

# City of St. Helens

## Consent Agenda for Approval

### CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

Presented for approval on this 19<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2025 are the following Council minutes:

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#### 2024

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- Joint City Council and Planning Commission Minutes dated December 11, 2024
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#### 2025

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- Special Session Minutes dated January 31, 2025
- Work Session, Executive Session, and Regular Session Minutes dated February 5, 2025
- Joint City Council and Planning Commission Minutes dated February 5, 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
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- Email minutes link to distribution list
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- File original in Vault
- Update minutes spreadsheet



# JOINT CITY COUNCIL & PLANNING COMMISSION

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

## DRAFT MINUTES

### MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Rick Scholl  
Mayor Elect Jennifer Massey  
Councilor Mark Gundersen  
Councilor Brandon Sundeen  
Councilor Russell Hubbard - via Zoom at 5:13 p.m.

Chair Dan Carey  
Vice Chair Jennifer Shoemaker  
Commissioner Charles Castner  
Commissioner Scott Jacobson  
Commissioner David B. Rosengard – via Zoom

### MEMBERS ABSENT

Council President Jessica Chilton  
Commissioner Brooke Sisco

### STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator  
Jacob Graichen, City Planner  
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner/Community Development Project Manager  
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder  
Crystal King, Communications Officer

### CALL SPECIAL SESSION TO ORDER – 4:01 p.m.

### DISCUSSION TOPICS

#### 1. Presentation of Plaque to Outgoing Planning Commission Member Dan Cary

Mayor Scholl presented Planning Commissioner Dan Cary with a plaque in honor of his 16 years of service. Council members, Commission members, and staff thanked Cary for his leadership and service.

#### 2. Discuss Draft Economic Policies & Actions

City Planner Graichen introduced the project.

Beth Goodman, EConorthwest, reviewed the goals, policies, and actions for implementation. A few highlights of discussion were:

- Goal A
  - Basic economic policies
  - Addition of high tech to second bullet. Prime place for remote work with a fast, fiber network.
  - Hire an Economic Development Specialist
- Goal B
  - Asset of St. Helens Industrial Business Park





# COUNCIL SPECIAL SESSION

Friday, January 31, 2025

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## DRAFT MINUTES

### MEMBERS PRESENT

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

### STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator	Gloria Butsch, Finance Director
Kathy Payne, City Recorder	Ethan Stirling, Field Supervisor/Safety Coordinator
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder	Shanna Duggan, Recreation Manager
Crystal King, Communications Officer	Mike De Roia, Building Official
Mouhamad Zaher, Public Works Director	Sharon Darroux, Engineering Manager
Suzanne Bishop, Library Director	Buck Tupper, Facilities Maintenance Supervisor
Joe Hogue, Acting Police Chief	

### OTHERS

Rachael Barry  
Simon Wright  
Brittany  
Jenni G.

### CALL SPECIAL SESSION TO ORDER – 10:00 a.m.

### DISCUSSION TOPICS

#### 1. 10:00AM - Icebreaker & Introductions

Rachael Barry, the facilitator, introduced herself and explained that the agenda for the day was full. She noted that a parking lot would be used for items needing additional attention. Barry asked participants to share why they chose public service as an icebreaker.

City Administrator Walsh shared that he came to public service later in his career after working in construction. He explained that he initially volunteered with his local County before being hired by the City of Centralia. Walsh stated that public service has been rewarding and allowed him to leave a lasting impact.

Councilor Gundersen said he likes to be involved and give back to the community, noting his past experience coaching kids and being involved with schools.

Mayor Massey described herself as a "workhorse and overachiever" who enjoys projects, strategizing, and trying to be part of solutions to complicated issues. She said she felt she could add value in her current role.

Councilor Hubbard explained he moved to St. Helens about 15 years ago after finding Portland increasingly difficult for his development business. He said he sees St. Helens as needing changes and believes he can be beneficial in making improvements, noting his focus on getting results.

Councilor Sundeen shared that he ran for office after being critical of things happening in the City, deciding to try to make a positive impact rather than just complain. He noted St. Helens is his home and where his kids are growing up, so it's important to him.

Council President Chilton described herself as a "natural helper" who has worked in mental health and is now helping seniors in the community. She said being a helper is core to who she is.

## **2. 10:15AM - DISC Workshop**

Barry introduced the DISC personality assessment, explaining it is a helpful tool for understanding communication styles and working together. She noted Mayor Massey had suggested using this tool.

Mayor Massey explained the DISC assessment provides a snapshot of how people communicate and receive information, which can help a new team understand each other's personality styles and adjust communication methods accordingly.

Barry provided an overview of the four DISC styles - Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, and Conscientiousness. She explained the key traits and motivations of each style.

Participants then shared their dominant DISC styles:

- John Walsh identified as an S (Steadiness) style
- Council President Chilton identified as an I (Influence) style
- Mayor Massey identified as a D (Dominance) style
- Councilor Hubbard identified as a D (Dominance) style
- Councilor Gundersen identified as an S (Steadiness) style
- Councilor Sundeen identified as an S (Steadiness) style

The group discussed strengths and challenges of their styles. D styles noted challenges with patience. S styles mentioned sometimes being too accommodating. The group discussed how understanding styles can improve communication and teamwork.

Barry showed a map of DISC styles for 20 city staff members who had taken the assessment. The group observed clusters in certain areas and discussed how this diversity of styles benefits the organization. They noted the importance of having a strategic plan and clear goals to leverage different strengths.

## **3. 11:00AM - Governing Policy Review**

Walsh provided background on the current governing policy, noting it was adopted in February 2019. He explained it shifted Councilor oversight of departments to more of a liaison role, giving more authority to the City Administrator while maintaining some Councilor decision-making involvement.

Walsh noted the policy has been problematic at times, particularly around personnel supervision. He said attorneys have advised it creates unclear lines of communication and decision-making.

The group reviewed key sections of the policy and discussed potential changes:

For Section 4 on supervision, there was consensus to keep language stating department employees are supervised by department heads and department heads are supervised by the city administrator. The group agreed to remove language about Councilors being involved in hiring/firing decisions for department employees.

On evaluations, the group discussed adding language about conducting annual evaluations and potentially having the full Council involved in evaluating department heads along with the City Administrator.

Mayor Massey suggested looking into training on how to properly conduct evaluations and give feedback. The group agreed this would be valuable.

There was discussion about improving communication between Council and staff, potentially through more frequent check-ins or reports from department heads. Councilor Hubbard suggested having department heads present to the full Council periodically rather than just liaising with individual Councilors.

The group agreed to continue discussing potential changes to the liaison structure, with some interest in moving to a more open model where all Councilors could engage with different departments rather than having assigned liaisons.

**4. 11:45AM - Break to Grab Lunch**

**5. 12:00PM - Working Lunch - Survey Results Overview**

Barry presented an overview of results from the recent community input survey, which received 256 responses. Key points included:

- Overall satisfaction levels have decreased compared to previous surveys
- The library received high ratings for customer service and overall satisfaction
- Parks also received positive ratings for maintenance and overall condition
- There were lower satisfaction ratings for economic development efforts and opportunities to participate in government
- Key challenges identified included growth, housing, and employment
- Social media and the City website were the most common sources of city information

The group discussed potential actions based on the results, including:

- Improving communication and engagement efforts
- Finding ways to increase participation in local government
- Addressing economic development concerns
- Considering town halls or other forums to connect with residents

**6. 12:45PM - Break & Welcome Staff**

Staff members joined the meeting following the lunch break. Barry reviewed the DISC assessment results for the full group, including both Council and staff. She noted there was a good balance of styles represented.

**7. 1:00PM - Envisioning Success Workshop**

Barry led an exercise where small groups created vision statements for where the City will be in two years. Key themes that emerged included:

- Morale
- Balanced workload
- Council/staff trust
- Team building
- Effective communication/transparency
- Partnerships/community collaboration
- Project completion
- Waterfront
- Engagement
- Meeting needs
- Fiscal sustainability/opportunities for sustainable revenue
- Employee wellness
- Stability with tourism

- Proactive planning
- Community trust
- Safe workplace

### **8. 1:30PM - SWOT**

The full group conducted a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis.

#### **Strengths:**

- Talented staff
- Dedicated staff
- Team collaboration
- Broad service offering
- Economic assets
- Industrial land
- Recreational assets - location, programs, amenities
- Strong sense of community/place
- Communications program
- Care about the community
- Staff adaptability
- Many hats/many tasks/broad breadths of knowledge
- Multi-tasked
- Equipment/fleet/tools
- Industry and readiness
- Community partnerships
- Abundant infrastructure
- Small and efficient
- Partnerships with state and fed policy makers
- Facilities

#### **Weaknesses:**

- Facilities
- Lack of power
- Funding CIPs
- Staffing needs
- Staff morale
- Trust from citizens
- Internal trust and respect
- Growing pains
- Effective communication
- Lack of decisiveness
- Utilizing all strengths
- State funding
- Misinformation

#### **Opportunities**

- Continue to grow partnerships
- Employer of choice
- Supporting local economy
- Site more industry
- Improve public safety
- Waterfront

- More voice in Salem
- Job creation
- Citizen engagement
- More water storage
- Grant funding - governmental and private
- Technological improvements
- Revenue stabilization
- Tourism - build/improve/establish more opportunities
- More support for small businesses
- Transportation
- Parking
- Ferry
- Re-shape economic inventory
- Education/cross-training
- Keeping people local
- Competition
- Youth programs
- Emergency preparedness and response
- Council/staff teambuilding

**Threats**

- Tenuousness of federal funding
- Cybersecurity
- Salem
- Misinformation
- Competition, loss of talented staff
- Culture/morale
- Infrastructure
- Losing institutional knowledge
- Maintaining public safety
- Hazards/disasters
- Lack of power
- Aging infrastructure
- Lack of proactive plans
- Funding
- Defining neighborliness
- Division among people
- Lack of staff/council cohesion/collaboration
- Access to healthcare
- Public transportation
- Amazon/e-commerce
- Lack of morale
- Lack of understanding of what the City does jurisdictionally
- Rising cost of materials
- Distrust of government
- Quality of life

Council and staff marked their top two from each category. The following scored the highest:

**Strengths**

- Talented, dedicated staff



- Economic assets like industrial lands
- Efficient interdepartmental coordination
- Industry readiness
- Team collaboration

**Weaknesses**

- Staff morale
- Trust with citizens
- Effective communication
- Lack of electric power capacity

**Opportunities**

- Revenue stability
- Improve public safety facility
- Emergency preparedness and response
- Council/staff team building
- Supporting local economy

**Threats**

- Misinformation/lack of understanding of City functions
- Infrastructure capacity and aging
- Uncertain federal funding
- Staff recruitment/retention challenges

**Observations:**

The group noted that the team is a major strength, with talented and dedicated staff achieving strong collaboration and efficient coordination. However, staff morale emerged as a weakness, which the group found surprising and concerning, sparking a discussion about its potential causes. Trust with citizens and effective communication also were identified as critical areas in need of improvement. Opportunities focused on stabilizing revenue and optimizing public safety facilities, while threats emphasized misinformation and infrastructure challenges. The group concluded the SWOT analysis by recognizing that many of the internal weaknesses can be adjusted through targeted efforts, providing a path for improvement in the future.

**9. 2:30PM - Priority Setting and Action Brainstorming**

Based on the SWOT analysis, the group identified two key priority areas to focus on:

- Building trust, internal and external
  - Effective communication
  - Respectful/truthful communication
  - Accountability
  - Personally find good information
  - Being inclusive
    - Anonymous surveys
    - SWOT within departments
    - External town hall for public
    - Internal town hall for employees
    - Rewarding performance/recognition
    - Feedback
    - Improvement plans
- Revenue stability
  - New business and industry

- Waterfront development
- Heed warning
- Infrastructure to support growth
- Staff planning
- Fees for services
- Grant opportunities

The group agreed these areas provided opportunities to make significant improvements over the next two years.

#### **10. 2:50PM - Closing Reflections & Next Steps**

Barry asked each participant to share one word describing how they felt about the goals and next two years. Responses included: excited, hopeful, optimistic, opportunity, determined, motivated, grace, open, nervous, and encouraged.

Walsh expressed appreciation for the session, saying it was a positive step toward better collaboration between Council and staff. Mayor Massey thanked everyone for participating and being open to building relationships.

Barry noted she would follow up with more detailed notes and potential next steps on work plan items based on the discussions.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **ADJOURN – 2:55 p.m.**

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

ATTEST:

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Kathy Payne, City Recorder

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Jennifer Massey, Mayor



# COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Wednesday, February 05, 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	Joe Hogue, Acting Police Chief
Kathy Payne, City Recorder	Jose Castilleja, Police Sergeant
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder	Johnathon Sprinzl, Police Officer
Crystal King, Communications Officer	Brandon Haflich, Police Officer
Suzanne Bishop, Library Director	Sam Ortiz, Pretreatment Coordinator
Gloria Butsch, Finance Director	Ashley Wigod, Contracted City Attorney

### OTHERS

Adam	Mitz	Amanda McFeron	Jennie Carnahan
Conor Delaney	Lynne Pettit	Jane Garcia	Ron Trommlitz
Joe	Jenni Gilbert	Kaelyn Cassidy	Sylvia Cole
KOIN	Marci Sanders	Lori Armstrong	Steve Topaz
Richard Mason	Jennifer Anderson	Brady Preheim	Jenn Dougherty
Michelle Millar	Anna Dahlman	Shawn Carnahan	Brent Keller
Steve Toschi			

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

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

- ◆ Steve Topaz. Discussed the importance of keeping accurate records during the City meeting. He began by invoking an old Greek thought, "Silence is a lie," to emphasize the significance of truthful and complete documentation. Topaz expressed concerns about missing information from a previous meeting in December, particularly regarding a discussion about stabilizing a significant embankment that involved the Council. He noted that part of the agenda seemed to be missing electronically, pointing to a lack of a reliable record of events. Furthermore, Topaz criticized a recent City Economic Opportunities Analysis, a lengthy document that mentioned mixed-use development on the Waterfront and substantial allocations for heavy industry. However, he noted that it failed to adequately account for contamination issues, citing a DEQ plan that limits the Waterfront's usage due to contamination that isn't being adequately addressed. Specifically, he mentioned a DEQ proposal for a costly remedy at the creosote plant site that would leave it unusable for commercial purposes. Additionally, he brought up concerns about overloaded sewage basins, aggravated by waste disposal practices that were not being properly addressed in the City's reports. Lastly, he highlighted inaccurate mapping in a City report, pointing out that landslide-prone areas under a specific lagoon were omitted. Topaz concluded by stressing the

responsibility of the council to ensure accurate information dissemination, aligning with his belief that "he who does not know the truth is a fool, yet who knows the truth and calls it a lie is a criminal."

- ◆ Brady Preheim. Brady addressed the mayor, questioning why there had not been a public apology issued to John. This was linked to a previous condemnation of John and Brady urged that an apology would actually be a demonstration of strength rather than weakness by admitting a mistake had been made. He also criticized the exclusion of KOHI radio from the media list, highlighting that they are the only local media remaining in the county. Brady pointed out that the Spotlight no longer has a location in St. Helens, and the Chronicle has closed, underscoring the importance of recognizing KOHI as a media entity.

Brady proceeded to question the status of the long-awaited report on Chief Greenway, emphasizing the need for its release and transparency. He argued that the mayor should be as accountable and transparent with Council matters concerning her actions as she expects of others.

Turning to fiscal matters, Brady expressed his opposition to the proposed police station, citing that it was an unaffordable item from the beginning. He noted the inflation factor and estimated the cost to potentially reach \$40,000,000, which he believes the City cannot afford. Instead, he advocated exploring cost-effective solutions to improve the existing police station, suggesting that more affordable options would be feasible with a fraction of the budget. Brady voiced his support for Chief Hogue's performance as interim and urged that the vacancy for the Chief of Police should be promptly announced, with Chief Hogue's position made permanent.

Brady then turned his attention to Council responsibilities, stating that he has no issue with the Council members receiving stipends but asserted that they should feel as though they earn them by adequately performing their duties. Finally, he expressed his full support for Habitat for Humanity, acknowledging their favorable reputation and his hope that the council would support their endeavors, particularly in building houses in the community.

- ◆ Lori Armstrong. Offered a prayer for the City Council members and the community, asking for guidance, protection, and blessings for the city and its residents.
- ◆ Ron Trommlitz. Raised several issues during his comments, particularly focusing on the use of AI in searching for information related to the 2-million-gallon reservoir evaluation failure. Trommlitz expressed his dissatisfaction with the limited information that AI can present, drawing attention to notable discrepancies between the AI-fed information and what he personally understands about the situation. He criticized the City for relying on AI, which he perceives as more of a super search engine that presents only a fraction of what he believes to be the whole picture. Trommlitz underscored the importance of transparency and factual accuracy, emphasizing the need for due diligence akin to a doctor's thorough diagnosis before treatment—a level of scrutiny he believes was lacking in the reservoir project.

Moreover, Trommlitz questioned the City's approach to the reservoir's rehabilitation and subsequent legal matters. He detailed a timeline of events dating back to October 2016, when the City embarked on executing Kennedy Jenks' plan, addressing a leak that had escalated significantly over time. He recalled the City's hiring of WPI for investigative purposes, pointing out a lack of oversight during the work on the reservoir and raising concerns about an inspection process he feels was inadequate. By March 2022, Trommlitz cited substantial frustrations over restricted access to key documents like the Walker report, expressing that the City's refusal to release this information fosters distrust. He also highlighted his personal observations about the

project's processes and voiced disappointment about the lack of accountability and corrective measures.

- ◆ Shawn Carnahan, resident near the recently purchased School District property. Raised concerns about the recent actions of the School District on nearby property. He outlined specific issues related to the changes in the natural drainage field due to land disruptions. Carnahan explained that such disturbances had altered the natural water flow, causing it to redirect into residential properties instead of the intended route of Firlok Park Boulevard. This shift posed significant problems for the four houses, including his own, that are adjacent to the newly acquired School District property. The District's initial attempt to dismantle a security fence further exacerbated these challenges, violating the established boundary requirements. After his communication with City Planning, a resolution was reached to reinstall the fence, but Carnahan emphasized the need for ongoing vigilance. He asserted that the School District's actions demonstrated a lack of consideration for the existing residential area, and requested that the Council ensure a closer oversight by Planning officials regarding any future development on this wetland-designated property by the school district, in accordance with Oregon Department of State Lands regulations.
- ◆ Amanda McFeron, a long-time resident of the area, raised significant concerns regarding the water flow and topography issues connected to the potential police station development in the locality. She highlighted the challenges posed by the area's solid clay ground, which exacerbates drainage problems. Amanda explained that excessive water flow resulting from land disruptions can severely impact the functionality of private sewage systems, particularly drain fields. She shared personal experiences, noting the financial burden she endured when faced with a failing system. She stressed the importance of proper evaluation of the drainage impact on existing systems before proceeding with any further developments. Amanda urged the Council to thoroughly consider these factors to prevent displacement and significant expense for residents due to compromised drainage fields resulting from increased waterflow in the development area.
- ◆ Sylvia Cole, a neighbor to the previous speakers, shared her challenging experience with septic system issues. She recounted the difficulties she encountered when attempting to connect her property to the city sewer system. During her attempts to address her septic issue, she approached City Planners under the guidance of Erin O'Connell, only to be informed that connection to the City's infrastructure was not feasible. Sylvia highlighted the extensive and costly steps she had to undertake to resolve her septic challenges, despite having a perfectly viable home on a half-acre plot adjacent to the proposed new police station site. During these interactions, City Planners initially suggested annexation into the City, requiring a \$1,200 fee. Sylvia and her partner were advised that this would allow them to connect to the sewer, much like her neighbor, Amanda. However, after discussions and before finalizing their payment, City Planners reversed their stance, stating the City's infrastructure was inadequate for new connections. They were consequently directed to pursue connection via a neighboring property's sewer line, which Sylvia felt was not a viable or fair solution. Ultimately, Sylvia had to hire an environmental specialist and navigate several procedural obstacles, costing \$40,000 to fix her septic system and avoid her home being condemned. She urged the Council to carefully consider the potential impact increased water drainage from new developments could have on existing residential properties, emphasizing the importance of protecting the neighboring community from similar ordeals in the future.
- ◆ Marci Sanders, a small business owner in the Riverfront District and a board member of the St. Helens Main Street Alliance, expressed concerns during the meeting about the forthcoming closure of the intersection at S. 1<sup>st</sup> and St. Helens streets. She emphasized the significance of

ensuring accommodations for customers and staff to safely and conveniently access businesses during the construction phase. Sanders highlighted the struggle of retail businesses in the area, which have already been impacted by two years of ongoing construction. She urged the Council to prioritize making parking accessible and to clearly communicate how people can navigate the area during the closure. Marci also acknowledged some efforts to promote businesses during this period but emphasized the need for practical solutions to support local businesses and their patrons in maintaining accessibility in the Riverfront District.

- ◆ Steve Toschi. Commented on the proposed resolution concerning media attendance at executive sessions. He began by stating that he had carefully read both the proposed resolution and the 2024 Attorney General's updated basis for the law, which underscores the significance of transparency and legal adherence in council activities. Toschi expressed concerns about ensuring the public remains lawfully attuned to the Council's proceedings and shared his decision to withdraw his media credentials since TownTalk Cafe is not currently covering news. This gesture reflected his commitment to maintaining transparency and integrity, adding that he would reapply for credentials if TownTalk Cafe resumed news reporting in the future.

Toschi suggested the Council reconsider the requirement for an organization to have a staff as a criterion for qualifying as news media, emphasizing that dedication to news dissemination should take precedence over organizational size. He highlighted the importance of accommodating individuals or smaller entities dedicated to regular news reporting, recommending that the staff requirement might not be logically linked to an organization's capacity to qualify as accountable news media. This nuanced perspective aimed to foster a more inclusive approach to determining media representation in executive sessions.

Moreover, Toschi recommended including KOHI as an approved media organization under the categories delineated by the City, specifically under radio stations. He acknowledged KOHI's longstanding service and engagement with the city since 1940, noting the consistent news coverage provided for over two decades by Marty, who runs the station. Toschi speculated on the likelihood that the inclusion of KOHI was anticipated for discussion, urging the Council to consider this local media outlet appropriately in its decision-making process. Thanking the Council, Toschi concluded his comments, reinforcing his advocacy for accessible, transparent, and inclusive practices concerning media participation in city council executive sessions.

## **DISCUSSION TOPICS**

### **1. Employee Length of Service Recognition - Sam Ortiz (5 Years)**

Mayor Massey recognized Sam Ortiz for his service to the City. Ortiz started working with the City on January 13, 2020, as the Pretreatment Coordinator and continues to serve in that role.

### **2. Recognition of Police Officers Johnathon Sprinzi and Brandon Haflich for Successfully Passing their Probationary Period and Announcement of Training Opportunity for a Sergeant - Acting Police Chief Joe Hogue**

Acting Chief Hogue recognized Officers Johnathon Sprinzel and Brandon Haflich for successfully passing their probationary period. Hogue highlighted the challenges faced by these officers due to COVID-related delays in academy training and praised their perseverance and positive attitudes. He noted that both officers are now successfully patrolling on their own.

Acting Chief Hogue announced that Sergeant Jose Castilleja had been approved to attend the FBI National Academy. He emphasized the significance of this achievement, noting that only about 1% of officers in the United States are selected for this program.

### **3. Annual Report from City Auditor - *Conor Delaney of Clear Trails CPAS***

Conor Delaney, senior manager in charge of fieldwork for the City's 2023-2024 financial audit, presented the annual audit report. Key points from his presentation included:

- The audit resulted in an unmodified opinion, which is the best opinion that can be provided on financial statements.
- The auditors found the City to be in compliance with state regulations regarding budget adoption and other financial matters, with only minor comments regarding a few over-budget line items in the general fund.
- The federal audit, required due to significant federal funding received by the city, was clean with no issues reported.
- Delaney highlighted upcoming changes in governmental accounting standards and provided comments on best practices, including a recommendation to ensure adequate staffing in the Finance Division to keep up with evolving regulations and compliance requirements.

Council members expressed appreciation for the comprehensive report and commended the Finance Division, particularly Finance Director Butsch, for their good work in supporting the audit.

### **4. Financial Report for Second Quarter of Fiscal Year 2024-25 - *Finance Director Gloria Butsch***

Finance Director Butsch presented the financial report for the second quarter of the fiscal year 2024-25. She highlighted the addition of the tourism fund to the report due to increased community interest. Butsch noted that Spirit of Halloweentown performed well despite the short turnaround time, and the interfund loan used to open the account had been repaid more quickly than anticipated. She invited questions from the Council members and offered to add additional information to future reports based on their interests or community concerns.

### **5. Annual Report from City Forester - *Brent Keller of Mason, Bruce & Girard***

Brett Keller presented the annual report on the City's forest management. Key points from his presentation included:

- The highlight of the 2024 forest program was the sale of the Section 20 timber sale, which is expected to generate approximately \$1.5 million in revenue over a two-year contract.
- Reforestation efforts were conducted in the first part of the year, with plans to continue in 2025.
- A pre-commercial thinning project is planned for 80 acres of 20–21-year-old trees.
- The current timber market shows strong prices, with expectations for continued strength due to limited supply.
- The city's forest management plan is being finalized and will be presented to the Council in the coming months.
- Keller discussed the sustainable harvest rate and current harvesting practices, noting that the City has been harvesting slightly above the sustainable rate in recent years.

Council members asked questions about replanting strategies, fire breaks, and balancing timber harvesting with recreational use of areas like Salmonberry. Keller addressed these concerns and expressed willingness to further discuss a formal plan for balancing various uses of the forest land.

### **6. Request from Columbia County Habitat for Humanity - *Executive Director Jennifer Anderson***

Jennifer Anderson, Executive Director of Columbia County Habitat for Humanity, and Anna Dahlman, Construction Project Coordinator, presented a request to the Council. Anderson provided an overview of their organization's work, including:

- Home building projects
- Critical home repairs
- Ramp construction

- IDA (Individual Development Account) program management
- USDA loan packaging assistance

Anderson requested a 50% reduction in SDCs (System Development Charges) for their upcoming project in St. Helens, citing the small size of the planned house and the disproportionate impact of flat fees on smaller structures. She also asked for a waiver of the sidewalk fee in lieu, which the City has historically granted for Habitat projects.

The Council expressed support for Habitat for Humanity's work and agreed to move the request to the evening meeting for further discussion and potential action.

### **7. Semi-Annual Library Department Report - *Library Director Suzanne Bishop***

Library Director Bishop presented a comprehensive report on the Library's activities and achievements.

Key points included:

- Increased building visits, up 24% from the previous year
- Expansion of the makerspace and its growing popularity
- Diverse programming for all age groups, including youth services, adult programs, and special events
- Partnerships with community organizations and volunteers
- Upcoming projects, including the biannual genealogy conference and summer library challenge
- Staffing overview and recent training initiatives
- New services, such as the distribution of Narcan and small business resources

Council members expressed appreciation for the library's efforts and the comprehensive nature of the report.

### **8. Review Proposal from Mason, Bruce & Girard for Forestry Management Services - *City Administrator John Walsh***

City Administrator Walsh explained that a Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued for forest management services as a best practice. Mason, Bruce & Girard was the only respondent. Given their outstanding performance over the past 20 years, Walsh recommended approving their contract at the evening meeting. The contract is based on a time and materials fee schedule.

### **9. Discussion regarding Stipends for Council Members**

Contracted City Attorney Wigod provided information on conflict-of-interest rules regarding Council compensation. Key points included:

- Council members cannot vote on changes to their own compensation due to conflict-of-interest laws.
- Changes to Council compensation typically require a charter amendment or voter approval.
- The current stipend structure, which is indexed to the county commissioner's salary, does not present a conflict of interest when approving the budget as it is already established.

Mayor Massey clarified that she intends to donate her stipend to a nonprofit organization but is not seeking to change the overall structure of council compensation.

### **10. Review Proposed Changes to Executive Session Media Attendance Policy**

Contracted City Attorney Wigod presented a draft policy for executive session news media attendance.

Key points of the presentation included:

- Background on the state law regarding media attendance at executive sessions
- Explanation of the Attorney General's guidance on defining representatives of news media
- Proposed updates to the City's policy to incorporate the Attorney General's guidance
- New application process and timeline for media representatives seeking to attend executive sessions



Council members asked for clarification on certain points and expressed appreciation for the thorough research and presentation. No action was taken, as this was a draft for discussion.

**11. Report from City Administrator John Walsh**

Walsh requested to hold his report until the evening meeting due to time constraints.

**ADJOURN – 5:10 p.m.**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- Real Property Transactions, under ORS 192.660(2)(e)
- Consider Information or Records that are Exempt by Law from Public Inspection, under ORS 19.660(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:

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Kathy Payne, City Recorder

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Jennifer Massey, Mayor

# City of St. Helens CITY COUNCIL

Executive Session Summary

February 5, 2025

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**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  
Acting Police Chief Joe Hogue

**Others:** Ashley Wigod, City Attorney with Jordan Ramis PC  
Akin Blitz, City Labor Attorney  
Jim Band, Investigator  
Kaelyn Cassidy, Columbia County Spotlight  
Maxine Bernstein, Oregonian



At 5:16 p.m., Mayor Massey opened the Executive Session pursuant to the ORS numbers listed below and then gave Council roll call including staff and others present. 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.

*I failed to turn on the mic and video up to this point.*

- **Real Property Transactions, under ORS 192.660(2)(e)**
  - Nothing was discussed under this statute.
- **Consider Information or Records that are Exempt by Law from Public Inspection, under ORS 192.660(2)(f)**
  - Discussion regarding Police Chief Brian Greenway investigation.
- **Consult with Legal Counsel & Potential/Pending Litigation, under ORS 192.660(2)(h)**
  - Nothing was discussed under this statute.

The Executive Session was adjourned at 6:03 p.m.



ATTEST:

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Kathy Payne, City Recorder

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Jennifer Massey, Mayor

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



# COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Wednesday, February 05, 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 Pane, City Recorder  
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder  
Jacob Graichen, City Planner  
Joe Hogue, Acting Police Chief  
Ashley Wigod, Contracted City Attorney

### OTHERS

Arthur	Jenn	Adrienne Linton, Mackenzie
Jared P.	Joe	Jeff Humphreys, Mackenzie
Melody Sexton	Erin	Brian Varricchione, Mackenzie
CH	Brady Preheim	Jane Garcia
Paul Carroll	Jenni Gilbert	Steve LeSollen
Janet LeSollen	Doug Walker	Shirley Walker
Treadway		

### CALL REGULAR SESSION TO ORDER – 7:30 p.m.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Massey introduced a new tradition of recognizing hometown heroes. She gave City Recorder Kathy Payne the honor of introducing her father, Douglas Walker, as the hometown hero for this session.

Kathy Payne introduced her father, Doug Walker, a veteran and patriot living in St. Helens for the past twenty years. She detailed his service in the United States Marine Corps, including his deployment to Vietnam and his honorable discharge as a sergeant E-5 in 1966. Payne highlighted Walker's involvement in various veteran support activities, including Run for the Wall, the Alaska Airlines Fallen Soldier Car Escort, and his participation in laying a wreath at the tomb of the unknown soldier at Arlington National Cemetery. She also mentioned his local involvement as Vice President of the Hometown Heroes of Columbia County and as a volunteer driver for the VA.

Doug Walker then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

- ◆ Brady Preheim. Addressed concerns about Mayor Massey, suggesting she should apologize for previous actions. He remarked that it was surprising to hear about someone being blackballed from the Elks and emphasized the need for accountability. Preheim also expressed significant concerns regarding the building site location, emphasizing that public input is crucial. He was skeptical about the projected cost of the police station, suggesting that an initial cost estimate of \$11 million seemed unrealistic and could potentially be double or triple the amount. Lastly, he criticized how funds were allocated, questioning a council member's decision to donate to their own nonprofit and suggesting that they could instead consider giving to an established organization like Kiwanis.
  
- ◆ Adam St. Pierre. clarified that his organization had nothing to do with the nonprofit mentioned by the previous speaker, explaining that it was started by the Zuber family. He stated, "Our organization has absolutely nothing to do with that," emphasizing that he had no knowledge of what they would do with the money. Adam expressed his appreciation for the new procedure of having a hometown hero perform the pledge of allegiance, noting that it was a positive change. He specifically thanked Doug Walker for his service, saying, "Thank you for your service, not only while you're in, but after you got out."

**ORDINANCES** – *First Reading*

1. **Ordinance No. 3307:** An Ordinance Amending the St. Helens Municipal Code Chapters 17.16, 17.32, 17.80, and 17.96 Pertaining to Oregon House Bill 3395 (2023) Regarding Single Room Occupancies, and Other Housekeeping Amendments

Mayor Massey read Ordinance No. 3307 by title. The final reading will be at next meeting.

City Planner Jacob Graichen briefly explained that this ordinance was related to accommodations for housekeeping discussed in a previous meeting. He noted that there was less material than initially thought.

**AWARD BID/CONTRACT**

2. Accept Bid and Award Contract to Mason, Bruce & Girard for Forestry Management Services

**Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Hubbard to approve '2' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

**CONSENT AGENDA FOR ACCEPTANCE**

3. Parks & Trails Commission Minutes dated December 9, 2024
4. Library Board Minutes dated December 9, 2024

**Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to approve '3' and '4' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

**CONSENT AGENDA FOR APPROVAL**

5. OLCC Licenses
6. Accounts Payable Bill Lists

**Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to approve '5' and '6' above. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

**WORK SESSION ACTION ITEMS****Habitat for Humanity Request**

**Motion:** Motion made by Councilor Gundersen and seconded by Council President Chilton to waive the sidewalk fee and reduce SDCs by 50%.

City Planner Graichen explained the typical process for street frontage improvements and the option of a fee in lieu of construction. He noted that waiving the fee would mean no funds would be added to the pool for frontage improvements elsewhere in the city.

Councilor Gundersen expressed concerns about setting a precedent and the impact on the City's budget. Mayor Massey inquired about the frequency of such requests and whether other nonprofit housing organizations had made similar requests.

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

**Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Sundeen to waive the sidewalk fee. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

**Release of Chief Brian Greenway Report**

**Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to release the redacted report.

Council discussed the release of Chief Brian Greenway's report. The discussion focused on whether to redact names or release the full report. Councilor Hubbard suggested releasing a redacted version, supported by Mayor Massey, Councilor Sundeen, and Council President Chilton, emphasizing transparency while protecting individual privacy.

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

**Police Station Project**

**Motion:** Motion made by Council President Chilton and seconded by Councilor Gundersen to direct site to pursue the Columbia Blvd. location for the police station. **Vote:** Yea: Mayor Massey, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen

**COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS**

Councilor Sundeen reported on the upcoming Parks and Trails Commission meeting and thanked everyone for their participation in last Friday's session.

Council President Chilton shared information from the City County Dinner she attended, discussing FEMA and floodplain issues. She also commended Public Works for their efforts during recent weather events. She read a letter from the St. Helens Senior Center Board of Directors, clarifying information about their finances and operations.

Councilor Gundersen mentioned upcoming Planning Commission and Columbia River PUD Board meetings.

Councilor Hubbard is waiting for the Planning Commission meeting next week.

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

- The senior center situation and meal program
- The recent Council Work Session and Strategic Planning Session

- Approval of a School Resource Officer (SRO) by the school district
- The Central Waterfront project
- Project Arcadia extension agreement
- Treadway events planning, including July 4th activities, Spirit of Halloweentown, and Citizens Day in the Park
- Dock repairs and Marine Board grant
- Reservoir project and request for proposals
- Business access during downtown construction
- City Day at the Capitol and meetings with state representatives
- Development interest in the riverfront and mill site
- Substation project contract documents

**MAYOR MASSEY REPORT**

Mayor Massey thanked staff and fellow Council members for their work and open dialogue. She discussed her attendance at the City County Dinner and the importance of planning for Oregon's 250th celebration. Mayor Massey also expressed appreciation for the recent strategic planning session and the positive relationship with the City Administrator.

**OTHER BUSINESS****ADJOURN – 8:21 p.m.**

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

ATTEST:

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Kathy Payne, City Recorder

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Jennifer Massey, Mayor



# JOINT CITY COUNCIL & PLANNING COMMISSION

Wednesday, February 05, 2025

## DRAFT MINUTES

### MEMBERS PRESENT

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

Chair Jennifer Shoemaker  
Commissioner Scott Jacobson  
Commissioner David B. Rosengard  
Commissioner Brooke Sisco

### MEMBERS ABSENT

Commissioner Charles Castner  
Commissioner Reid Herman

### STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator  
Kathy Pane, City Recorder  
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder  
Jacob Graichen, City Planner  
Joe Hogue, Acting Police Chief  
Ashley Wigod, Contracted City Attorney

### OTHERS

Arthur	Jenn	Adrienne Linton, Mackenzie
Jared P.	Joe	Jeff Humphreys, Mackenzie
Melody Sexton	Erin	Brian Varricchione, Mackenzie
CH	Brady Preheim	Jane Garcia
Paul Carroll	Jenni Gilbert	Steve LeSollen
Janet LeSollen	Doug Walker	Shirley Walker

### CALL SPECIAL SESSION TO ORDER – 6:12 p.m.

### DISCUSSION TOPICS

- 1. Discuss Potential Sites for the New Police Station at 1771 Columbia Blvd. and 2675 Gable Road, generally**

#### Overview of Project History

City Administrator Walsh introduced the topic of the new police station, noting that it had been a difficult and long-running process to find a suitable location. The project had been the subject of many meetings and discussions about priorities and locations.



Commissioner Shoemaker mentioned that she was the only Planning Commission member who had been involved from the beginning and asked if clarification was needed for the other Planning Commissioners.

City Administrator Walsh explained that they would be going through the presentation given at the last Planning Commission meeting, with Mackenzie leading the discussion.

### **Existing Police Station Conditions**

Adrienne Linton presented an overview of the current police station conditions. The existing facility is approximately 2,000 square feet and houses 24 people, including 21 sworn officers. Adrienne also highlighted the challenges of working in such a small space, comparing it to a standard residential house.

The presentation included photos of the interior, showcasing:

- A multipurpose room used for briefings, breaks, conferences, and evidence processing
- Uniform storage in an uncontrolled area
- A small break room with limited amenities
- An evidence room with makeshift storage solutions

Adrienne emphasized the importance of proper evidence storage for maintaining the chain of custody in police cases and noted that the current setup might not meet accreditation standards.

### **Potential Sites Overview**

Brian Varrichione presented a map showing four different sites:

1. 1771 Columbia Boulevard
2. Gable Road (former high school site)
3. Existing police station off Columbia Boulevard
4. Old Portland Road and Kaster Road site (for context)

The discussion focused on the sites one and two as the primary options for the new police station.

### **1771 Columbia Boulevard Site**

Brian provided details about the Columbia Boulevard site:

- Just over an acre in size
- Frontage on four streets: S. 17<sup>th</sup> Street, S. 18<sup>th</sup> Street, Columbia Boulevard, and Cowlitz Street
- An existing sanitary sewer pipe runs through the middle of the site, which would need relocation
- Zoning: Northern quarter is in the Houlton Business District zone, southern three-quarters zoned as General Commercial
- Estimated construction cost: \$11,200,000 (including site preparation, sewer relocation, and street improvements)

City Planner Graichen recommended rezoning the entire site to a zone that clearly lists public safety facilities as an allowed use.

### **Gable Road Site**

Brian presented information about the Gable Road site:

- 17 acres in size
- Owned by the School District
- Two lots are within city limits, one additional lot to the west is in Columbia County (not yet annexed)
- Current zoning: Apartment Residential
- Estimated construction cost: \$10,800,000 (including site preparation and improvements to Alder Street)
- Wetlands present on a portion of the site

Graichen recommended rezoning to General Residential (R5), which would allow public safety facilities with a Conditional Use Permit.

### **Site Comparison and Ranking Exercise**

Jeff Humphreys led the Council and Commission through a ranking exercise for both sites based on 18 different criteria. The criteria included factors such as cost of land, size of site, public access, visibility, traffic congestion, and proximity to other government functions.

After the ranking exercise, the results were:

- Columbia Boulevard site: 288 points
- Gable Road site: 202 points

The exercise revealed a clear preference for the Columbia Boulevard site among the participants.

### **Discussion and Concerns**

Several key points were raised during the discussion:

- The importance of public involvement in the decision-making process
- Potential impact on property values for neighboring residences at the Gable Road site
- The need for a new police station due to the poor conditions of the current facility
- Concerns about the wetlands and annexation process for the Gable Road site
- The potential benefits of having the police station in a more central, civic location on Columbia Boulevard

### **Next Steps**

City Administrator Walsh noted that staff had been looking for direction and was eager to move forward with the project. However, it was clarified that no formal decisions could be made during this joint meeting. The data and discussion from this meeting will be used by the City Council to contemplate their decision-making in a future session.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **ADJOURN – 7:26 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

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Kathy Payne, City Recorder

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Jennifer Massey, Mayor