
- Economic development.
- Long-term planning.

### 2. **Who we serve** – St. Helens demographics

- Young and growing community. Over a quarter of the population is under 19.
- How do we deliver effective services to all of our community?
- Discussion of homeless being an issue created by the State.
- Region is growing.
- Need to actively reach out to Spanish-speaking population through both documentation and speaking.
- Access and engagement to people with disabilities is important.

### 3. **The role of cities and how we deliver services**

Barry reviewed a list of city services.

Review of organizational chart. Council should contact Walsh if they have questions about departments that they do not oversee. He will obtain the information and get back to them.

Discussion of the City's tax base. We are the lowest in the County. They were able to keep the tax rate low when Boise was active. Unfortunately, a measure was created to not allow the rate to be increased without a vote of the citizens.

#### 4. **Operating as a Council:**

- **How agendas are created**
- **Procedure, rules of order**
- **Team agreement and mantras**

Reviewed Operating Rules and Procedures.

- Emphasis to call each other by mayor and councilor, and not first name.

Discussion of holding public forums to provide community information.

- Mayor Scholl suggested having a dinner on public hearing and public forum nights. Having a long work session and an early meeting makes it difficult.
- There is a current community survey for people to give feedback on when they would prefer meetings to be held. Barry will bring those results back to Council.

Council can provide an explanation of why they voted the way they did.

Discussion of serial meetings. Barry will coordinate a training with legal advice.

- **Communications protocols**
  - **Who speaks for the City**
  - **How to represent the City**
  - **Title use**

Communications Officer Crystal King and Communications Assistant Cameron Burkhart communicate for the City.

#### 5. **Governance:**

- **Council responsibilities**
- **Board and commission descriptions**

Barry plans to visit the board and commissions meetings to work with them on updating their Code section. It is important to clarify their boundaries.

- **Department liaison role**
- **Strategic Workplan 2020-2022**

Opportunities

- Quarterly meetings/retreats
- Review Goals every six months
- Resume monthly public hearings/forums
  - Third Wednesday of each month

Barry will schedule a follow-up retreat to continue discussions and education.

The Special Session was adjourned at 8:56 p.m.



ATTEST:

  
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Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder

  
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Rick Scholl, Mayor