

City of St. Helens

CITY COUNCIL

Work Session Minutes

January 20, 2016

Members Present:

Randy Peterson, Mayor
Doug Morten, Council President
Keith Locke, Councilor
Susan Conn, Councilor
Ginny Carlson, Councilor

Staff Present:

John Walsh, City Administrator
Jon Ellis, Finance Director
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Margaret Jeffries, Library Director
Terry Moss, Police Chief
Neal Sheppard, Public Works Operations Director
Sue Nelson, Public Works Engineering Director
Bob Johnston, Building Official
Crystal Farnsworth, Communications Officer
Melanie Payne, Municipal Court Assistant to the Prosecutor
Jennifer Johnson, Utility Billing Specialist
Shanna Duggan, Utility Billing Specialist
Anya Moucha, Main Street Program Coordinator
Jenny Dimsho, Assistant Planner

Others:

Tina Curry
Nicole Thille

Steve Topaz
Amanda Renner

Joel Haugen

Mayor Randy Peterson called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

**Visitor Comments**

♦Joel Haugen. He is from Scappoose City Council. On behalf of the City Council, Mayor and Manager, he would like to pursue a collaborative approach to issues they have in common. He is enthusiastic about developing a stronger relationship between the communities.

Council agreed.

♦Steve Topaz. He reviewed some of his concerns with the Council:

- 1) Terrorism and gun control. Terrorism comes from poverty and a corrupt government. We're having a problem in Bend with people taking over a national park. The news media is showing people saying that we don't want outsiders here and to get out. That will lead to a negative perception of Oregon. Some say that these people are breaking federal law and should be arrested. Marijuana is illegal through federal laws but it's legal in Oregon. The outside world sees that we pick and choose the laws we want to follow.
- 2) Corruption. The government is working for itself and the people they govern do not matter. We have a water problem here with rain running onto some properties. The City has been very good about making sure drainage is correct for some properties. The

local perception is that the City takes care of the in-group but not the outsiders. He is an outsider. He recently read an article in the civil engineering journal. It describes St. Helens and his water problems. Law says if you find a problem and report it, it must be taken care of. In his case, he reported a problem to the professional engineering board about his property. They said they do not have the ability to correct it. Then the appeals court said since it affects other properties, it's against the law. He brings this up because the waterfront business will have to be financed by outside developers. However, the outside press shows that we don't want outsiders and we don't follow the law.

- 3) If we want new businesses here, business owners will want their kids to have a good school. Oregon is at the bottom of the list. Kids in St. Helens are finding ways to get their kids in Scappoose schools.
- 4) Working together. He was involved with the 4th of July fireworks for a couple years. He missed a meeting where the fireworks were voted out by SHEDCO because it was a waste of money. In one way it's true. This shows that if you miss one meeting you'll be voted out and that they're not patriotic. Unless we come together as community, we will not be able to entice anyone to help develop the waterfront. It's well known that if you're not a St. Helens insider, we will try to hurt you. We should be worried about what the outside world thinks of us.

Employee Length of Service Awards

We have three employees who have reached big milestones in their employment with the City of St. Helens. The following individuals will receive a certificate and pin at the January 20 Council work session.

10 Years

Melanie Payne came to work for the City as a part-time Deputy Court Clerk in December of 2005. In December of 2010, she was hired full-time as our Legal Assistant to the Prosecuting Attorney. In July of 2013, her job was reclassified and she is now the Municipal Court Assistant to the City Prosecutor. Melanie is an instrumental employee in keeping the City's Municipal Court running smoothly!

5 Years

Jennifer Johnson began working for the City in December of 2010 as a Utility Billing Specialist.

Shanna Duggan began working for the City in December of 2010 as a Utility Billing Specialist.

Both Jennifer and Shanna have worked diligently to learn the Utility Billing system and both are valuable employees!

Congratulations to Melanie, Jennifer and Shanna, and thank you for your service!

4th of July Fireworks and Activities

Tina Curry was in attendance to talk about the events. She has spoken with City Administrator Walsh. She has also spoken with everyone she can think of who may be willing to coordinate 4th of July. They have all declined because of other projects during that time. There's a mix of people who want to have 4th of July fireworks and people who think it's a waste of money. We are at a crossroads of whether the City would like to fund 4th of July. It would cost approximately \$5,000 for 4th of July activities and \$20,000 if it included fireworks. They can still raise money through sponsorships. Last year it was a huge effort of three people fundraising last year and they are not available this year.

Mayor Peterson would like to discuss this during their retreat before responding.

Steve Topaz pointed out the need to make a decision soon. The time to acquire a permit through the Coast Guard is quickly approaching. Last year, businesses allowed canisters to be placed on their counters for firework donations.

Council President Morten does not think that fireworks means you are patriotic.

Tina would like to have direction from the Council within the next 30 days. The other factor to consider is bundling sponsorships for 4th of July, Spirit of Halloweentown and Christmas. She's working on Halloween now. It would be fantastic to have a full size stage in the park to replace the gazebo. It would cost about \$7,000 and could be used for concerts throughout the year. Councilor Locke agreed that it is part of the Parks Master Plan. Tina added that there's potential for business sponsors to have the stage named after them for a year. It would save money by not having to rent stages during events. Locke pointed out that the current gazebo has terrible acoustics and is too close to the amphitheater.

Tina suggested they perform an online survey to find out if people would prefer spending the money on fireworks this year or build a stage. The stage will be long-term and should be a fairly easy project.

Council President Morten requested this be discussed at the next Parks Commission meeting. Tina will provide a sketch of the proposal for the meeting.

Steve Topaz thinks the gazebo should stay exactly where it is now. He suggested using the Boise Veneer property as a venue site. Columbia View Park should stay as it is.

2nd Quarter Communications Report

Crystal Farnsworth, Communications Officer, presented her 2nd Quarter Communications report via a PowerPoint presentation which is included in the archive packet for this meeting.

Local Improvement District Assessment Status

Finance Director Ellis handed out a memo titled Discussion on Liens and Loans dated January 20, 2015, a copy of which is available in the archive packet for this meeting. He reviewed the outstanding receivables.

Nuisance Properties Needing to be Posted

Bob Johnston, Building Official, has prepared resolutions on two properties in town for the Council to declare nuisances and to initiate the abatement process. The properties are 515 N. 10th Street and 496 S. 13th Street. No questions from the Council.

Review Final Budget Calendar for FY16-17

Finance Director Ellis reviewed the FY16-17 budget calendar. Council President Morten has a conflict with the February 17 meeting. There were no other concerns from the Council.

Library Board Recommendation

Library Director Jeffries reported that the Library Board met last night. They are recommending the pursuit of a technical assistance grant through the Ford Family Foundation. She is requesting approval to work with Penny Hummel to develop and apply for the grant. The City would use funds up front to pay for her involvement as well as the cash match. Penny is currently involved with strategic planning processes for Tillamook, Hood River and recently

completed a project with Coos Bay Public Library.

Councilor Locke asked how much is in the Library Reserve right now. Jeffries responded that it is around \$9,000. This project should cost less than \$10,000.

No objections from the Council.

Review Proposed Amendments to Library Assistant Job Description

Library Director Jeffries reported that the job description has not been updated since 2007. They would like to employ additional staff to fill the gap between training a youth librarian and having a library assistant on leave.

No objections from the Council.

Submit Nomination for Oregon Innovation Award

The Oregon Innovation (OI) Award recognizes and honors the active pursuit of organizational breakthrough innovation through collaborative partnerships between one or more public service organization(s) and the Portland State University's Center for Public Service. The OI award is designed to enable forward-thinking organizations to further identify, co-produce and scale-up breakthrough innovations in their organizations and communities.

City Administrator Walsh attended the orientation. He was able to tell the St. Helens innovation story. He is looking for Council's input on this potential grant program. The project he has in mind is the Chamber, SHEDCO, Mainstreet, and Community Foundation cooperation. The proposal is to have someone focus on economic development in the County for the next six to eight months.

No objections from the Council.

Department Reports

Police Chief Moss reported...

- Interviews were conducted a couple weeks ago for the open Police Officer positions. They have offered employment to two very qualified applicants. One is currently a Reserve Officer with the City and the other is a Columbia 911 Dispatcher. They are in the background phase right now. He hopes they can begin around the first of March.
- They have identified three candidates for Reserve Police Officer. They are in the background phase right now as well. The Reserve Academy will begin next month. The Columbia River Foursquare Church donated \$3,000 from the Reindeer Run for the reserve program.

Public Works Engineering Director Nelson reported...

- There was an inquiry about installing flashing crosswalk signs by Lewis & Clark Elementary School. They received an equipment quote of \$13,000. The installation and maintenance would be additional.

Council President Morten asked if it was solar powered. Nelson explained that it would be hard-wired.

Councilor Carlson suggested approaching the school district to help with funding. Nelson agreed. Councilor Locke suggested looking for grants as well. Mayor Peterson directed staff to work with the school and find out what they are willing to contribute.

Public Works Operations Director Sheppard reported...

- Nothing to report.

Library Director Jeffries reported...

- Youth Librarian interviews will be conducted late next week. They have five solid applicants.

Finance Director Ellis reported...

- We have received quite a few applications for the part time Office Assistant position. That closes next week.
- He completed the payroll model. It will be used as they begin working on scenarios with AFSCME. Their contract expires June 30. The biggest impact will be the increase in PERS. It's an approximate \$300,000 increase to our budget.

City Recorder Payne reported...

- Nothing to report.

City Administrator Walsh reported...

- They are working on the formation of a Waterfront Advisory Committee. The tentative date is the same as the Council retreat. There were no objections from Council.
- Boise property update:
 - The ODOT rail property has been recorded and finalized.
 - Working with DSL on the waterfront easements.
 - Working on the property tax issues.
 - Working with DEQ on their cleaning program.
- Labor negotiations will begin soon.

Council Reports

Mayor Peterson reported...

- Nothing to report.

Councilor Conn reported...

- The consensus from the recent meetings she has attended is how well community members pulled together during the rain and wind events. She's very proud of our community.
- Alta Lynch was in here a while ago talking about the Elks Veterans Bunker. She went there last week and stumbled upon a volunteer training on how to help veterans. It was taught by the County Veterans Services Agent Russ Clark. They are very well prepared.
- Scappoose is having a town hall at 9 a.m. on Saturday at Scappoose Middle School. She encouraged the Council to attend.

Council President Morten reported...

- He is very encouraged to hear about the veteran's services available.
- He received a call from two people, who are business owners in the community. One of the owners has a substantial number of rentals in the area. They were giving kudos to the public works crew who were out immediately taking care of fallen trees. It is very much appreciated.
- It's good to see the length of service awards for Melanie, Shanna and Jennifer.
- The KOHI broadcast that Crystal is spearheading is really noteworthy. It's a great communication tool. He asked Library Director Jeffries to attend the next broadcast to do an update on Library activities. The next airing will be the third Friday of February at 9 a.m.
- It was good to see Joel Haugen here. He would like to make the same effort to attend

Scappoose City Council meetings.

Councilor Carlson reported...

- Law Enforcement Appreciation day was January 9. Community members delivered donuts to the local law enforcement agencies.
- The Rotary Club is working with the Parks Department to add swings for special needs individuals in the parks this summer.
- She had a hard time making a decision for the Employee of the Year program. We have a great team. She appreciates everyone who was nominated.

Councilor Locke reported...

- Will report tonight.


Other Business

City Recorder Payne reminded those who have not submitted the department head evaluations to get those in.



There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

ATTEST:


Kathy Payne, City Recorder


Randy Peterson, Mayor