

City of St. Helens

City Council

Work Session Minutes

February 21, 2018

Members Present: Mayor Rick Scholl
Councilor Susan Conn
Councilor Ginny Carlson
Councilor Keith Locke

Members Absent: Council President Morten

Staff Present: John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Matt Brown, Finance Director
Neal Sheppard, Public Works Operations Director
Terry Moss, Police Chief
Sue Nelson, Public Works Engineering Director

Others: Joan Youngberg Al Petersen
Evelyn Hudson Tina Curry
Julie Thompson Nicole Thill

1) **Call Work Session to Order - 1:00 p.m.**

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

- ◆ Evelyn Hudson. This will be the 18th year of the Megga Easter Egg Hunt at the Fairgrounds. The St. Helens School District no longer distributes paper flyers. It is all done electronically. That does not work for students who do not have printers at home. She handed out copies of the coloring contest flyer and informational flyer. She is requesting the City distribute the flyers in their utility bills. Communications Officer Crystal Farnsworth has agreed to include them in the City newsletter. They are a nonprofit under the Warren Community Foundation.

Discussion of locations to distribute the flyers. Council directed Finance Director Matt Brown to research the cost to include the flyers in the utility bill. They were in agreement to include the flyers if it does not increase the mailing cost.

- ◆ Joan Youngberg. She is leading a project with the Columbia Art Guild called, "This is Us St. Helens." She has brought this idea to the Arts & Cultural Commission as well. It is a community art project. Groups come together to paint a house. They are returned to her and will be on display in one outdoor location. The goal is to have 5,000 houses.

Council concurred with the project.

- ◆ Al Petersen. In 2014, he was approached by a developer proposing a 20-room hotel in St. Helens. Al explained System Development Charges (SDC) to the developer, which would have cost \$139,000. The developer backed out. SDC's are hindering small

business owners who want to develop. He recommends lowering the SDC's in areas of town that the Council wants to encourage development, such as downtown and uptown.

He brings this up because of a proposal in the packet to rent a 5,780 sq. ft. City-owned building for \$315/month. The rental rates in 2015 were between .50/sq. ft. and \$1.05/sq. ft. That is approximately \$3,641/month. Is the City subsidizing large industrial clients?

3) **Discussion Topics**

3.A Employee Length of Service Award - Brett Long for 25 Years

Brett Long began working for the City as a Utility Worker I in January of 1993. Just two years later, he became the City's Mechanic in December of 1994 where he has served ever since.

Congratulations, Brett, and thank you for your service!

3.B Discuss Court Contracts: Judge & Prosecutor

Finance Director Brown reported that the judge and prosecutor were on 90-day contracts that continued for a year. March 1st is the deadline to notify them if the City's going to go out for another RFP.

Councilor Conn would like to extend the prosecutor's contract for six months based on the changes he has been making. She would like to go out for an RFP for the judge. Only one person applied last year and she would like to see if there is more interest.

Councilor Carlson expressed concern about keeping them on a short time-frame. Is that normal? Brown said it depends on the situation. It's normally yearly contracts that can be extended up to three years. Both the judge and the prosecutor have expressed that they do not want to do another 90-day contract because of the unknown. Carlson is also concerned about the staff and the impact it has on them.

Mayor Scholl is in favor of a one-year contract for both of them. Councilor Locke would be willing to do a one-year contract with quarterly reviews.

Brown will continue with a monthly and quarterly report, return with a new contract for the prosecutor, and start the process for the judge RFP. Council concurred.

3.C Discuss Lease for FARA Building/Lot

City Administrator Walsh explained that when the City acquired the Boise property, there was an existing mill operation and two other tenants leasing. One was the softball association for \$10/year and the other was FARA, which is a fitness center. Boise and Cascades paid for FARA as a benefit to their employees. The ballfields are not being assessed by the County but FARA is, which means property taxes are now assessed to the property where FARA is located. The Cascades manager at the time agreed to pay for the property taxes but the new manager is not going to pay it. If the Council wants to allow FARA to continue the use, they need to look at modifying the lease.

After discussion, it was the consensus of the Council to investigate the value of the building/lot and invite FARA representatives to the next meeting to review.

3.D Review Draft Community Recognition Award Form

City Recorder Payne reviewed the draft nomination application. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet. She asked the Council if nominations are submitted by the Council or the community? Council Carlson envisioned that anyone could submit a nomination and awards would not be given on a regular basis but when it fits with the Council's goals and mission. Payne and Carlson will talk about it and return with a plan.

3.E Review Grass Height Regulation

City Recorder Payne reviewed the memo. A copy is included in the archive meeting packet.

It was the consensus of the Council to remove the dates. Payne will return with an ordinance amendment for approval.

4) Department Reports

4.A Public Works Department Report

Police Chief Moss reported...

- Nothing to report.

Public Works Engineering Director Nelson reported...

- A recent problem was discovered with a sewer main. The project to replace about 620 feet of sewer pipe was put out to bid. Unfortunately, it's across Columbia Blvd. on 6th and 7th Streets and will be an inconvenience. She acknowledged Engineering Project Manager I Sharon Darroux for working over the weekend to move this project quickly. Her work is appreciated.
- Public Works crews worked overnight to keep our roads safe during the snow.

Public Works Operations Director Sheppeard reported...

- Be careful. More snow is expected tonight.

Finance Director Brown reported...

- Does the Council want to discuss a policy for businesses and nonprofits to obtain a cost estimate on utility bills? Council concurred. Brown will return with more information.

City Recorder Payne reported...

- Every year a recognition banquet is held for volunteer board and commission members. Does the Council have something particular they would like to do for food this year? It was the consensus of the Council to not hold the event in the Council Chambers. Mayor Scholl suggested holding it at The Roof. It ties in well with the Waterfront property development.
- Code Publishing quoted \$2,500 to do a legal review of our Municipal Code. She suggested it be done every few years. It hasn't been done in probably eight or ten years. Council concurred with the legal review.
- The next City County Quarterly Dinner is at the Elks Lodge on March 6th.

Event Manager Tina Curry reported...

- She thanked Public Works, Parks, and Administration staff for all of their help.
- The first merchants meeting was held. Feedback was good and they have already acted on some of what was discussed. The next meeting will be held in March.
- The Spirit of Halloweentown museum and gift shop has been open for a couple weekends. People are amazed at the building. The will have rocks for people to paint in

a Halloween theme. The rocks will be placed around the community to use in a scavenger hunt. If you find a rock, you bring it to the museum and get to paint another rock.

- She had an idea for the Easter Bunny to come to the gift shop for photos and an experience leading up to the Megga Egg Hunt. That will also allow them to promote the event. She already has props that can be used. She suggests charging a minimal fee to cover costs for cupcakes and a beverage bar.
- The museum could also be a location for people to paint a "This is Us St. Helens" house and possibly a long-term location for the houses.
- Anyone can post upcoming local events on the Columbia County Events website.
- The Monster Dash will not be held this year. The Chamber is trying to decide what they will take on.
- Almost completed the 13 Nights on the River line-up. It will end with Curtis Salgado.
- 4th of July
 - The fireworks contract is nearly complete.
 - Fireworks and tailgating will be on the Waterfront property.
 - Hit Machine will perform in the evening.
 - May have music during the day during the trash can painting.
 - Councilor Carlson suggested Tina contact the St. Helens High School band director work to have them perform.
- Planning a Festival of the Fairies that will take place on weekends beginning the end of March or early April.
- Escape rooms in the Haunted Mansion will be held on the weekends.
- Communications Officer Crystal Farnsworth will be creating a flyer listing the ongoing events in St. Helens.

Mayor Scholl thanked Tina for her work.

City Administrator Walsh reported...

- He and Tina talked to Travel Oregon about their ability to help with St. Helens tourism. They have resources that can help with website and social media campaigns.

5) **Council Reports**

Councilor Locke reported...

- Nothing to report.

Councilor Carlson reported...

- Attended the business meeting with Mayor Scholl. We often get compared to Scappoose. Something that was being done in Scappoose took two weeks and the same thing here took four months. We need to remember that we are the customer. We need to help everyone who comes in the front door. If we don't know the answer, we need to find out who can help them.

Councilor Conn reported...

- The Library closed at 5:30 p.m. yesterday to allow staff to get home safely.
- Library Director Jeffries is not here today because she's working at the Library due to staff shortage.
- She served on the St. Helens School Board for seven years quite a while ago. During that time, she also attended City Council meetings. She would like to see the City and

School District collaborate for the good of the community. Ways to do that are currently being researched.

Mayor Scholl reported...

- Hosted Senator Jeff Merkley's Town Hall meeting last night. He was impressed with how many people attended due to the weather.

6) **Other Business**

7) **Adjourn** – 2:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:



Kathy Payne, City Recorder



Rick Scholl, Mayor