



Urban Renewal Agency Budget Committee

Thursday, May 16, 2024, at 6:00 PM

Draft - Minutes

Members Present

Mayor Rick Scholl
Council President Jessica Chilton
Councilor Mark Gundersen
Councilor Russell Hubbard
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

Chair Lew Mason
Committee Member Ivan Salas
Committee Member Jennifer Gilbert
Committee Member Jennifer Massey
Committee Member Steve Toschi

Staff Present

Gloria Butsch, Finance Director - Budget Officer
John Walsh, City Administrator – URA Administrator
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner / Community Development Project Manager / URA Secretary
Jamie Edwards, Accountant II- Budget Committee Secretary
Jennifer Johnson, Accountant III

Others Present

Brady Preheim

Call to Order

6:00 PM. Called to Order

Introductions

Finance Director Gloria Butsch started the meeting with a roundtable of introductions.

URA Overview

Butsch advised this is the Urban Renewal Agency (URA) Budget Meeting. She reiterated that the Council serves as the URA board and explained the role of the budget committee, which is to review, discuss, make adjustments and deletions, and approve the budget presided by the Budget Officer.

City Administrator John Walsh gave an overview the URA history. Walsh further explained the URA process using the veneer property as an example. He described how the tax base is frozen on the day the district is formed, and any increment above that is captured as URA revenue.

Election of Budget Chair

Motion made by Committee Member Jennifer Massey, to appoint Committee Member Lew Mason as Chair, seconded by Councilor Mark Gundersen.

Voting Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen, Vice Chair Mason, Committee Member Salas, Committee Member Gilbert, Committee Member Massey, Committee Member Toschi

Approval of Minutes

3. Approval of Minutes 1/5/2022 URA Budget Committee Meeting

Motion made by Mayor Scholl, to approve the minutes from January 5, 2022, seconded by Councilor Gundersen.

Voting Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen, Vice Chair Mason, Committee Member Salas, Committee Member Gilbert, Committee Member Massey

Voting Abstaining: Committee Member Steve Toschi

Budget Message

Busch presented the URA budget message and proposed budget for fiscal year 2025. She highlighted that this would be the first year since the formation of the SHURA where funds would be appropriated in categories other than contingency. The proposed budget appropriates \$3 million in capital outlay to support the Riverfront District Streets and Utilities Extension Project and Phase 1 of the Riverwalk Project.

Butsch explained that the maximum indebtedness for the URA is \$62 million, and by June 30, 2025, the amount used is expected to be \$17,546,875. She noted that the agency is projected to receive less than forecasted property tax revenue for fiscal years 2024 and 2025 due to the departure of Cascades Tissue. However, staff are optimistic about potential improvements in the financial outlook due to private investment on the city's waterfront redevelopment project, reactivation at the mill site, and reactivation at the former Armstrong World Industries site.

Butsch also mentioned that the City may request reimbursement of expenses from previous years related to the agency in the future. She recommended adopting the budget on an annual basis until there is stability in the city's industrial area.

Public Comment on Proposed URA Budget

Chair Mason opened public comments. Public comments were received by Brady Preheim who expressed concern about the \$3 million allocation, stating that urban renewal is essentially a district that is bankrupt due to lower revenues than when the district started. He cautioned against relying on fantasies of things happening and counting money before it materializes.

Walsh responded and directed the Committee to the packet document showing updated revenue forecast.

Discussion and Approval for FY 2024/2025 URA Budget

Mason asked about timelines and if there have been any prospective developers. Chilton advised there have been interested buyers.

Motion made by Committee Member Ivan Salas, to approve the FY2024-2025 Budget for the City of St. Helens Urban Renewal Agency in the amount of \$ 3,650,954 and approve that the Agency levy the maximum incremental tax revenue as provided under State law. Seconded by Committee Member Gilbert.

Voting Yea: Mayor Scholl, Council President Chilton, Councilor Gundersen, Councilor Hubbard, Councilor Sundeen, Vice Chair Mason, Committee Member Salas, Committee Member Gilbert, Committee Member Massey, Committee Member Toschi

Adjournment at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Jamie Edwards, Accountant III with assisted transcription by ClerkMintues.