

City of St. Helens
Consent Agenda for Approval

CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

Presented for approval on this 15th day of October, 2025 are the following Council minutes:

2025

- Work Session, Executive Session, Public Hearing, and Regular Session Minutes dated September 17, 2025
- Special Session Minutes dated September 22, 2025
- Public Forum and Regular Session Minutes dated October 1, 2025

After Approval of Council Minutes:

- ☐ Scan as PDF Searchable
- ☐ Make one double-sided, hole-punched copy and send to Library Reference
- ☐ Minutes related to hearings and deliberations get copied to working file
- ☐ Save PDF in Minutes folder
- ☐ Update file name & signature block on Word document & copy Word document into Council minutes folder in Shared Drive
- ☐ Upload & publish in MuniCode
- ☐ Email minutes link to distribution list
- ☐ Add minutes to HPRMS
- ☐ Add packet and exhibits to HPRMS
- ☐ File original in Vault
- ☐ Update minutes spreadsheet



COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Wednesday, September 17, 2025

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Jennifer Massey
Council President Jessica Chilton
Councilor Mark Gundersen
Councilor Russell Hubbard
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
Crystal King, Communications Officer
Shanna Duggan, Recreation Manager
Mouhamad Zaher, Public Works Director

Aaron Kunders, Water Quality Manager
Sharon Darroux, Engineering Manager
Alex Bird, Engineer II
Ashley Wigod, Contracted City Attorney
David Rabbino, Contracted City Attorney

OTHERS

Steve Topaz	Dominic Maiello	Joel, Romano Properties
Brady Preheim	Nick Ries	Erin Salisbury
Jeff Humphreys	Robyn's Phone	Reed Hjort
David Lintz	Marci Sanders	

CALL WORK SESSION TO ORDER – 3:00 p.m.

CLEARING CONFUSION AND SETTING THE FACTS STRAIGHT

1. Response to September 3 Visitor Comments

No responses.

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

- ◆ Brady Preheim. Expressed appreciation for the comprehensive work done by staff in identifying cracks on the Waterfront project, though he voiced concern about the extensive list of issues that need repair. He also expressed concern about the Parks and Recreation Manager job description, noting it had been two years with the wrong description. He believed that since the position now only handles recreation instead of both parks and recreation, there should be a reduction in salary as it has half the responsibilities. Additionally, he raised safety concerns about the lack of railing across from the splash pad, pointing out it seemed dangerous as children could fall off the ledge.
- ◆ Steve Topaz. Spoke about free speech issues, referencing a recent shooting in Utah. He stated that in his own experience bringing problems about the sewer system and storm drains, he was considered "out of touch with the law" and that it would be "illegal" for him to talk about it, which resulted in federal court action. He noted that the federal court ruled that laws on public speaking in Oregon are illegal under the US Constitution, particularly regarding timing, subject matter, and types of words to be used.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

2. Employee Length of Service Recognition - Aaron Kunders 25 Years!

Mayor Massey recognized Aaron Kunders who reached 25 years of service with the City on September 11, 2020. Public Works Director Mouhamad Zaher praised Kunders for his exemplary leadership, particularly highlighting his role in merging the Wastewater Treatment and Water Filtration plants into one division. Zaher emphasized that Kunders had been promoted from superintendent to Water Quality Manager and possesses irreplaceable institutional knowledge of the City's entire system.

Council President Chilton shared that she had brought her child to the treatment facility for Take Your Kid to Work Day, where they learned valuable lessons about proper waste disposal. Steve Topaz added that Kunders is "not just a good guy, he's a super guy" who works effectively between federal regulations and pollution control, and is an excellent teacher for both children and adults.

3. Quarterly Reports from City Departments/Divisions (Informational)

Council reviewed the quarterly reports. Mayor Massey noted that Communications Officer Crystal King's report was very thorough. King announced that Trunk or Treat would be held on October 25, with participation from Recreation, Library, and Police.

King and Marci Sanders shared exciting news that St. Helens Main Street Alliance had made it to the top 50 finalists for the Levitt Foundation Music grant. The grant is an in-kind matching grant for three years, up to \$40,000 per year (totaling \$120,000), to support free community concert series to activate underutilized spaces. After a community voting campaign that ended Monday, they discovered they had made the final cut. The foundation is now in a review process until November 18, which will involve securing additional letters of support from community members. If awarded, the funding would primarily go toward fairly compensating local bands and securing new bands for the "13 Nights on the River" concert series.

The Council also briefly reviewed the Recreation report, noting the after-school programs currently serve approximately 100 children. Mayor Massey emphasized the importance of these programs for the youth in the community.

4. Review Agreement with Mackenzie for New Police Station at 1771 Columbia Blvd. - Jeff Humphreys, Mackenzie Architect

Jeff Humphreys from Mackenzie Architects presented the proposed agreement for the new police station to be located at 1771 Columbia Boulevard. The project had previously been planned for the Kaster Road site, but the City is now moving forward with the Columbia Blvd. location. Humphreys explained that the building design would need to be mirrored to fit the new site, with the entry now positioned in the northeast corner. A plaza would welcome people coming from Columbia Blvd., with secure parking for staff and emergency vehicles at the back of the site. Public street parking would be available along Columbia Blvd., S. 17th Street, and Cowlitz Street.

Humphreys presented the revised schedule, noting they would need to redo the design development phase due to the new site, which requires new landscaping, civil work, and land use approval. Construction is anticipated to start in the second quarter of next year with completion in fall 2027. The contract modification requested amounts to \$355,380, primarily covering the design development, land use adjustments, and value engineering changes.

Council President Chilton expressed concerns about adequate public parking, but Humphreys explained that the parking demand would be minimal since the building doesn't include a community meeting room. The facility will have a small public lobby, records desk, public restroom, and a safety room for emergencies.

Mayor Massey noted that the project had undergone significant value engineering to reduce the budget from over \$15 million to \$12.6 million. Dave Lintz, the owner's representative, confirmed they have \$1.5 million in contingency throughout the budget and the current budget is at \$12,525,000.

5. Review of Punch List Items from Downtown Projects - *Public Works Director Mouhamad Zaher*

Public Works Director Mouhamad Zaher presented a comprehensive list of punch list items for the downtown projects. He explained that the projects consist of three separate components: the R-685 (intersection at S. 1st Street and St. Helens Street), M-532 (underground utilities), and P-525 (street utilities).

Zaher reported that across all three projects, the City poured 76,000 square feet of concrete, with only 464 square feet showing cracks—representing less than 1% deficiency (99.5% of the concrete work is in good condition). He stated that the contractor has been directed to replace all cracked concrete rather than just seal it, as previous repair attempts made some areas look worse. The repairs are underway and should be completed within a month.

Additionally, Zaher addressed issues with landscaping, noting that the contractor has been ordered to redo the entire project landscaping for the third time due to inadequate work. He also mentioned problems with bollard lights along the trail that have been repeatedly vandalized. These lights have been turned off for safety reasons to prevent electrocution hazards, and the City is working with the contractor to develop protection measures.

In response to Brady Preheim's earlier comment about the splash pad area, Zaher confirmed they have met with the landscape architect to develop safety solutions, including adding some type of guard rail to prevent children from falling over the edge.

Councilor Hubbard questioned whether the concrete cracking was due to insufficient expansion joints in the design. Director Zaher acknowledged that better craftsmanship from the concrete installer could have prevented some issues, as they should have known to add joints even if not specified in the design. Engineer II Alex Bird added that the specifications did include language allowing for field adjustments to joint lines that the contractor should have followed.

Mayor Massey requested bimonthly updates on the progress of the punch list items until all are resolved.

6. Review of Proposed Exclusive Negotiating Agreement (ENA) with Romano Properties for Potential Waterfront Development - *City Administrator John Walsh*

City Administrator John Walsh introduced the proposed Exclusive Negotiating Agreement (ENA) with Romano Properties for potential waterfront development. Contracted City Attorney David Rabbino explained that the City had negotiated the final terms with Romano Properties, including an agreement that if the deal does not close, the City would reimburse the developer 50% of third-party report costs up to a maximum of \$100,000.

Joel Blanton represented Romano Properties at the meeting (as Greg Romano was unable to attend due to a personal matter). The agreement gives Romano Properties a six-month window of exclusivity to conduct due diligence, develop plans, and create concepts. Any specific land acquisition or development would require subsequent agreements.

Walsh noted that the City first met with Romano Properties in March, and the Council expressed excitement about moving forward with the partnership. The formal approval of the agreement would be on the agenda for the evening's regular session.

7. Review Proposed Rates Increases for Waste Management Drop Box Services - *City Administrator John Walsh*

City Administrator John Walsh presented the proposed rate increases for Waste Management drop box services. The franchise agreement with Waste Management has a prescriptive formula for rate adjustments, capped at 1.5% annually. Based on the current CPI of approximately 5%, the increase would default to the 1.5% maximum.

Mayor Massey expressed concern that the City has approved 1.5% increases every year since 2021, and questioned whether the Council was simply "rubber stamping" these increases without adequate review. She suggested requesting more detailed data to justify the increases and improving communication with citizens about why rates are being raised.

Nick Ries from Waste Management confirmed the 1.5% annual increase is per their agreement and mentioned they serve about 21 customers within St. Helens. He offered to follow up with more detailed information and expressed willingness to explore ways the company could support community events, similar to how they assist Vernonia, Columbia County, and Scappoose with various events.

8. Review Proposed Amendments to Parks & Recreation Manager Job Description - *City Administrator John Walsh*

City Administrator John Walsh explained that the Parks and Recreation Manager position had been separated several years ago, with parks maintenance moving to a different department. The job description was never updated, and this amendment would officially change it to Recreation Manager. Once the job description is approved, the City will conduct a pay equity study to confirm appropriate market compensation for the position.

Mayor Massey expressed appreciation for the administrative housekeeping to properly align job descriptions with actual duties.

9. City Administrator Report

- Highlighted the exciting developments with Romano Properties and the upcoming public hearing about additional property for industrial development.
- Congratulated Main Street for making the top 50 finalists for the Levitt grant.
- Represented the City at the Growing Rural Oregon Conference, discussing a \$500,000 grant (\$100,000 per year) aimed at supporting entrepreneurs, which the City directed to the Columbia Economic Team and Small Business Resource Center.
- Working with Finance Director Gloria Butsch on utility rate studies and financial planning to address the City's concerning budget forecast.
- Noted issues with the City's phone system, which is at the end of its life and not supported anymore.
- Expressed appreciation for Aaron Kunders' 25 years of service, emphasizing the value of institutional knowledge and employee commitment to the city.

ADJOURN – 4:21 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- Labor Negotiations, under ORS 192.660(2)(d)
- Real Property Transactions, under ORS 192.660(2)(e)
- Exempt Records/Confidential Attorney-Client Privileged Memo, under ORS 192.660(2)(f)
- Consult with Counsel/Potential Litigation, under ORS 192.660(2)(h)

Respectfully transcribed by ClerkMinutes and submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

Kathy Payne, City Recorder

Jennifer Massey, Mayor

City of St. Helens

CITY COUNCIL

Executive Session Summary

September 17, 2025

Members Present: Jennifer Massey, Mayor
Jessica Chilton, Council President
Mark Gundersen, Councilor
Brandon Sundeen, Councilor
Russell Hubbard, Councilor

Staff Present: John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder

Others: Ashley Wigod, City Attorney with Jordan Ramis PC
David Rabbino, City Attorney with Jordan Ramis PC



At 4:30 p.m., Mayor Massey opened the Executive Session pursuant to the ORS numbers listed below and then gave roll call. Other than Labor Negotiations, 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.

- **Real Property Transactions, under ORS 192.660(2)(e)**
 - Update on pending purchase of a portion of property at St. Helens Industrial Business Park by Arcadia Paper Mills.
 - Update on potential sale of City property on Ross Road.
- **Deliberations with persons appointed to carry out Labor Negotiations, under ORS 192.660(2)(d)**
 - Update on labor negotiations with the AFSCME general employees' union.
- **Consult with Legal Counsel & Potential/Pending Litigation, under ORS 192.660(2)(h)**
 - Nothing was discussed under this provision.
- **Exempt Records/Confidential Attorney-Client Privileged Memo, under ORS 192.660(2)(f)**
 - Nothing was discussed under this provision.

The Executive Session was adjourned at 5:26 p.m.



ATTEST:

Kathy Payne, City Recorder

Jennifer Massey, Mayor

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



COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING

Wednesday, September 17, 2025

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Jennifer Massey
Council President Jessica Chilton
Councilor Mark Gundersen
Councilor Russell Hubbard
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Ashley Wigod, Contracted City Attorney

OTHERS

Steve Topaz	Brad Monroe
Nicholas Hellmich	T. Curry
Brady Preheim	Ron Houghtelling
Adam St. Pierre	Chris Houghtelling
Tanner Boyle	

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING – 6:30 p.m.

TOPIC

1. Sale of City-Owned Property at 1300 Kaster Road described as:
 - Tax Account No. 11362, Map No. 4N1W-4DD-11300
 - Tax Account No. 11361, Map No. 4N1W-4DD-10800
 - Tax Account No. 13215, Map No. 4N1W-9-100

Contracted City Attorney Ashley Wigod explained the legal requirements for selling real property under ORS 221.725, noting that the City must publish a notice stating the time and place of the public hearing, property description, proposed uses, and reasons why the Council considers it necessary or convenient to sell the property. Wigod confirmed that the City Recorder had satisfied the notice requirements and noted that the option area had been updated to a 25-acre parcel.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- ◆ Steve Topaz. Spoke both for and against the property sale. He noted that the sale would prevent a proposed toxic waste facility, as the property's location would make toxic waste transportation and processing unfeasible. However, he expressed concerns about power usage requirements for whatever would be built on the property, questioned whether the marijuana grow facility still had first right of refusal on mill property sales, and worried about losing industrial business space.
- ◆ Nicholas Hellmich. Briefly commented in favor of selling the property.

City Administrator John Walsh explained that the nature of the proposed sale is an option for Project Arcadia to purchase 25 additional acres to expand the paper mill they are currently rehabilitating. The option would be valid for two years. The purchase price was set at \$200,000 per acre, which exceeds the appraised value of approximately \$140,000 per acre. Walsh clarified that the option would be contingent upon the owners acquiring the mill site.

City Planner Jacob Graichen provided details about the property, noting it contains wetlands on the east and west sides with a canyon having a 44% slope on the east. He explained that the area has limited access, with the only practical route being through a gravel road cutting through the wetland on the west side or through the mill site itself. Graichen emphasized that the City would retain certain parcels, including those along Kaster Road that provide vehicle, pedestrian, and utility access. He also confirmed that the existing ball fields would not be included in the option area and that all land in question is zoned Heavy Industrial.

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING – 6:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

Kathy Payne, City Recorder

Jennifer Massey, Mayor



COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Wednesday, September 17, 2025

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Jennifer Massey
Council President Jessica Chilton
Councilor Mark Gundersen
Councilor Russell Hubbard
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Ashley Wigod, Contracted City Attorney

OTHERS

Steve Topaz	Brad Monroe
Nicholas Hellmich	T. Curry
Brady Preheim	Ron Houghtelling
Adam St. Pierre	Chris Houghtelling
Tanner Boyle	

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

- ◆ Brady Preheim. Expressed concerns about a company that presented a proposal for the Riverfront property. He questioned the vetting process for this company, stating they didn't seem organized or professional enough for a multimillion-dollar project. He noted the City would be responsible for half of all costs if the project failed. Preheim also expressed concern about the use of "spiritofhalloweentown.co" instead of the city-owned "spiritofhalloweentown.com" domain.
- ◆ Adam St. Pierre. Commented on lighting differences throughout the City, explaining that different types of lighting serve different purposes such as area lighting, task lighting, and pathway lighting. He mentioned that government agencies consider light pollution when making lighting decisions. St. Pierre also congratulated Mayor Massey on becoming a grandmother.
- ◆ Nicholas Hellmich. Voiced concerns about the police chief selection process, stating it was conducted behind closed doors with nondisclosure agreements that prevented public input. He suggested the secrecy undermines public trust and confidence in City leadership. Hellmich noted the Police Department's budget has increased significantly from \$3.8 million in 2020-2021 to \$5.6

million in 2023-2024 and suggested considering contracting with the County Sheriff's Office for law enforcement services.

DELIBERATIONS

1. Sale of City-Owned Property at 1300 Kaster Road described as:
 - Tax Account No. 11362, Map No. 4N1W-4DD-11300
 - Tax Account No. 11361, Map No. 4N1W-4DD-10800
 - Tax Account No. 13215, Map No. 4N1W-9-100

Council briefly discussed the sale of city-owned property at 1300 Kaster Road with unanimous agreement to proceed with the sale.

ORDINANCES – *Final Reading*

2. **Ordinance No. 3314:** An Ordinance Revising Chapter 18.36, Environmental Protection, Erosion Prevention, and Sediment Control Rules, of the St. Helens Municipal Code to Meet the City's Requirement as a Designated Management Agency Under the DEQ's Willamette Basin Mercury Total Maximum Daily Load

Mayor Massey read Ordinance No. 3314 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to adopt Ordinance No. 3314. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

3. **Ordinance No. 3317:** An Ordinance to Annex and Designate the Zone of Certain Property at 58506 Kavanagh Street (Avenue)

Mayor Massey read Ordinance No. 3317 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to adopt Ordinance No. 3317. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

RESOLUTIONS

4. **Resolution No. 2058:** A Resolution Establishing an Official Compensation Package for Members of the City of St. Helens Planning Commission, and other City Advisory Boards and Commissions for Food, Beverages, and Other City-Related Items

Mayor Massey read Resolution No. 2058 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to adopt Resolution No. 2058. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

5. PUBLIC COMMENT - Increase in Drop Box Rates

No public comments were received regarding the increase in drop box rates.

Resolution No. 2059: A Resolution Establishing Drop Box Rates and Superseding Resolution No. 2028

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to adopt Resolution No. 2059.

During discussion, Mayor Massey mentioned she would like to see if the service provider would be willing to partner with the City for community projects. She asked City Administrator John Walsh to follow up on this possibility.

Councilor Sundeen asked about when the next franchise agreement negotiation would occur, noting it had been renewed not too long ago.

Vote: Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

- 6. Resolution No. 2060:** A Resolution of the City Council of St. Helens, Oregon, Finding it Necessary and Convenient to Sell Real Property Located at Tax Account No. 11362 Map No. 4N1W-4DD-11300, Tax Account No. 11361 Map No. 4N1W-4DD-10800, and Tax Account No. 13215 Map No. 4N1W-9-100 and Authorizing the City to Enter into the Option to Purchase the Property in Compliance with ORS 221.725

Contracted City Attorney Ashley Wigod requested an amendment to the resolution to make the exercise of the option conditional upon the buyer owning the adjacent paper mill property.

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Hubbard to adopt Resolution No. 2060 and authorize the City Administrator to enter into the Option Agreement as substantially described and amended to make the exercise of the Option Agreement conditional upon the Buyer owning the Paper Mill property. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

APPROVE AND/OR AUTHORIZE FOR SIGNATURE

7. Agreement with Mackenzie for New Police Station at 1771 Columbia Blvd.
8. Exclusive Negotiating Agreement with Romano Properties for Proposed Development on Riverfront Property

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve '7' and '8' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

9. Reappoint Robert Dunn and Jana Mann and Appoint Kelsey Knutson to the Library Board

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to reappoint Robert Dunn and Jana Mann and appoint Kelsey Knutson to the Library Board. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

CONSENT AGENDA FOR ACCEPTANCE

10. Library Board Minutes dated June 9, 2025
11. Library Board Special Meeting Minutes dated June 9, 2025
12. Library Board Special Meeting Minutes dated August 27, 2025

Motion: Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve '10' through '12' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

CONSENT AGENDA FOR APPROVAL

13. City Council Minutes dated September 3, 2025
14. Amended Recreation Manager Job Description (fka: Parks & Recreation Manager)
15. Declare Surplus Property - Police Department Vehicles
16. Accounts Payable Bill Lists

Motion: Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve '13' through '16' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

WORK SESSION ACTION ITEMS

No work session items were discussed.

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

Councilor Sundeen reported...

- Parks and Trails Commission:
 - A new tool for parks assessment has been tested, enabling commissioners to document safety concerns and gather park user feedback.
 - There is an opening on the Parks and Trails Commission, with the application deadline next Tuesday.
- Historical information about the Plaza was shared:
 - Originally designed to showcase the courthouse.
 - Featured a fountain, replaced by a piece of German artillery after World War I, later scrapped for metal during World War II, and subsequently replaced with a flagpole removed following the Columbus Day storm.

Council President Chilton reported...

- Meetings with Treadway:
 - Provided support and guidance as they implement changes.
 - Spirit of Halloweentown preparations are underway with celebrities on board and events being planned.
 - An invitation for the Council to tour the gift shop and haunted house is forthcoming to view recent changes.

Councilor Hubbard reported...

- Joint Planning Commission and Council meeting:
 - Agreed with Councilor Sundeen's suggestion to meet less frequently, due to a lack of discussion topics.
 - This topic will be addressed in the next Planning Commission meeting.

Councilor Gundersen reported...

- Nothing to report.

MAYOR MASSEY REPORTS

- Thanked City Recorder Kathy Payne and Deputy City Recorder Lisa Scholl for their work in preparing meeting materials, noting it was Payne's birthday the previous day.
- She and Councilor Hubbard toured Arcadia (the paper mill property) last week and were impressed with the improvements already underway. She noted that next year would be the 100-year anniversary of the mill and expressed excitement about the partnership moving forward.
- Requested and received consensus from the Council to appoint Councilor Hubbard as liaison for the new police station construction project to ensure regular updates on progress, milestones, and budget adherence.
- Reviewed progress on various roadmap items from earlier in the year, noting completed items included:
 - Modifying news media policies to align with the Attorney General
 - Working on nuisance fees ordinance
 - Improving department reporting to Council
 - Improving reporting from Boards and Commissions
 - Updating the Governing Rules of the Council
 - Modifying Council meeting structure
 - Pursuing Human Resources consultant options
- Items still in progress or planned include:
 - 250th celebration for next year
 - City Charter update

- Full-time grant writer
- Town Halls
- Side-by-side vehicle regulations (tabled until December due to hunting season)
- Marine park contract compliance review scheduled for October 17

PROACTIVE ITEMS**OTHER BUSINESS**

Councilor Sundeen added that he would like to work with Walsh and Payne to establish a citizen committee for the 250th celebration of the country, noting that many cities are already planning their celebrations and suggesting this should be a community-wide effort involving organizations like the Lions Club.

ADJOURN – 7:27 p.m.

Respectfully transcribed by ClerkMinutes and submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

Kathy Payne, City Recorder

Jennifer Massey, Mayor



COUNCIL SPECIAL SESSION

Monday, September 22, 2025

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Jennifer Massey
Councilor Mark Gundersen
Councilor Russell Hubbard
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

MEMBERS ABSENT

Council President Jessica Chilton

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
Ashley Wigod, Contracted City Attorney

OTHERS

None

CALL SPECIAL SESSION TO ORDER – 4:00 p.m.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Review Amendment No. 2 to the Purchase and Sale Agreement with Arcadia Holdings, LLC

City Administrator John Walsh presented Amendment No. 2 to the Purchase and Sale Agreement with Arcadia Holdings, LLC. He outlined the key changes to the agreement, which included:

- Consent to transfer the purchase and sale agreement to an affiliate of the original buyer, now Arcadia Holdings
- Setting the final legal description for the boundaries of the sale of land
- Amending the seller finance terms, with Arcadia paying more money upfront than originally anticipated
- Allocating the sale price between land value (\$5,000,000) and equipment value (\$25,500,000)
- Extending the closing deadline to December 30

Walsh also addressed a question from a previous Council meeting regarding water rights. He clarified that the City is not conveying any water rights as part of this transaction. Rather, the City is allowing Project Arcadia to use up to 50% of the water available under the City's water right, which amounts to a 40-million-gallon-per-day water right. If those rates get adjusted in the future or downsized, it would remain at 50% of the available amount, ensuring that both the City and Arcadia will always have water access.

Mayor Massey opened the floor for discussion on the changes, but no Council members had questions or comments on the modifications.

Contracted City Attorney Ashley Wigod confirmed that there was nothing additional to add beyond what Walsh presented, but noted that exhibits C-2 and D-1, along with an amortization schedule that's part of D-1, needed to be updated in the final packet. Mayor Massey confirmed these updated materials were available.

RESOLUTIONS

- 2. Resolution No. 2061:** A Resolution of the City Council of St. Helens, Oregon, Authorizing Amendment No. 2 to the Purchase and Sale Agreement of Property at 1300 Kaster Road, Tax Account Nos. 13249 and 13215, and Authorizing and Directing the City Administrator to Take Appropriate Steps to Effectuate Closing of the Sale of Property, and Repealing Resolution No. 2053

Mayor Massey read Resolution No. 2061 by title. **Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Sundeen and seconded by Councilor Hubbard to adopt Resolution No. 2061. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURN – 4:05 p.m.

Respectfully transcribed by ClerkMinutes and submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

Kathy Payne, City Recorder

Jennifer Massey, Mayor



COUNCIL PUBLIC FORUM

Wednesday, October 01, 2025

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Jennifer Massey
Councilor Mark Gundersen
Councilor Russell Hubbard
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

MEMBERS ABSENT

Council President Jessica Chilton

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder

OTHERS

Art Leskowich	Eddie
Steve Topaz	Debra Korpela
Mary Hubbard	Greg Korpela
Ron Trommlitz	Janelle Adams
Brady Preheim	

OPEN PUBLIC FORUM – 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Massey explained that the forum's purpose was to allow for the presentation of two community members, Arthur Leskowich and Stephen Topaz, on the future potential use of the wastewater treatment secondary lagoon.

Mayor Massey provided background that the City has been exploring repurposing the secondary lagoon area for more than a decade, with the most recent project name being the "Central Waterfront Redevelopment Project." She noted that the City is in early stages of repurposing this project and is gathering information and consulting with experts to identify the best ways to move forward safely and in the City's best interest.

Mayor Massey explained that both presenters have been personally engaged with the lagoon's status and potential repurposing. She noted that Topaz regularly speaks about the lagoon at Council Work Sessions during visitor comments, and when asked, was open to having a longer presentation period. Leskowich has also spent considerable time gathering information on this topic. The Council decided it would be beneficial for the City and community to provide them with an extended period to present their information and perspectives.

Mayor Massey clarified the forum format: Leskowich and Topaz would present their information uninterrupted, followed by a question and comment period. She asked that questions be written down and held until the end of the presentation.

TOPIC**1. Presentation of Viewpoint from Community Members Arthur Leskowich & Stephen Topaz on Future Potential Use of Wastewater Treatment Secondary Lagoon**

Steve Topaz began the presentation by explaining that the lagoon repurposing discussions started in 2014 with City Administrator John Walsh's presentation to Portland Harbor regarding where to put dredge waste. He introduced Art Leskowich to explain technical terminology.

Art Leskowich stated he prefers to use "contaminated sediments" rather than "toxic waste" when discussing the materials. He mentioned that most information he would share had already been presented to the Council previously but could be confusing due to the volume of information (thousands of pages). He noted his background in environmental business, primarily in cleanup.

Leskowich pointed out that the Council has changed over the years, while this project goes back over 10 years. He expressed concern that from the beginning, the only option discussed was turning the lagoon into a landfill, without exploring alternatives such as doing nothing, cleaning up completely, or options in between. He questioned whether the City had consulted with tribes, the Public Health Department, and other stakeholders beyond state agencies.

Leskowich discussed funding, noting that the project has been at higher levels of government for years, including the governor's office. He questioned why Portland Harbor and the state had such interest in sending contaminated sediments to St. Helens, explaining that clean sediments could be disposed of in open water.

Topaz then showed historical photos of the area, explaining important physical features including:

- The railroad on pilings 14 feet above water level
- A lift bridge that allowed barges from the river to enter the quarry
- The mill dumping large amounts of wood waste
- The lagoon's location relative to the railroad and river

The presenters showed additional photos demonstrating:

- The levee being 25 feet higher than the railroad
- A PVC membrane that had slipped and required repair
- A deep slot in the rock (283 feet deep) filled with sand
- Unconsolidated silty soils beneath the lagoon

Topaz presented data from groundwater testing in the area, highlighting concerning findings:

- Temperature variations in groundwater (58-67 degrees Fahrenheit instead of the expected 52 degrees)
- Evidence of gas being generated, causing the membrane to float
- Changes in water levels correlated with river tides, suggesting unstable ground
- Risks of the membrane floating during flood conditions

Leskowich explained that the lagoon's liner is leaking, allowing contaminants to leave the lagoon through a permitted National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) pipe. He stated this permit was just renewed after 20 years and that the facility uses old technology that cannot meet current standards. He expressed concern about PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances or "forever chemicals") leaving the lagoon and flowing toward the City's drinking water intake, which is about a mile and a half downstream.

The presenters showed maps of water flow patterns, highlighting:

- The discharge point from the lagoon into the Multnomah Channel
- Flow patterns carrying discharge toward the City's Ranney well drinking water collection system

- Areas of high contamination (PCBs at 1,000 times allowable levels) near a proposed barge unloading facility

Leskowich raised concerns about a previous application to use a contaminated area for a barge facility by Wilsonville Concrete Products, stating that the Division of State Lands was unaware of the contamination when processing the application, demonstrating a lack of communication between agencies.

Topaz noted Columbia County has the second-highest cancer rate in the state, suggesting potential links to environmental contamination. He presented calculations regarding the logistics of transporting contaminated sediments to St. Helens, estimating:

- 800,000 cubic yards of material would need to be moved annually
- This would require a truck every 7.5 minutes or five barges per day
- Processing challenges including drying and sorting of materials
- Potential revenue of \$120 million over 10 years, but with costs of \$110 million, netting only about \$800,000 per year

As they concluded, Leskowich questioned the current plan to spend \$400,000 on a permit application for the landfill and suggested exploring alternative uses for the Waterfront property such as floating homes, light commercial shipyards, or dry docks.

During the question period, Mayor Massey first acknowledged the need for a follow-up presentation to address all questions raised. She noted that multiple investigations in 2019-2023 showed groundwater at the lagoon flowing east toward the Multnomah Channel, not toward the Ranney well system. Topaz responded that water flow through the sandy slot versus basalt layers created a more complex situation than portrayed.

Mayor Massey asked about the Ranney collector wells' distance from the discharge point, which Leskowich confirmed was about a mile and a half.

Regarding PFAS from the fire department, Walsh indicated that staff may have followed up, but this would need to be addressed at the next meeting.

Leskowich questioned whether grant money received could be repurposed for alternatives to the landfill plan. Mayor Massey noted she understood there was approximately \$863,000 in federal dollars remaining. Walsh clarified that there was about \$1.4 million in the last round of funding (part FEMA money, part congressional appropriation), targeted for evaluating the berm's stability, with a shifted focus toward resilience.

Mayor Massey clarified that DEQ doesn't permit hazardous waste (which would require a different type of facility) but rather contaminated sediments. She asked about the project's origin, and Walsh explained that when examining the Veneer property, developers were concerned about the lagoon's odor. Consultants suggested filling it in, which led to evaluating whether this could be done safely with revenue-positive material that wouldn't negatively impact the community, potentially funding a relocated treatment facility and redevelopment.

Mayor Massey outlined potential scenarios: status quo, closing and capping the lagoon, marine expansion/recreation reuse, or a hybrid approach. Leskowich suggested the window for using the site as a landfill was closing and expressed doubt about building structures on the site in a cost-effective manner given its geological instability and proximity to the drinking water source.

CLOSE PUBLIC FORUM – 6:56 p.m.

Respectfully transcribed by ClerkMinutes and submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

Kathy Payne, City Recorder

Jennifer Massey, Mayor



COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Wednesday, October 01, 2025

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Jennifer Massey
Councilor Mark Gundersen
Councilor Russell Hubbard
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

MEMBERS ABSENT

Council President Jessica Chilton

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Shanna Duggan, Recreation Manager

OTHERS

Art Leskowich	Eddie
Steve Topaz	Debra Korpela
Mary Hubbard	Greg Korpela
Ron Trommlitz	Janelle Adams
Brady Preheim	

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PROCLAMATION

1. Lights on After School Day - October 23, 2025

Mayor Massey read a proclamation designating October 23, 2025, as "Lights on After School Day" in the City of St. Helens. The proclamation emphasized the importance of quality after-school programs for children's education, well-being, and development. It highlighted that after-school programs help children realize their full potential, support working families, address issues like school absenteeism and learning loss, and build stronger communities. The proclamation noted that after-school programs provide a solid return on investment, with every dollar invested saving at least three dollars through increased earning potential, improved school performance, and reduced crime and juvenile delinquency.

Mayor Massey expressed her enthusiasm for the Recreation Program and the opportunities it provides for local youth. Following the proclamation, photos were taken with Recreation Manager Shanna Duggan and Council members.

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

- ◆ Janelle Adams, Columbia Sexual Assault Response Network. Introduced a new local nonprofit focused on providing sexual assault response services in Columbia County. She explained that their mission is to deliver timely sexual assault medical exams, empower the community through

prevention and education, and strengthen support services that prioritize survivor safety, dignity, and healing. Adams noted that currently, adult sexual assault survivors in Columbia County must travel to Portland or Longview for rape kits, often waiting hours in emergency rooms. The organization is working with the Amani Center to develop local services. Adams also mentioned that October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and shared statistics about sexual assault, including that someone in the US is sexually assaulted every 74 seconds. She presented a proclamation for the Council to consider declaring October 2025 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month in St. Helens.

- ◆ Brady Preheim. He expressed concern about the City's plans for the lagoon, stating that filling it would require building a new Wastewater Treatment Plant at a cost of approximately \$170 million, which would offset any income from storing waste from Portland. Second, he criticized the current state of Spirit of Halloweentown, noting that it has diminished significantly and that several expensive assets purchased for the event (including a train and tourism boat) are not being utilized. He questioned where missing haunted house assets had gone and urged the Council to recognize that the event has not been successful and to hold the organizers accountable.

APPROVE AND/OR AUTHORIZE FOR SIGNATURE

2. First Amendment to Agreement with Columbia Pacific Economic Development District for Grant Administration of the Sanitary Sewer Capacity Improvement Project

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

Vote: Yea: Mayor Massey, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

3. [Ratify] Agreement with Donovan Enterprises, Inc. for a Utilities Rate Study

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

Councilor Hubbard asked about the purpose of the utilities rate study, noting that the last one was done in 2022. City Administrator John Walsh explained that these studies are conducted every five years to update rates and forecast revenues. He clarified that Donovan Enterprises analyzes income, expenses, growth, capital projects, and SDC revenues to create formulas that model future needs. This helps the City build rates to pay for Capital Projects and ongoing operations without financial surprises.

Walsh mentioned that the contract amount of \$29,350 falls within his signature authority, but as a matter of policy, he prefers to bring all agreements to the Council. He also noted that Donovan Enterprises will present their findings at the October 15 meeting.

Mayor Massey requested confirmation that the study would include a cost cap of \$29,350 and asked if the study would evaluate whether to keep stormwater costs in sewer rates or create a separate stormwater utility. Walsh confirmed both points and added that the study was necessary to comply with DEQ SRF loans as the current model is expiring. Mayor Massey suggested that in the future, the Council should receive past reports and background information before approving such agreements.

Vote: Yea: Mayor Massey, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

4. Agreement with St. Helens Marina LLC for Harbor Master Services (Monitoring and Enforcement of Local Ordinances of the City's Docks and Waterways)

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

Council discussed what services were covered by the agreement. Walsh explained that it includes monitoring and enforcement of City ordinances related to the City docks on Sand Island, pilings, and infrastructure. The Harbor Master checks the docks daily, ensures people are paying required fees, and addresses derelict vessels. Fines are paid to the City.

Mayor Massey expressed concern about the City's practice of continually renewing contracts without going through an RFP process, suggesting this should be a topic for future Council discussion. She emphasized that her concern was not with this specific contractor but with the general practice of contract renewals without competitive bidding.

Councilor Sundeen mentioned that he had met with Toni Doggett (the current Harbor Master) and suggested having her give a presentation to the Council about her role. He noted that while most people comply with her requests, there are occasions when situations escalate, which prompted a meeting between him, Toni, and Police Chief Smith to discuss the proper process.

Councilor Hubbard noted that the Marina does a good job but pointed out some needed repairs on the island docks. Walsh clarified that while the Marina identifies repairs, the actual work is done by contractors paid by the City, sometimes with assistance from the Oregon Marine Board.

Council agreed it would be beneficial to have regular updates from the Harbor Master about operations.

Vote: Yea: Mayor Massey, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

CONSENT AGENDA FOR ACCEPTANCE

5. Parks and Trails Commission Minutes dated August 11, 2025

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

Vote: Yea: Mayor Massey, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

CONSENT AGENDA FOR APPROVAL

6. Accounts Payable Bill Lists

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

Vote: Yea: Mayor Massey, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

WORK SESSION ACTION ITEMS

None

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

Councilor Sundeen reported...

- Shared a historical fact about the courthouse, completed in 1907. The clock wasn't purchased until 3-4 years later, during which the painted clock hands permanently showed the time as 9:15.

Councilor Gundersen reported...

- Visited downtown and mentioned that the gift shop remodel for Spirit of Halloweentown looked good, although he had not attended the festivities yet.

Councilor Hubbard reported...

- He is set up with the proper equipment to follow the police station meetings and would update the Council in the future. Mayor Massey clarified that the due diligence date for the police station project is October 16, not August 24 as initially thought.

MAYOR MASSEY REPORTS

- Expressed appreciation for City staff, particularly City Recorder Kathy Payne and Deputy City Recorder Lisa Scholl, for their behind-the-scenes work.
- Thanked City employees for their efforts despite lean staffing.
- Acknowledged Walsh for his responsiveness to her questions.
- Mentioned her excitement about the upcoming police station due diligence report.
- Looking forward to the Mayor's conference scheduled for the following day to meet with other mayors and discuss common challenges.

- Brought up the need to start planning for the City's 250th anniversary celebration.
- Thanked Art Leskovich and Steve Topaz for their Public Forum presentation and indicated she would follow up with questions on that topic.

PROACTIVE ITEMS

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURN – 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully transcribed by ClerkMinutes and submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

Kathy Payne, City Recorder

Jennifer Massey, Mayor