

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**CITY OF EAST HELENA**  
**CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN – ROOM 108 (GYMNASIUM)**  
**PUBLIC HEARING & COUNCIL MEETING: 7:00 PM**  
**DATE: TUESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2021**  
**INTERNET ZOOM MEETING: <https://zoom.us/j/8976327748>**  
**CONFERENCE CALL-IN: 1-301-715-8592 MEETING ID: 897 632 7748**

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:** Mayor Schell called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM. Councilmember Harris led the Pledge of Allegiance. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only legally required and essential agenda items were to be considered. Masks and physical distancing were required for those in attendance at City Hall.

**CITY OFFICIALS & STAFF PRESENT:** Mayor James Schell, Councilmember Wesley Feist, Councilmember Don Dahl, Councilmember Judy Leland, Councilmember Kelly Harris, Public Works Director Kevin Ore, Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren, Police Chief William Harrington, City Attorney Pete Elverum, and Fire Chief Troy Maness (via Zoom)

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** Greg Wirth (via Zoom), Betty Blankenship, and Tammy Reich

**ABSENT/EXCUSED:** City Judge Dennis Loveless

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** There was no public comment on non-agenda items.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

1. **Create Highland Meadows Subdivision Special Improvement Lighting District 101** – The public notice and draft Resolution 547 were in the council packet. City Attorney Elverum recapped the process of creating the SID. This was an information-only item.
2. **Create Highland Meadows Subdivision Special Improvement Lighting District 101** – Mayor Schell called three times each for public comment in favor of, opposed to, and neutral toward the proposed SID. Greg Wirth of Stahly Engineering spoke in favor of the lighting district in Highland Meadows subdivision.
3. **Create Highland Meadows Subdivision Special Improvement Lighting District 101, Resolution 547** – Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve Resolution 547 creating Special Improvement Lighting District 101. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

1. **Resolution to Create Vigilante Subdivision Special Improvement Lighting District 201** – The public notice, draft Resolution 548, and the agreement with NorthWestern Energy were in the council packet. City Attorney Elverum briefly summarized the process of creating the SID. This was an information-only item.
2. **Resolution to Create Vigilante Subdivision Special Improvement Lighting District 201** – Mayor Schell called three times each for public comment in favor of, opposed to, and neutral toward the proposed SID for Vigilante subdivision and received none.
3. **Resolution to Create Vigilante Subdivision Special Improvement Lighting District 201, Resolution 548** - Councilmember Harris made a motion to approve Resolution 548 creating Special Improvement Lighting District 201. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The draft minutes of the January 5, 2021 meeting were in the council packet. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

**CITY COURT REPORT:** City Judge Dennis Loveless was excused. A written report is expected at the next meeting.

**DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:**

**Administration** – Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren reported that she had submitted the final request for CARES Act funding and that Strom & Associates were currently auditing FY20.

**Police Department** – A letter of partner commitment with Lewis & Clark Public Health’s Suicide Prevention Program for Lewis & Clark Public Health’s MHAT grant application from Police Chief William Harrington was on the council table. He reported that Officer Palumbo was attending Montana Law Enforcement Academy and that his department was being audited by the Criminal Justice Information Network (CJIN).

**Public Works** - Public Works Director Kevin Ore reported on the damage from the windstorm. He said he would be meeting with Brad Koenig of Robert Peccia & Associates to go over the initial drawings of the new water tank.

**Volunteer Fire Department** - Fire Chief Troy Maness had not yet arrived via Zoom. Mayor Schell said that he would include the VFD’s by-laws in next meeting’s packet.

- 1.) **Approval of Elected Officers for 2021: Chief Troy Maness, Assistant Chief Joe Maness, Deputy Chief Grabinski** - There was no public comment. Councilmember Harris made a motion to approve all three VFD officers. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

1. **East Helena Cemetery Future Cost Analysis** – City Attorney Elverum updated Council on his progress. This was an information-only item.
2. **Montana Environmental Trust Group New Public Water Supply Well Agreement** – Public Works Director Ore reported that there were no new updates. Mayor Schell noted that there is still work to be done on the water rights with the METG contractor and the DNRC. This was an information-only item.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **Helena Street Rodders Car Show in Kennedy Park East Helena Rodeo Weekend** – Betty Blankenship and Tammy Reich were present to request the free use of Kennedy Park and a blanket business license for the event. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the request on the condition that COVID-19 restrictions are observed. Councilmember Harris seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
2. **East Helena School District Letter of Support for Walking Trail for FWP 2021 Recreational Trails Program Grant** – The draft letter and a map of the area were in the council packet. Mayor Schell read the letter aloud. Council discussed the location of the trail in the easements and rights-of-way. There was no public comment. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve the letter with the addition of the condition “that the specific design of the trail system will be reviewed and approved by the city at the specific locations where any city rights-of-way and/or easements are crossed.” Councilmember Harris seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
3. **East Helena School District Letter of Support for Sidewalk Project for MDT TA Grant** – A map with the proposed location of the sidewalk was in the council packet. Council discussed the history of TA sidewalk grants in the city. The letter is forthcoming. There was no public comment. Councilmember Leland made a motion to table. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

4. **Lewis & Clark Public Letter of Partner Commitment for Health Mental Health Awareness Training (MHAT) Grant** – The template for the letter was in the council packet. The draft letter was on the council table. Mayor Schell discussed his changes to the last paragraph. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
5. **Roads & Streets: Streets Maintenance Program Implementation** – A map of city streets was in the council packet. Public Works Director Ore presented the Street Safety Committee’s recommendation to implement a multi-year street maintenance program to address repairs and maintenance on Gail, Riggs, Morton, 1<sup>st</sup>, Thurman, Clinton, Porter, and Kalispell. The focus of the improvements are the priority routes within the city. There was no public comment. Councilmember Harris made a motion to approve. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
6. **Roads & Streets: FY21 Asphalt Repair & Chip Seal Budget Allocation** – A detailed list of chip-sealing projects and their cost estimates (including savings) was in the council packet. Public Works Director Ore explained the need for each project and where the money for them was located in the budget. There was no public comment. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to fix the roads. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
7. **Roads & Streets: Transportation Review & Evaluation Program Implementation** – The draft traffic study was in the council packet. Public Works Director Ore presented the Street Safety Committee’s recommendation to implement the stop-sign placement in the visionary transportation system and the functional classification of streets that has been engineered by Robert Peccia & Associates. There was no public comment. Councilmember Harris made a motion to approve. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
8. **NLC Service Line Warranty Program for Water and Sewer Line Insurance** – The draft agreement, Whitefish’s draft agreement, and a letter of endorsement from the Montana League of Cities & Towns was in the council packet. Council compared NLC’s service line warranty program with a homeowner’s insurance rider. There was no public comment. Councilmember Leland made a motion to table pending further clarification. Councilmember Harris seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
9. **National Boy Scout Day February 8<sup>th</sup> Proclamation** – A letter of request from Venturing Crew 2206 and a copy of the proclamation were in the council packet. Mayor Schell read the proclamation aloud. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the proclamation. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

**MAYOR’S REPORT:** Mayor Schell included the following handouts in the council packet:

- 1.) Montana State Fund letter & attachment dated December 31, 2020, informing Deputy Clerk Julia Shannon that the City of East Helena has earned a 2020 WorkSafe Champion Elite designation and been awarded a grant for a requested drinking fountain bottle fill addition.
- 2.) Montana Department of Transportation letter and attachment received January 14, 2021, informing the City of the 2021 Bridge and Road Safety and Accountability Program (BaRSAA)/HB 473 Fuel Tax Allocation of \$53,801.29.
- 3.) Letter and attachments from the Helena Regional Airport Authority received January 14, 2021 regarding their Community Air Service 2021 program.
- 4.) January 15, 2021 Carroll College SARS-CoV-2 Wastewater Testing result graphs from the latest samples for the City of East Helena & Helena.

The following handouts were on the council table:

- 1.) Phase 1B Tiers for COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution.
- 2.) Montana Historic Preservation Grant report.

Mayor Schell reported that the AARP Fitlot expert would be at the next council meeting and that he had testified at the legislature for the Fireman’s Rec Hall Montana Historic Preservation Grant.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS' REPORTS:**

**Don Dahl** reported that he had attended the Ethics training and the Street Safety Committee meeting.  
**Wesley Feist** reported that he had attended the Ethics training.  
**Kelly Harris** reported that he had attended the Ethics training and the Street Safety Committee meeting.  
**Judy Leland** reported that she had attended the Ethics training.

**LEGAL REPORTS:** City Attorney Elverum reported that he had been keeping busy with the police department and the court and that the cemetery district was moving to the top of his to-do list.

**PAYMENT OF BILLS:** Claims 293489 through 293513 were presented for Council's review. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to pay the bills. Councilmember Harris seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

**SPECIAL MEETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

1. Growth Policy Update – Planning Board Meeting, Tuesday, February 9, 2021, 6PM, Council Chambers Room 110

**MEETING SCHEDULE:**

1. East Helena Council Meeting, Tuesday, February 2, 2021, 7PM, City Hall Room 108 (Gym)
2. East Helena Council Meeting, Tuesday, February 16, 2021, 7PM, City Hall Room 108 (Gym)
3. East Helena Council Water Rate Work Session, Tuesday, February 26, 2021, 5:30PM, City Council Rm 110

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mayor Schell adjourned the meeting at 8:36 PM.

ATTEST:

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Clerk/Treasurer

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Mayor