

# City of St. Helens

## Consent Agenda for Approval

### CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

Presented for approval on this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of April, 2024 are the following Council minutes:

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2024

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- Work Session, Executive Session, and Regular Session Minutes dated January 24, 2024

#### **After Approval of Council Minutes:**

- Scan as PDF Searchable
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# COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Wednesday, January 24, 2024

## DRAFT MINUTES

### MEMBERS PRESENT

Council President Jessica Chilton  
Councilor Mark Gundersen  
Councilor Russell Hubbard  
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

### MEMBERS ABSENT

Mayor Rick Scholl

### STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator  
Kathy Payne, City Recorder  
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder  
Gloria Butsch, Finance Director  
Suzanne Bishop, Library Director  
Heidi Davis, Building Permit Technician  
Crystal King, Communications Officer  
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner  
Christina Sullivan, Community Development Admin Assist.  
Amy Lindgren, Contracted Municipal Court Judge  
Bill Monahan, Contracted City Attorney  
Michele Karmartsang, Library Assistant  
Dan Dieter, Library Assistant  
Nicole Woodruff, Library Technician I  
Aryn Keeney, Librarian I – Youth  
Cameron Burkhart, Library Assistant  
Brenda Herren-Kenaga, Librarian I – Reference  
April Messenger, Municipal Court Clerk  
Melanie Payne, Municipal Court Clerk  
Dawn Richardson, Admin. Billing Specialist  
Sheri Ingram, Public Works Office Assistant  
Tim Underwood, Construction Inspector  
Alex Bird, Engineer II  
Scott Harrington, Utility Worker II  
Scott Williams, Collections System Operator  
Curt LeMont, Utility Worker II  
Nicholas Ratliff, Utility Worker I  
Joel Beehler, Utility Worker II  
Ryan Powers, Water Systems Operator  
Jesse Templin, Utility Worker II  
Tyler Hills, Water/Wastewater Trtmnt. Op II  
Sam Ortiz, Pretreatment Coordinator  
Julian Zirkle, Parks Utility I  
Cameron Page, Parks Specialist

### OTHERS

Lynne Pettit	Molly Matchak	Margaret Trenchard-Smith
Don Patterson	Steve Rosenlund	Judy Thompson
Jane Garcia	Jay Tappan	Collen DeShazer
Jennifer Shoemaker	Julie Pelletier	Joe Baessler
Carol Gortler	Ivan Salas	Nancy Sullivan
Christ Stout	Erin O'Connell	Taylor Thompson
Ron Trommlitz	Aden Dixon	Melinda Gartman
Emma Marks	Carmel L.	Jenni Gilbert
Josh Marks	Tina B.	Matt McHugh
Brady Preheim	Tammy Maygra	Steve Toschi
Colleen Ohler	Stephanie Patterson	Shauna Stroup
Jen Massey	Adam St. Pierre	Tommy Sullivan
Stacey Watkins	Eddie Dunton	Tina Curry

Michelle M.	Haley Starkey	Jane Garcia
Jennifer Shoemaker	Scott Jacobson	Betty Bundy
Arthur Leskowich	Mitz	Amy
CDC	Conor Delaney	Richard Mason
Jamie Smith	Nnnnn	Claire Catt

### **CALL WORK SESSION TO ORDER – 2:00 pm**

#### **PRESENTATION FROM AFSCME UNION MEMBER(S)**

Heidi Davis, AFSCME Local 1789 President; Crystal King, AFSCME Local Vice President; and Jenny Dimsho, AFSCME Local 1789 Secretary/Treasurer, spoke on behalf of their members who were City union workers from various departments providing essential services to the community.

They addressed statements made at the January 3 City Council Work Session related to AFSCME Local 1789 members including the assertion that Public Works' services and programs were sufficiently funded because they did not come before the Council to seek additional funding, explaining how the statement was not true. Their members used aging and faulty equipment, infrastructure projects were deferred, and many department positions were unfilled. They were not asking for staffing or funding; members were helping cover the workloads.

They expressed disappointment in the St. Helens Police Association's disparaging comments made at the January 10 Special Session which some Councilors agreed with as well as comments that some departments are more important than others which was a sentiment affirmed by the Council. AFSCME Local 1789 did not feel supported by statements made by the City Council and were greatly impacted by existing and future budget shortfalls.

They encouraged the Council to discuss unmet needs with department and division heads and learn first-hand about the work they do in service to the community, speaking about how it was the Council's responsibility to gain a broad understanding of the City's needs as a whole before making budgetary decisions.

Christina Sullivan addressed how each department adds value to the City of St. Helens.

Cameron Burkhart read a letter on behalf of Gretchen Kolderup, former Youth Librarian, which shared some of the services the Library provided to the community.

Joe Baessler, Executive Director of Oregon AFSCME which represented the workers present and about another 37,000 employees in the state who were the backbone of their organizations, said he supported the AFSCME members' statement tonight.

Ms. King replied to Councilor Sundeen that immediate steps that could be taken to make sure the employees were heard and appreciated would be to show up in person where they work and talk to them.

Councilor Gundersen said he would make reaching out to them a priority, apologizing for his comments and thanking them for bringing the matter to the Council's attention.

Councilor Hubbard stated he had worked with many of them and had talked with them in the trenches.

Council President Chilton appreciated the presentation and their heartfelt message.

Councilor Sundeen spoke about how every City department was important, and everyone needed to work together as a team, apologizing that they did not feel valued. He would work harder to make sure they knew so and thanked them for all they do.

Councilor Gundersen expressed appreciation for the condition of the parks. The union members were being heard, and he would do a better job.

City Administrator Walsh appreciated all the City's employees and their coming to this meeting.

**VISITOR COMMENTS** - *Limited to three (3) minutes per speaker*

- ◆ Steven Toschi. The message he heard from the AFSCME speakers was that critical government services were underfunded and understaffed. Such a process should have been done all along to allow bright citizens trying to help the government assist with the City's budget. Budget Committee members were asking for information. It was a public process, and everyone needed to work together.
- ◆ Nancy Sullivan. The ethical way to budget for funding a capital improvement and services when funds were needed was voter approval per property tax bond. To implement directly through Council decision a fee that could potentially outprice a human needed resource such as water showed lack of knowledge to whom the Council served, the voting citizens.
- ◆ Margaret Trenchard-Smith. She represented the Kiwanis Club of St. Helens and was responding to the St. Helens Police Association letter. The Kiwanis Club expressed its support for Mayor Scholl and City Administrator Walsh, and they were in support of Tina Curry as well. Spirit of Halloweentown was an indispensable source of revenue, and for many, the chief source. She talked about what the Kiwanis Club provides to the community and encouraged a more amicable way to solve the City's problems.
- ◆ Judy Thompson. She felt the City's stress and appreciated hearing from the union. She spoke about how with matters such as the added fee on the water bill and the failed new policy facility, it was in nobody's interest to form a committee to evaluate Tourism now for 2024. She asked the City to give adequate time to form a committee that would review and explore city tourism that would result in respectful options. Everyone needed to work together.
- ◆ Matt McHugh. He is a City sponsor through Cascadia Home Loans and Big Food Cart & Brew. Ms. Curry makes the sponsorship easy. He quadrupled his investment every year for being a City sponsor. He would dislike seeing Ms. Curry not get renewed. She did a great job and was an asset the City should not lose.
- ◆ Ron Trommlitz. Silence was complicit if one knew the truth and did not use one's voice to speak out against client privilege as an injustice to the public. Mr. Walsh's invoking of client privilege in not releasing the Walker Report may not be criminal, but it was an annoyance. The report contained the City's involvement with the 2-million-gallon reservoir failure. He spoke about the attempts and testing involved in the reservoir's rehabilitation.
- ◆ Colleen Ohler. She is a citizen and the Queen of Halloweentown. She expressed how she was upset that Councilor Hubbard asked the definition of tourism and no other member of the Council explained that 45,000 people come from all over the world to St. Helens to spend money. The only budget currently working was Tourism which funneled money into the City. The City and its events would never recover if the events were not held this year.
- ◆ Stephanie Patterson. Read an email from one of her vendors regarding tourism events in St. Helens. She spoke about asking Councilors Hubbard and Sundeen for a meeting to address misinformation about Spirit of Halloweentown. The community was losing 13 Nights with every day that passed. Work on Spirit of Halloweentown started in October for the following year. She described what work she should be currently doing to prepare with the vendors. She and others

had been laid off. She explained how social media complaints had become more vicious. The Council's job was to sort through legitimate concerns versus people with an agenda. She asked the Council to extend Tina Curry's contract. The vendors needed the time.

- ◆ Julie Pelletier. Talked about her personal experience at Spirit of Halloweentown and being recognized by a child as a witch in the parade. There was joy, light, and magic with the kids.
- ◆ Steve Rosenlund. Loved the activities, and 13 Nights was his favorite. It was for the regular people. He wanted to help save it. He thanked the Council for what they do.
- ◆ Shauna Stroup. Found the lack of communication with the community unfortunate. Water bill increases should be voted on. For seniors living on fixed incomes, \$15 extra a month was a lot; water bills were already high. She was disheartened by the lack of compromise. Firing Tina Curry would not magically make money appear to pay for police staffing. She agreed that the police needed more support and a new building. She had concerns about the lagoon. The City was having one crisis after another.
- ◆ Brady Preheim. Glad to see he was not the only one irritated with the police. The City needed to sign the tourism contract now. If the Council wanted to change the contract, they could negotiate another one for 2025. Questioning the contract started because the police wanted the Tourism money. He agreed funding was needed for officers but not a new station. The police asked for Mayor Scholl's resignation, and no Councilor defended him which disappointed Mr. Preheim. The police wanted to add a \$25 fee which the Council thought was inconsequential and what they would spend at McDonald's. The people who were worried about the \$25 fee do not go to McDonald's; they go to the food bank. It was illegal to put a fee like that on the water bill, but he supported the \$10 fee for police staffing. The City should get a levy for the station.
- ◆ Tammy Maygra. Disgusted that Councilor Hubbard would want to take away a productive tourism director. Before Tina Curry came to St. Helens, there was no such thing as tourism in the city. People should stay home if they do not like Spirit of Halloweentown. The police needed more patrol officers and maybe a remodeled building, but they should not try to steal Tourism money. It was shameful that no Councilors stood up when the police asked for Mayor Scholl's resignation. She spoke about what Tourism provides, asking the Council to sign the contract and questioning why Ms. Curry must be audited every year which is ignorant and uncalled-for. The Council wanted to take away the little joy people in this town get from attending an event.
- ◆ Jen Massey. Spoke before about the Halloween Parade needing a permit process implemented. She sent the Council 502 documents today looking at how to improve what went wrong with the parade. She was a huge fan of Tourism. The comments made on the 18th by the parade organizers were wrong. St. Helens Police was never included in the permit which was signed by Mr. Walsh. The permit was issued, and OSP and CCSO were never contacted. The organizer was put in the middle. The events need to be done safely. She asked the Council to work on the permit process.
- ◆ Adam St. Pierre. Thanked the Council for doing what they do. Councilors must use facts and logic to make their decisions and had information not available to everyone.
- ◆ Tommy Sullivan. Worked in management and understood the Council was managing the City. He had lived in St. Helens for over 30 years and had seen a lot of change. The City was following in

the steps of the federal government. He did not want to see the town turn into a shambles. It seemed like the City was making wrong decision after wrong decision. Tourism should continue.

- ◆ Stacy Watkins, owner of Soup & Co. Vendors had contacted her to express that if Spirit of Halloweentown ends, their businesses would end. The parade was not organized by Tourism. Now was not the time to end Ms. Curry's contract. She asked the Council not to stop the event from happening which would affect many lives. She asked the Council to give Ms. Curry another year.
- ◆ Eddie Dunton. Served on the Budget Committee in the past. If something was not making money such as 13 Nights, maybe the event should be re-evaluated for future years. If the Fourth of July was costing money that could go to the Library or Water Department, the latter were more important until the City could afford the event. She spoke about rumors including the City having to pay when asking the contractor to stop work during Spirit of Halloweentown, asking where citizens can find out if rumors were true.
- ◆ Tina Curry. Ms. Curry stated that almost every rumor Ms. Dunton mentioned was not true which was concerning considering Ms. Dunton was on the Budget Committee last year. She spoke about her company E2C being brought on board in 2016, their work, and the outcomes including Spirit of Halloweentown becoming an international destination. She talked about her company being falsely accused of financial wrongdoing which resulted in an audit where they fully cooperated. Halloweentown tourism ran in the black and paid for everything; not one penny came from taxpayers. She would answer any questions anytime. She spoke of another audit of her company where all the money was accounted for. She had submitted a proposal to the City in November requesting a renewal of her contract. She and E2C were ready to go to work.

## DISCUSSION TOPICS

### **1. Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Audit Report from City Auditor - *Conor Delaney from Pauly, Rogers, & Co., PC***

Conor Delaney presented his audit report for Fiscal Year 2022/2023, a copy of which was included in the archive packet for this meeting, highlighting the purpose of the audit, an overview of the process, and the specific results for 2022/2023. He noted they did not find any issues with the City's internal controls and found no major issues or incorrectly stated balances. He thanked Finance Director Butsch and staff for their work and the Council for responding to the questionnaire. The final report would be issued next week.

Mr. Delaney clarified that if Councilors bring up any areas with a real potential for a material problem, they would take a look at that and potentially follow-up with the Councilor to ensure full understanding of the issue. If anything were flagged as a major problem, they would look into it further.

### **2. Municipal Court Semi-Annual Report - *Municipal Judge Amy Lindgren and City Prosecutor Sam Erskine***

Judge Amy Lindgren reviewed her report, a copy of which was included in the archive packet for this meeting, noting things were going well. Governor Kotek issued an order which would write off \$137,448 in line items for this year, a loss for the City. Numbers were consistent from last year to this year, but traffic violations were lower. She recommended holding off on the red light cameras until the time is right. Court Clerks worked hard and were professional. St. Helens was her favorite city to work for.

Councilor Hubbard was interested in redlight cameras. Judge Lindgren replied it would be something for the Police Department to look into, but she believed the initial investment was probably rather large.

### 3. Police Service Fee Discussion

Finance Director Butsch reviewed a spreadsheet showing phasing in of an additional \$15 fee and what it would cover when hiring three entry-level officers and retiring two officers. The \$15 monthly fee would provide for three fully loaded police officers through Fiscal Year 2032, based on her calculations. Alternately, there was enough in the \$10 current fee to pay for one year, Fiscal Year 2024, to hire one officer.

Ms. Butsch said more officers could be funded with interest earnings from the Bond; there were some available funds to help. The City could fund two officers now through 2025 but would need to work on immediately filling the gap. No such measures would help the revenue loss from Cascades leaving.

She clarified staff was working on affording the retirement costs by using built-up interest revenue and a portion of the current \$10 fee, which could cover the retirements unless all four retire. That would take the City back to square one. The City could do a couple officers and a couple retirements and have them funded.

Councilor Hubbard spoke about his frustration that the police could not move forward to maintain staffing without funds; the City must look at that.

Councilor Sundeen said he would like the Budget Committee to look at the matter, acknowledging that for some people a \$25 fee would be a hardship.

Mr. Walsh clarified a program could be implemented to help those who would experience a hardship with the \$25 fee. Ms. Butsch added that the Council could implement a policy for a low-income application. A tax levy would probably be the better way to go; it would be more transparent and show whether the community accepted it.

Council President Chilton said it was an option to add the fee for emergent needs and do a levy at the same time to continue the service. She was hopeful to drop the fee once the City budget would improve.

Mr. Walsh said the Rec fee was \$2 and sunsetted at a certain date. It worked well for the program to become self-sustaining. The City had not had the luxury to do succession planning.

Ms. Butsch acknowledged that when an officer retires it was a higher pay scale and then a new officer would be hired at a lower pay level. The cost of a retiring officer would be paying off leave accruals, etc.

Councilor Gundersen wanted to get the police what they needed to be successful.

Councilor Sundeen was not opposed to a public safety fee, but a lot of places around the state do one around \$2 to \$4, not usually as high as St. Helens'. Ms. Butsch pointed out that those cities typically have a higher tax rate to compensate; St. Helens had a really low tax rate. She recommended trying to get a tax levy.

The Council and staff discussed the tax levy. Council President Chilton believed the matter needed to be addressed and decided at tonight's Regular Session.

### 4. Report from City Administrator John Walsh

Mr. Walsh presented his report. Highlights were as follows:

- The community had experienced a lot of disharmony. He was proud of the City employees.
- Staff was looking at alternative locations for the new police station and meeting with the design team. The project was on standby with all works paused, not spending any money. They were looking at how to recycle the existing plans and salvage the amount of investment in the facility as designed and pick it up somewhere else suitable which would save costs.
- Staff was working with legal counsel and the labor union on the call back language in the union contracts for the police.

- Industry was so valuable to the community. When they leave, it takes millions out of the budget. The burden shifted to the ratepayers and constituents. It was paramount to get industry. Project Sprint was looking good; they needed better access to electric power.
- Equipment from Cascades would bring some revenue to the City.
- He and Councilors Hubbard and Sundeen met with attorney Peter Hicks who would have a draft of a new Tourism contract on Friday. The Council discussed whether to temporarily extend the current contract and a new contract going into effect to address concerns that come up over and over again, noting Ms. Curry had done a wonderful job. Council President Chilton said the contract renewal comes up at the worse time. The Council seemed to agree about the idea of extending the current contract until the new contract was proofed. Mr. Walsh noted it would be an action item at the regular session. The Council needed to see the contract sooner to review it in the future. The new contract would be adopted in no later than six months.

**ADJOURN – 4:37 pm**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- Hear Complaints or Charges brought Against a Public Official, under ORS 192.660(2)(b)
- Real Property Transactions, under ORS 192.660(2)(e)
- Consult with Counsel/Potential Litigation, under ORS 192.660(2)(h)

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

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Kathy Payne, City Recorder

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Jessica Chilton, Council President



# City of St. Helens CITY COUNCIL

Executive Session Summary

January 24, 2024

**Members Present:** Jessica Chilton, Council President  
Mark Gundersen, Councilor  
Brandon Sundeen, Councilor  
Russell Hubbard, Councilor

**Members Absent:** Rick Scholl, Mayor

**Staff Present:** John Walsh, City Administrator (joined at 5:16 p.m.)  
Kathy Payne, City Recorder  
William Monahan, City Attorney with Jordan Ramis PC (via Zoom)  
Peter Hicks, City Attorney with Jordan Ramis PC (via Zoom) (left at 5:16 p.m.)

**Others:** None



At 4:52 p.m., Council President Chilton opened the Executive Session pursuant to the ORS numbers listed below and then gave Council roll call. Other than Labor Negotiator Consultations, representatives of the news media, designated staff, and other persons as approved shall be allowed to attend the Executive Session. All other members of the audience are asked to leave the Council Chambers. Representatives of the news media were specifically directed not to report on or otherwise disclose any of the deliberations or anything said about these subjects during the executive session, except to state the general subject of the session as previously announced. No decision may be made in executive session. Any person in attendance, including the news media, who has a recording device is directed to turn it off.

- 4:53 p.m. **Hear Complaints or Charges brought Against a Public Official**, under **ORS 192.660(2)(b)**
  - Discussion regarding an anonymous complaint received regarding the Mayor and City Administrator.
- 5:16 p.m. **Real Property Transactions**, under **ORS 192.660(2)(e)**
  - Possible purchase/lease of property for new public safety facility.
  - Discussion regarding City-owned properties that were recently appraised and potential to sell them.
- **Consult with Legal Counsel/Litigation**, under **ORS 192.660(2)(h)**
  - Nothing discussed under this item.

The Executive Session was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.



ATTEST:

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Kathy Payne, City Recorder

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Jessica Chilton, Council President

*An audio recording of this meeting is archived at City Hall.*



# COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Wednesday, January 24, 2024

## DRAFT MINUTES

### MEMBERS PRESENT

Council President Jessica Chilton  
Councilor Mark Gundersen  
Councilor Russell Hubbard  
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

### MEMBERS ABSENT

Mayor Rick Scholl

### STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator	Suzanne Bishop, Library Director
Kathy Payne, City Recorder	Dylan Gaston, Police Officer
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder	Bryan Cutright, Police Officer
Gloria Butsch, Finance Director	Tina Curry, Contracted Event Coordinator

### OTHERS

Christina Sullivan	Brady Preheim	Tammy Maygra	CDC
Colleen Ohler	Howard Blumenthal	Jenni Gilbert	KT
Jennifer Massey	Jason Morris	Gretchen	CA
Angela Wayman	Brianna Gaston	Jennifer Pugsley	TC
Jane Garcia	Janet LeSollen	Steve LeSollen	Megat
Lew Mason	Shauna Stroup	Steve Toschi	Bilton
Betty Bundy	Logan Johnston	Mary Wheeler	Melanie
Brooke Sanders	Jaimie Smith	Diana Wiener	Michelle
Stephanie Patterson	William Eagle	Kelly Whitney	Annette
Julie Pelletier	Toni Doggett	Chin Chin	Holly
Joel Warner	Ava Eib	Ethan Flock	Alex
Chloe Mosterdyke	Nancy Whitney	Nathan Wallace	Bobbie
Brandon Hogan	Molly Matchak	Nicholas Hellmich	Andrea
Teresa Fox	Christina Larson	Jorga Hogan	R. Garcia
Christina Wallace	Adam St. Pierre		

### CALL REGULAR SESSION TO ORDER – 7:00 p.m.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council President Chilton announced that they will be discussing the tourism contract extension later in the meeting.

### ST. HELENS POLICE ASSOCIATION PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL

St. Helens Police Association (SHPA) President Dylan Gaston and Vice President Bryan Cutright distributed handouts to the Council. A copy is included in the archive packet for this meeting. They are here to speak about staffing and the importance of public safety. St. Helens is becoming a town with events but lacks public safety, and they want to help change that. SHPA released a 'Vote of No Confidence' for Mayor

Scholl and City Administrator Walsh, based on false promises to increase police staffing and build a new public safety facility. Instead, they want to reallocate the money for the Waterfront project. The 'Vote of No Confidence' also includes concerns about City finances and lack of transparency for Spirit of Halloweentown finances. This is not an attack on any persons related to Spirit of Halloweentown. They are seeking full transparency and financial details related to the event management contract with E2C. What has the City done with the proceeds from events? Tourism should benefit the City. Why has a forensic audit not been done? The 'Vote of No Confidence' letter also cites unprofessional meetings held by Mayor Scholl and City Administrator Walsh following the City Council Special Session where several SHPA members spoke. The Police Department was not invited to those meetings. However, attendees informed SHPA members that both Mayor Scholl and City Administrator made derogatory and retaliatory statements. Those meetings were unprofessional and unbecoming of City leaders. Officer Cutright addressed Walsh's response to the 'Vote of No Confidence,' stating no new positions were added, a detective was moved back to the road to maintain 24-hour coverage, the new supervisor position did nothing to benefit citizens, the salary adjustment was made to retain officers, new vehicles were purchased as a necessity, the new facility at the Recreation Center was built to replace the trailer in poor condition, the K-9 kennel was built in the garage as a necessity, body-worn cameras were purchased as required by State law, and the new report-writing software was a necessity. Cutright went on to point out that every department's budget has increased, not just the Police Department. They have been requesting additional officers since 2021 to prepare for upcoming retirements but have received no added positions. Their requests to discuss callout pay have been ignored. Cutright distributed and read statements made by former Finance Director Matt Brown for the record, a copy of which is included in the archive packet for this meeting. Cutright believes Walsh is lying to them about the spending of tourism funds. He repeated the need for an audit and to remove Walsh from his position. The archive packet also includes a spreadsheet he put together from researching budgets of similar size cities and the percentage of the budget they contribute to public safety. St. Helens receives 11% of the budget, while Coos Bay receives 14%, Troutdale receives 19%, La Grande receives 18%, and Sandy receives 13%.

Cutright read an email that was sent to St. Helens PD Info and shared with him. The unnamed person who sent it mentioned their surprise by the City's disregard for public safety. Transparency is important but no one speaking at a previous meeting was identified. The person is a business owner and expressed disappointment of the lack of concern to follow-up with business and police needs. The Riverfront Development has turned into something different than what was proposed, including the increased cost. A fully functional police department is vital. Where have the Spirit of Halloweentown funds gone? He supports the demand for Walsh's resignation. City government is a direct reflection of the Council. He supports the Police Department and feels sorry for the position they are in.

Cutright agreed that tourism does have a place here. However, the revenue and budget is not being done correctly. Going for a levy will not bring help right now. Three people will be gone on November 1. They do not have enough bodies to operate 24/7.

Councilor Sundeen hears them and senses the frustration.

Gaston understands they're asking for a lot. None of the other options are realistic. Cutright repeated that they have been asking to prepare for the retirements for three years. They are already too late. He told people to stop volunteering for overtime and giving up their family time. Gaston added that it would be different if there was an end in sight.

Council President Chilton agreed. The overtime is not good for their mental health nor cost effective. They are trying to figure out how to find funding for the positions in transition. It starts with an analysis of staffing. She hears them and knows they can't keep kicking it down the road.

Councilor Hubbard didn't realize they don't have funding for the transition of new officers prior to those retiring. He agrees they need a solution.

Cutright added that the easiest funding solution is a Public Safety Fee. Something must change in the budget or nothing gets fixed. The purpose of a municipality is to provide public safety and they are failing.

Walsh said they did discuss what can be done now during the work session. Council President Chilton wants to see a change in the way they budget for police.

**VISITOR COMMENTS** – *Limited to three (3) minutes per speaker*

- ◆ Nancy Whitney. She has lived here 81 years. She supports the police and a levy. They need help. Her and her husband already pay \$2,400/year on their utility bill. A public safety levy should be voted on by the people instead of raising utility rates.
- ◆ Toni Doggett. She works at St. Helens Marina and owns Split Ink Gallery. She showed a bar graph of the increased income received during Spirit of Halloweentown. She talked about her experiences working with Spirit of Halloweentown and meeting people from all over the world. The construction makes it very hard to conduct business but Tina Curry made it work for businesses to make money. They can't survive without tourism and she doesn't want to be another ghost town.
- ◆ Nathan Wallace. He is the Cub Master for Pack 106. 13 Nights on the River is a great community event and a main source of funding for their Scouts. Council was very aware of Tina's contract expiring and should not have let this happen. Scouts rely on this fundraiser to learn essential skills, have a sense of belonging, and pay for camps and supplies. If it's cancelled, they are going to have to scramble for fundraising opportunities. They also participate in the 4th of July celebration. They are pleading with the City to fix this immediately.
- ◆ William Eagle. They need police officers and a place for them to meet. He suggests remodeling the facility they have. He would prefer the opportunity to vote on a levy rather than adding a \$25 fee to utility bills. Someone is going to say it's not legal and it will cost more to defend. He talked about the funds generated from Spirit of Halloweentown and the community service organizations it benefits. He hopes they will continue with events.
- ◆ Jane Garcia. She is the owner of Keller Williams Real Estate Office across the street. She was excited for the future when they purchased their building. They donate thousands of dollars as an event sponsor, decorate for events, welcome people to take photos, and talk to visitors. She was recently thanked for sponsoring 13 Nights on the River by someone who attends every week, and now they're at risk of losing the event. What would St. Helens look like without Tina? It will look like failed businesses and empty store storefronts, such as Fat Boy's Pizza that everyone complains about. More than half of the room would be affected financially if tourism events ended.
- ◆ Brandon Hogan. He owns a small business, Brogan Made, and is known as the mushroom guy. He sells mushrooms on a website, at 13 Nights on the River, and at Spirit of Halloweentown. If those events are gone, he probably won't be able to continue his business.
- ◆ Molly Matchak. She is here as a citizen and custodian for the St. Helens Police Department. She encouraged the Council to do a police levy to support them. Spirit of Halloweentown needs to stay to support local businesses.

- ◆ Nicholas Hellmich. It doesn't make sense to end tourism. Tourism benefits the citizens. They have lost the mill and every other form of income the City used to have. He respects the Council and knows it's hard to listen to people complain all the time.
- ◆ Teresa Fox. After moving here four years ago, Tina heard she was in the movie Halloweentown and gave her a job at the Dark Market. She loved that place. She feels lost and disrespected since finding out earlier this month she no longer has a job. She's legally disabled. Tina was the only person who gave her a chance. She has never seen any signs of Tina being a liar or thief.
- ◆ Janet LeSollen. Tina has built Spirit of Halloweentown and 13 Nights on the River over the last 10 years. She is a vendor at 13 Nights and has driven the shuttle for Spirit of Halloweentown, where she met people from all over. Tina is professional and does so much work. Janet's ex-husband does the garbage and bathrooms during the events. She pled for the Council not to get rid of Spirit of Halloweentown.
- ◆ Kelly Whitney. She was notified of the potential of utility bills increasing \$25 and is here to voice her opposition. A lot of people can't afford that. She will refuse to pay that if it's added and doesn't think they can turn her water off for that. She is also upset about losing 13 Nights on the River and Spirit of Halloweentown. They need police down here during events.
- ◆ Tammy Maygra. Testimony should not be read into the record from an unnamed person. She is saddened by some of the comments from the SHPA tonight. The City should allow taxpayers to vote for a levy, not increase the utility fee, and not steal tourism funds. E2C has passed all audits and a longer contract needs to be made with them. Main Street tried to get rid of E2C. Councilor Hubbard received grant money from Main Street and his wife sits on the Board. That is a conflict. He should not be the one overseeing tourism. It's hard to get people to volunteer consistently. People from all over the world come to these events.
- ◆ Colleen Ohler. She read an email into the record from Casey Curio. Casey graduated from St. Helens High School in 2007 and worked at St. Helens Cafe the year before it closed. They watched many surrounding businesses close. Spirit of Halloweentown has brought back growth. Ending tourism events will affect many people.
- ◆ Steven Toschi. He does not think Councilor Sundeen and Councilor Hubbard fully appreciate the value of tourism, as the two councilors reviewing amendments. There are so many people affected. Tina has brought an extremely valuable program. She also successfully led programs with two other cities. He is going to hold a roundtable at the Library next week with businesses to see how they are affected by events. As far as police, they don't know where they are financially. They need to go through the Budget Committee process and find out how much is needed. Then they can take it to the public for a levy. The police have a contract that is unsustainable.
- ◆ Christina Sullivan. She addressed the funding that police receive, which is 47.3% of the General Fund. She used to run 13 Nights on the River with the St. Helens Community and understands the Special Use Permit process. The permitting process was brought up earlier about the parade. She knows it has changed recently, but in the past the Police Chief signed those permits. He has since requested to be removed from the permits. Once approved, those permits are emailed to a distribution list, which includes the Police Chief. For the police to say they were not notified about the parade means that someone is not reading their emails. She is saddened to hear the police

call Walsh a liar. Walsh works hard to provide for all staff and public. They are all human and make mistakes, but they need to move forward. Council is doing their best and she doesn't envy them.

- ◆ Howard Blumenthal. He supports the police. However, he does not like idea of tacking another fee on the utility bill. They need a levy for citizens to vote. Can Systems Development Charges (SDCs) be increased to help cover some of these costs? All the new development should help pay for police. The increases are going to drive people out.
- ◆ Brady Preheim. He thinks it's a bad idea to add a six-month extension to the tourism contract. The contract would end in the middle of 13 Nights on the River and then they wouldn't have a coordinator. There's a chance Tina won't even sign the contract. She is being recruited. They need to give her a one-year contract and then start working on a new contract. Speaking to the \$25 utility fee proposal, he thinks they should reject it and not give into pressure from the police after they came in and attacked all the other employees and tourism. He believes that a levy would pass. He also suggested the Council talk to Sheriff Pixley about his office providing services like Scappoose is investigating. They should not make any decisions about the utility fee increase without the mayor here and without it being on the agenda. Brady also suggested they not listen to what former Finance Director Brown said since he's no longer here.
- ◆ Jennifer Massey. She thanked the Council for being here and making hard decisions. She went on to tell Walsh that he is very bad at his job. He lacks substantial ethical boundaries and displays inappropriate behavior as a City Administrator. His relationship with a City contractor has crossed ethical boundaries. An email was sent from former Finance Director Brown about missing \$537,000 in tourism funds and promptly forwarded it to the Tourism Director as an FYI. She sent an email to Walsh and the City Council that was forwarded, which created an ethical dilemma. Her organization submits Public Records Requests and if others are getting them for free, she is going to expect the same courtesy for everything they want to see. The email was an effort to understand tourism and come up with possible solutions to reduce contention. Conversations were hypothetical and she never used her name, the city, where she was from, or the situation. Walsh is the root cause of the problems. It's time for him to resign or Council needs to fire him. She's a huge supporter of Mayor Scholl. He needs to stand up and be a strong mayor. They need a new City Administrator. They are in a financial crisis and she can't get any answers from him.
- ◆ Shauna Stroup. They have known for years the police are understaffed. However, they have taken on a huge Waterfront Development project. They continue to rezone industrial property for apartments that generate no revenue and bring more burden to the Police Department. The City is losing trust and faith from the community. When will they invest in public safety? How will they preserve tourism and the sense of pride in the community? Spirit of Halloweentown has become a sense of identity for so many in the community and it's a way to invest in the locals. Tourism increases the need for public safety. The city deserves an adequate police force but there should be a levy for the building. They can't continue to put the burden on utility bills.
- ◆ Christina Larson. She is a huge supporter of police and believes they deserve the absolute best. Tourism benefits her small business and so many others. Business is slow right now and they need the increased revenue they see during events. Tourism means her kids can take swim lessons, do extracurricular activities, her autistic son can get services, and she can run a business and bring her homeschooled son to work with her. Without tourism, businesses and hotels will close. The City is in a crisis and they need to figure it out quickly. A lot of people are here and

listening because they care. The Council is elected to work for your community and they need to do their job. No one has asked businesses what tourism means to them.

- ◆ Name unknown. Tourism is an activity with her kids, neighbors, and family. It would be devastating to lose it. She also supports the police and doesn't mind paying extra for it.
- ◆ Jorga Hogan. She attends St. Helens High School. Every year people talk about 13 Nights on the River coming up. It's important to keep it going. There has been more vandalism at the school and damage to personal bikes.
- ◆ Christina Wallace. She came with the Scouts but is also here as a mom and aspiring business owner. She lives near Kozy Korner and knows the importance of police. She and many of her friends participate in Spirit of Halloween. It doesn't matter if her house is vandalized or decorations are stolen, she is always excited to participate. She also participates in 13 Nights on the River with Scouts. They need tourism events to help the town thrive. She doesn't know why they waited until the last minute to work on the tourism contract. It should be easier with them working as a team. As a mom, she hopes for the best.
- ◆ Adam St. Pierre. He thanked the Council for being here. Addressing Walsh, he is 99% sure he shared the email from Jenn Massey because he just saw it on Steve Toschi's phone with his name on it. They will be submitting a Public Records Request to see who asked for that information. St. Helens is an agency that officers want to be at and don't leave unless they have to. A five-year \$15 utility bill fee would allow them to hire five officers right now. They need to show that officers are supported. He likes tourism but avoids Spirit of Halloweentown. It's a liability. He has heard tonight that E2C has employees and they should be documented in payroll taxes. They get a lot of their information from Public Records Requests. There are a lot of unsubstantiated accusations against the Police Chief. Council needs to look at the records they send them. Why are they going to postpone the tourism contract for six months? They need to figure it out now.

There were several comments from the audience from people working during Spirit of Halloweentown that they are contractors and not employed by E2C.

- ◆ Jenni Gilbert. Council was sent an email earlier today about the 2023 Halloween parade. She is here to address the defamation of Chief Greenway, officers working the parade, and the St. Helens Police Department. She is discouraged by what happened at the parade and the events that followed. She read the emails and re-watched the meetings. Greenway and officers were lied about, and Council allowed it to happen. Greenway's job is to make sure the City and officers are safe. He brought concerns about the parade to the Council in 2022, was ignored, and then removed from the process entirely. They circumvented the person who was trying to warn them of possible issues. He and his officers were then publicly defamed after the last parade. She is requesting a written public apology for the misunderstanding to Greenway and an apology to the officers who worked the parade and the Police Department. The City believed lies by disgruntled people and created a divide of relationships. She respects each person on the dais. They are a public servant because they care. This is not personal. They must do what is right and admit when they are wrong. It appears that Ms. Epperly was unable to manage the parade and made untrue accusations publicly. She is also requesting Ms. Epperly to publicly apologize.
- ◆ Tina Curry. She thanked everyone for coming in support of tourism. It's a community effort that was likely unexpected from some Councilors. Her agenda is to bring people to town and offer a good experience. She respects police. In the two times they were called, they immediately came



and addressed the situation. Chief Greenway did state that he wouldn't have police on site during Spirit of Halloweentown but he would send them immediately if they were needed. In the future, they could hire private event security, although they haven't seen a need for that. This also brings up the need to have scheduled tourism meetings for people to come and ask questions. It's appropriate to let a contractor know when there is a problem. It's a misdirected attack on Walsh and a matter of him trying to correct a problem. People are very passionate about this. It's difficult to watch what is going on here. When you mess with people's livelihoods, they will not sit still. They want to protect it.

- ◆ Diana Wiener. She thanked the Council for serving. She loves Spirit of Halloweentown and tourism. It's important for the economy. However, she hears locals express that they feel shut out of Spirit of Halloweentown and say it's for visitors. There is a lot of confusion and conflicting opinions because of incomplete information. She encouraged the Council to create a Tourism Board to ensure there is transparency, record keeping, and oversight. Agreeing with Brady, they need to make a decision quickly. They can take the time to work on a clearer contract for the next year. She suggested talking to other cities to see how they work with their communities.

### **ORDINANCES – Final Reading**

1. **Ordinance No. 3298:** An Ordinance to Amend the City of St. Helens Comprehensive Plan Map for Certain Property from Light Industrial, LI Designation to the General Residential, GR Designation and the Zoning District Map from Light Industrial, LI Zone to the General Residential, R5 Zone (475 N. 12th Street)

Council President Chilton read Ordinance No. 3298 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to adopt Ordinance No. 3298. **Vote:** Yea: Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

### **APPROVE AND/OR AUTHORIZE FOR SIGNATURE**

2. Personal Services Agreement with ECONorthwest for Development of an Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA)

Walsh explained that this is a State grant funded Economic Opportunities Analysis, including public engagement. There is no cost to the City other than time.

**Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to approve '2' above.

**Vote:** Yea: Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

3. Extension of Agreement with Tiberius Solutions, LLC for the St. Helens Urban Renewal Financial Update

Walsh explained that this updates financial projections for the Urban Renewal Agency and cashflow to fund projects. There is no financial impact. The contract expires in February and this extension provides more time for the contractor.

**Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to approve '3' above.

**Vote:** Yea: Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

4. Display Agreement and Purchase Order with Western Display Fireworks for 4th of July Fireworks Display

**Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Hubbard to approve '4' above.

**Vote:** Yea: Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

5. Extension of Letter of Interest with American Hyperion Solar LLC for Purchase of Real Property

**Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to approve '5' above.

Discussion. Councilor Hubbard pointed out the purchase verbiage in the title. Walsh agreed and pointed out that the body of the letter references purchase or lease.

**Vote:** Yea: Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

### **CONSENT AGENDA FOR ACCEPTANCE**

6. Planning Commission Minutes dated December 12, 2023

**Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve '6' above.

**Vote:** Yea: Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

### **CONSENT AGENDA FOR APPROVAL**

7. Department Goals for Fiscal Year 2024-2025
8. Council Minutes dated December 6, 2023
9. OLCC Licenses
10. Animal Facility Licenses
11. Accounts Payable Bill Lists

**Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to approve '7' through '11' above. **Vote:** Yea: Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

### **WORK SESSION ACTION ITEMS**

#### **Extend E2C Contract**

Councilor Sundeen reviewed the proposed motion to extend the contract for six months or until a new contract is fully executed. Council President Chilton is hopeful it won't take six months. It's fair to do due diligence when new councilors come on. They intend to continue the contract and events, and don't know where that misconception came from. Councilor Gundersen agreed that he does not want the events to end and is hopeful that E2C will agree to the extension and new contract.

**Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to approve an extension of the E2C Contract for events management for six months or until a new contract is fully executed. **Vote:** Yea: Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

#### **Police Concerns**

Walsh reported that they discussed recruitment of two officers at the Work Session. Council President Chilton asked how it will be funded? Walsh explained that money from the full rate and interest payment could potentially be used. Council President Chilton agreed that would fund two. She would like to see a plan to increase the number of officers. At a past meeting, Finance Director Butsch presented estimates for updating the Public Safety fee to fund officers. Walsh said any rate increase would need a public hearing and notice. Council President Chilton is unsure about a levy. There's not much time and it's very expensive. She values the police and is very concerned about losing 24-hour coverage. Councilor Hubbard said it's abuse to add it to the utility bill. They need to scrape the barrel to find the money. They could have a levy on the May ballot. City Recorder Payne pointed out that it's too late to add it to the May ballot.

Council President Chilton wants to continue the conversation when Mayor Scholl returns. She does want to make sure the Police Department feels they are being heard. Public safety is the most important thing the City provides.

Council President Chilton directed staff to advertise two Police Officer positions.

**COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS**

Councilor Sundeen reported...

- Thanked everyone for attending and speaking. He sees the social media posts and comments, and often people don't show up or contact City Council. He encouraged them to continue coming and getting involved.
- He never had any intention for the tourism program and E2C to go away. He loves Spirit of Halloweentown and tourism and brings his family to the events. The contract needed amendments to make it better for the contractor, the City, and the community. They are making progress. He apologized for the hurt and emotions. That was never the intention. It's important for people to attend and be heard.
- This is all our community. He encouraged people to get involved with the City Boards and Committees. He started on the Parks & Trails Commission before running for City Council. He is trying his best. It's a lot of work and intimidating. It takes lots of people to run the City and they can't say one department is more important than another. They all have different functions. It's discouraging to read people say they are lining their pockets and are self-serving. He assured them that his pockets are not lined. He is thankful for the opportunity to serve and is available to talk.

Councilor Gundersen reported...

- He joined City Council to help. They will never be able to make everyone happy and need to find a middle ground. He welcomes opinions and help, but discouraged attacking. He lives here, works here, and raised his kids here. He wants his kids to continue living here with the same benefits. He agreed that all departments are important.

Councilor Hubbard reported...

- He took this position feeling like he could ask questions and help the City. He and Councilor Sundeen are working on the contract. Social media has influenced people to say things that are cruel. He is thinking about resigning because of what's been going on. Steve Toschi said on social media that Councilor Hubbard is the reason 13 Nights on the River and Spirit of Halloweentown will not happen.

Steve Toschi accused Councilor Hubbard of having a secret meeting with Jennifer Massey and shutting the program down.

Councilor Hubbard left the meeting at 9:13 p.m.

Council President Chilton reported...

- The City is facing monumental challenges. She is calling on help from the Council, staff, and community to work together. They can get through it with trust, hard work, and accountability. She wants to leave this team better than when she joined it. She is dedicated to the City and wants to make it strong and sustainable for her kids and yours. She is pleading for everyone to come together, set their differences aside and do what's best for the community.

**ADJOURN – 9:14 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

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Kathy Payne, City Recorder

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Jessica Chilton, Council President