



# **COUNCIL SPECIAL SESSION**

Wednesday, February 08, 2023

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## **DRAFT MINUTES**

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mayor Rick Scholl  
Council President Jessica Chilton  
Councilor Patrick Birkle  
Councilor Mark Gundersen  
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

### **STAFF PRESENT**

John Walsh, City Administrator  
Kathy Payne, City Recorder  
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder  
Rachael Barry, Government Affairs Specialist

### **CALL SPECIAL SESSION TO ORDER - Council Retreat – 4:32 p.m.**

### **VISION**

Provide quality, effective and efficient service to our citizens

### **MISSION**

- Develop and preserve the highest possible quality of life for our 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

### **What do you love about St. Helens?**

City Administrator Walsh

- Living and working here
- Watching the transformation from a mill town to what it is becoming
- Council's support of the Waterfront development

Councilor Birkle

- Planted roots and raised children here
- Library
- River access
- Parks
- Being part of a smaller community with access to bigger cities
- Easy access to the coast and mountains
- Waterfront development
- A safe place that families and single people can enjoy life

Councilor Gundersen

- Sense of community
- People

## Councilor Chilton

- Small town feeling
- Fair
- Parades
- Schools
- Sports

## Mayor Scholl

- People/citizens
- Neighbors helping each other
- Sense of community with events
- City provides services, which is what made him want to get involved to become part of it
- Enjoys being part of the City's momentum
- River
- Watershed
- Access to mountain and coast
- Inclusive community

## Councilor Sundeen

- Agreed with previous statements
- Has always been home for him and now for his kids
- Seeing people engaged in the community
- Great place to be

## Government Affairs Specialist Barry

- All the reasons already stated
- Potential
- Basalt
- Connection of history with future
- Knowing neighbors
- Amazing sense of potential
- Connection to river

**What is one thing you are looking forward to in 2023?**

## City Administrator Walsh

- New Finance Director

## Councilor Birkle

- Breaking ground on riverwalk

## Councilor Gundersen

- House Bill 3115

## Councilor Chilton

- Police station

## Mayor Scholl

- Growth and how Council will keep the small town feeling

## Councilor Sundeen

- Continuing to meet with employees and learning more about each department

## Government Affairs Specialist Barry

- GRO Navigate Program

**THE ROLE OF CITIES AND WHAT WE DELIVER**

- Reviewed services the City provides
- Reviewed organizational chart
- Reviewed overall City budget

**OPERATING AS A COUNCIL****Takeaways from Council Trainings**

Councilor Gundersen

- How not to get sued
- Council team aspect. If your vote loses, you're still part of the team.

Councilor Birkle

- City Administrator is the Mayor and Council's best friend

Councilor Sundeen

- Refreshing that he's not alone as the new person

Councilor Chilton

- Differences between how cities function
- Serial meetings

Mayor Scholl

- ABC's
- Meeting new people
- Importance of allowing staff to do their job. If there is an issue, talk to Walsh about it before bringing it to the Council.

Discussion of not discussing City business or deliberating towards a decision outside a public meeting. They can still attend trainings, conferences, and social gatherings together.

**2. Governing Policy**

Walsh reviewed the Governing Policy. Mayor Scholl talked about how Walsh was given more authority about six years ago. It helps things move along and not wait for a Council meeting and decision. It was created to become more effective and includes trust.

**3. Operating Rules and Procedures**

This document can be changed by Council. It was recently updated to include the changed meeting time as well as other amendments. It includes what takes place if something were to happen to the mayor, departments liaisons, etc.

**4. Team Agreements and Mantra**

- Reviewed Group Agreements
- Reviewed Mantra

Councilor Sundeen talked about visitor comments not being a question-and-answer session. Mayor Scholl added that they don't have all the information at hand. They need to go back and get information. Walsh said he often goes back and gets information and then responds. Council can direct staff to get back to people after the meeting.

**5. Communications Protocols**

- Who speaks for the City
- How to represent the City

The Communications team is fabulous. When Council is contacted by the press, they can refer them to Walsh and then Communications. If Council responds directly, they need to identify that they are speaking for themselves. Mayor Scholl said Councilors can say they will have a staff member get back to

them. Getting the information from staff first is the best method if you're unsure how to respond. Mayor Scholl reminded them to never make promises to someone.

## **GOVERNANCE**

### **6. Council Responsibilities**

Discussion of creating an informational video of what Council does.

## **Break**

### **7. Boards and Commissions**

- Review of the roles of Boards and Commissions.
- Arts & Cultural Commission and Youth Council are currently inactive. Discussion of bringing them back. They need to know what the impact will be on staff.
- Councilor Chilton recommends creating a Recreation Advisory Committee.
- Discussion of staffing. At least three staff members are needed to run the meeting - minutes, broadcast, and technical staff.
- Council can choose to use create a short ad-hoc committee rather than bring back a full committee, such as the Dock Ad-hoc Committee. Councilor Birkle asked if they could consider that for the Arts & Cultural Commission as art projects come up. Walsh suggested they look at art or recreation groups already happening.
- Barry asked them to consider how this serves the mission. They need to be clear about what they need. Consider having an administrative position that supports all boards and commissions.
- Walsh talked about different art projects that will be coming up with the Waterfront development.
- Councilor Birkle is interested in the Youth Council. The School Board has two youth members who serve. He would like to see a youth representative in the empty seat. It would give them a presence and a voice. Barry suggested adding that for the Parks and Library Board. Mayor Scholl talked about how they used to function. Barry said a quarter of the population is under 20 years old and it would give them a voice. Mayor Scholl suggested approaching the school to get students. City Recorder Payne added that Youth Council is a public board but did not follow public meetings law in the past. It needs to be staffed with notice, agendas, minutes, and a recording being done. They also need to keep in mind that students will age out. It became difficult to track the changes. She suggested inviting students from the Recreation Leadership Club group to join the Council at meetings.
- Discussion of a Recreation Commission. A Recreation Master Plan is needed first. Councilor Chilton talked about recreation being sustainable and does not way to see it go away. Barry said there is a youth connection piece. Parks & Recreation Manager Duggan is so valuable.

### **8. Department Liaison Role**

How is it going working with the boards and commissions? What are the most valuable pieces?

Mayor Scholl

- Understanding how each one functions

Councilor Birkle

- Planning Commission's perception was that Council didn't always appreciate the time they spent making decisions. Now they have scheduled quarterly meetings together. He was able to understand better where they are coming from. It's important as a liaison to have an ear to the ground. He saw his role as trying his best to advocate and understand the role. If a decision is overturned again, they will better understand.

Councilor Gundersen asked if the Council can send something back to a board or commission if they want to see further changes. Mayor Scholl said yes. Barry added that it's helpful to have more direction from Council. Councilor Chilton talked about the importance of understanding the role of each board and

commission. Councilor Birkle was supportive of the Planning Commission being pro-active. They have the ability to do things and present it to Council.

Barry wants board and commission members to feel supported. Mayor Scholl talked about them being the extra eyes and ears for the City. Councilor Chilton pointed out the importance of the Council liaison bringing back reports to Council following meetings.

Councilor Sundeen

- The biggest complaint he has heard from the Parks & Recreation Commission is communication. He would like to improve that.

Councilor Birkle has a standing meeting with Library Director Bishop the week prior to Library Board meetings. It helps him understand what is going on.

Barry will create best practice notes for board and commission liaisons. She suggested bringing back their takeaways from the meeting, asking them what challenges they face, and their top two priorities.

Barry encouraged Council members to help recruit for vacant positions.

Councilor Chilton left the meeting.

Walsh asked if anyone knows who owns the flag at the end of St. Helens Street. Councilor Sundeen said Les Watters owns the property, but Clarks signs maintains the billboard and flag.

Barry left the meeting.

Walsh asked Council to be mindful about additional meetings.

Next retreat – Strategic Plan, Council Goals

**ADJOURN – 6:33 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

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Kathy Payne, City Recorder

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Rick Scholl, Mayor