

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF EAST HELENA
CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN – ROOM 108 (GYMNASIUM)
COUNCIL MEETING: 7:00 PM
DATE: TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 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 7:03 PM. Councilmember Leland led the Pledge of Allegiance. Masks and physical distancing were required for those in attendance at City Hall.

CITY OFFICIALS & STAFF PRESENT: Mayor James Schell, Councilmember Wesley Feist, Councilmember Judy Leland, Councilmember Kelly Harris, Public Works Director Kevin Ore, Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren, City Attorney Pete Elverum, Fire Chief Troy Maness (via Zoom), and Councilmember Don Dahl arrived (via Zoom) during Unfinished Business #4

PUBLIC PRESENT: Dave Jensen, and Chris Averill (via Amanda Kaster’s Zoom)

ABSENT/EXCUSED: City Judge Dennis Loveless

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The draft minutes of the March 2, 2021 meeting were in the council packet. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Councilmember Harris seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

CITY COURT REPORT: A written report for the month of February 2021 by City Judge Dennis Loveless was in the council packet.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Administration – Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren reported that the quarterly entitlement share and wind damage insurance settlements had been received.

Police Department – Mayor Schell announced that Chief Harrington had resigned.

Public Works - Public Works Director Kevin Ore reported that the cardboard recycling bins now located next to the post office may need to be discontinued or relocated due to the inordinate amount of time the public works crew spends cleaning the area, the annual Spring Cleanup was scheduled for May 3rd through 7th, and that he would be scheduling a meeting with the pool manager in preparation for pool opening.

Volunteer Fire Department - Fire Chief Troy Maness reported that Missouri River Brewing would host recruitment nights for the department and that he would present potential locations for a second fire station to Council.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. **East Helena Cemetery Future Cost Analysis** – City Attorney Elverum said he would have an update at the next meeting. There was no public comment. This was an information-only item.
2. **Montana Environmental Trust Group New Public Water Supply Well Agreement** – The 2019 draft agreement was in the council packet for reference. Mayor Schell reported that as planned the test well was drilled and a successful pump test was performed. He noted that the pump test was performed with no water in the canal. A new agreement with the current well location should be

forthcoming from the METG. There was no public comment. Councilmember Harris made a motion to table. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

3. **NRDP East Helena Water Systems Improvements Agreement** – The draft agreement with the proposed NRDP and insurance provider changes was in the council packet. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve. Councilmember Harris seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
4. **Delinquent Utility Bill Payment Late Fee & Water Shutoff Reimplementation** – An updated delinquent account report and the COVID-19 emergency payment plan application were on the council table. Council discussed the need to give plenty of notice before reimplementing late fees and shutoffs. There was no public comment. Councilmember Harris made a motion to reimplement late fees and shutoffs at the end of May. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Farmers Market 2021, East Helena City Hall Parking Lot – July 13th through Sept 21st** – Relevant meeting minute excerpts from 2020 were in the council packet. Mayor Schell presented Dot Vieth’s request to once again hold the Tuesday market in the City Hall parking lot. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve use of the City Hall parking lot and a required single business license purchase for the event. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
2. **AARP Fitlot Fitness Park Location in Kennedy Park** – A map of the park was in the council packet. There was no public comment. Council discussed the current horseshoe pits as a possible location and a sidewalk for access from the parking lot. Councilmember Feist made a motion to move forward with the project pending future discussions. Councilmember Harris seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
3. **MMIA Employee Benefits Program FY22(2021/2022) Est. 2.4% Cost Increase Approval** –The memorandum with the benefits currently offered to employees, the early rate adjustment indication for FY22, current plan summaries, report of estimated cost increase by fund, Montana code regarding the permissive medical levy, and a sample determination of permissive medical levy for group benefits worksheet were on the council table. Council discussed increasing coverage to each employee to improve retention. There was no public comment. Councilmember Harris made a motion to table pending review of the financials for increased coverage and final rate determination by MMIA. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
4. **Missouri River Drug Task Force Memorandum of Understanding FY2022-FY2023** – The cover sheet and page one of the MOU were in the council packet which was available for review at city hall. City Attorney Elverum spoke in favor of it. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

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

- 1.) Public Notice for Wednesday, March 24, 2021, 7PM Planning Board Public Meeting for Growth Policy public input and public comment.
- 2.) Montana League of Cities & Towns American Rescue Plan summary sheet and spreadsheet listing estimated municipal and county federal funding distribution amounts.
- 3.) Lewis & Clark County Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority Press Release, FAQ Sheet, and draft County Resolution for joining the Rail Authority in Montana. Public Meeting scheduled for March 18, 2021 at 9 AM.
- 4.) Lewis & Clark County Public Health Supervisor’s March 10, 2021 email explaining the latest COVID-19 rules changes which include all regulations lifted except for masks.

5.) March 1, 2021 Carroll College SARS-CoV-2 Wastewater Testing result graphs from the latest samples for the City of East Helena & Helena.

Mayor Schell reported that the road known as Doug E Road near St. Ann's Cemetery has officially been named Cemetery Drive.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' REPORTS:

Don Dahl had nothing to report.

Wesley Feist reported that he would attend the May 4th meeting remotely.

Kelly Harris had nothing to report.

Judy Leland had nothing to report.

LEGAL REPORTS: City Attorney Elverum reported that he had been discussing candidate filing fees with the county elections office. He said he would bring options for staffing the police department to Council.

PAYMENT OF BILLS: Claims 293648 through 293674 were presented for Council's review. Councilmember Harris made a motion to pay the bills. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

SPECIAL MEETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Planning Board Meeting - Growth Policy Update, Wednesday, March 24, 2021, 7PM, City Hall Room 108 (Gym)

MEETING SCHEDULE:

1. East Helena Council Meeting, Tuesday, April 6, 2021, 7PM, City Hall Room 108 (Gym)
2. East Helena Council Meeting, Tuesday, April 20, 2021, 7PM, City Hall Room 108 (Gym)

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Schell adjourned the meeting at 8:07 PM.

ATTEST:

Clerk/Treasurer

Mayor