

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**CITY OF EAST HELENA**  
**CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN – ROOM 108 (GYMNASIUM)**  
**COUNCIL MEETING: 7:00 PM**  
**DATE: TUESDAY, APRIL 6, 2021**  
**INTERNET ZOOM MEETING: <https://zoom.us/j/8976327748>**  
**CONFERENCE CALL-IN: 1-301-715-8592 MEETING ID: 897 632 7748**

The unveiling ceremony for the new Little Free Library built by Pack 212 Scout Caleb Madsen took place prior to the council meeting. Lewis & Clark Library East Helena Branch Librarian Andrea Eckerson spoke in favor of his Eagle Scout project. Authors and East Helena residents Ken and Vicky Soderberg spoke about the importance of books and thanked Scout Madsen for his work.

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:** Mayor Schell called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM. Councilmember Dahl 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 Don Dahl, 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 City Engineer Brad Koenig

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** Helen Fandrich, Mary Hollow (via Zoom), Bradi Watkins (via Zoom) and Dave Jensen

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

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Referencing the Little Free Library unveiling ceremony, Helen Fandrich recounted her experiences with the library since moving to East Helena area in 1972.

**PROCLAMATION:** Mayor Schell read the proclamation aloud during the unveiling of the Little Free Library that had preceded the council meeting. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to proclaim the week of April 4<sup>th</sup> through April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021 National Library Week. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

**PRESENTATION:** Prickly Pear Land Trust Executive Director Mary Hollow presented an update on the status of the Prickly Pear Greenway and discussed the project with Council.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The draft minutes of the March 16, 2021 meeting were in the packet for Council's review. Councilmember Harris made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

**CITY COURT REPORT:** A written report for the month of March 2021 by City Judge Dennis Loveless was on the council table.

**DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:**

**Administration** – A written report was in the council packet. Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren reported that the admin office has been receiving zoning and building permit applications for the new subdivisions and preparing to receive swimming lesson registrations.

**Police Department** – Mayor Schell reported that Patrol Officer Palumbo had graduated from the Montana Law Enforcement Academy and that he and Reserve Officer Morgan attended the graduation ceremony.

**Public Works** – A written report and a map of completed sewer-jetting locations were in the council packet. A letter from DEQ regarding the recent scheduled inspection was handed out. Public Works Director Kevin Ore reported that the minor violation items in the DEQ letter were being addressed and that he was working with Robert Peccia & Associates and Pioneer Technical to analyze sewer line status and recent road damage on the 200 block of East Pacific Street.

**Volunteer Fire Department** - Fire Chief Troy Maness reported that a transformer had started a fire on a power pole during a recent power outage event, that he was working on a presentation to the council for a new fire station, and that there would be car fire training in May.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

1. **Water Infrastructure Improvements Projects Update** – Engineer Brad Koenig reported that the construction of the new McClellan Creek water tank would be delayed because of contractor availability. He discussed with Council which infrastructure projects could be moved forward in the meantime and the need to review and implement planned water rate increases soon. There was no public comment. This was an information-only item.
2. **East Helena Cemetery Future Cost Analysis** – City Attorney Elverum had no update. Helen Fandrich asked for a recap of the progress-to-date. Mayor Schell said that the East Helena Cemetery Association had approached the City about taking over the cemetery and that Council had asked staff to research how it could be accomplished. This was an information-only item.
3. **Montana Environmental Trust Group New Public Water Supply Well Agreement** – Mayor Schell reported that an updated agreement was being drafted by METG. There was no public comment. This was an information-only item.
4. **AARP FitLot Fitness Park in Kennedy Park Agreement** – A packet of information and draft agreement were included in the council packet. Council discussed whether the fitness instructors mentioned in the grant agreement would be city employees or contractors. Mayor Schell clarified that he believes that they would be contractors. There was no public comment. Councilmember Leland made a motion to move forward with developing the contract. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
5. **MMIA Employee Benefits Program FY22(2021/2022) 0% Cost Increase, Possible City Employee Benefit Adjustment** – MMIA’s employee benefits renewal memo was in the council packet. Council discussed raising the City’s contribution to employee health benefits to match the cost of the Bridger plan, which would be an increase of \$25 per month for each eligible employee in FY22. There was no public comment. Councilmember Harris made a motion to fund employee health insurance benefits at the Bridger plan level starting in the FY22 budget. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **AARP Community Challenge Grant Application** – Information on the grant was included in the council packet. Council discussed various projects that could be accomplished with the grant funds. There was no public comment. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to apply for the grant to install ADA accessible picnic tables at JFK Park. Councilmember Harris seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
2. **Utility Easement Review and Possible Vacate 804 E. Groschell St.** – The 2011 encroachment agreement and 2001 and 2002 certificates of survey were in the council packet. Mayor Schell pointed out that the 2002 certificate of survey did not show this easement. The omission is preventing the homeowners from refinancing their house. Public Works Director Ore will have the utilities located and Mayor Schell will work on a solution with Zoning Officer Jeremy Fadness and Surveyor Tom Stark. There was no public comment. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to table. Councilmember Harris seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

3. **Montana Legislature 2021 Session Update** – The 67<sup>th</sup> Legislature’s updated calendar and list of bills that at a minimum had been signed by the senate president were in the council packet. An updated list was on the council table. Mayor Schell summarized the bills of interest to the city. There was no public comment. This was an information-only item.
4. **Request to Use Kennedy Park and Parking Area for A Regularly Scheduled Community Event**  
Bradi Watkins requested to use JFK Park for a regularly scheduled community event on Thursday evenings. Council discussed JFK Park and parking lot possibilities. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to table pending a more detailed proposal. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
5. **FY21 Budget Adjustment, Public Works, Sewer Operating Expenses** – An estimate from Dick Anderson Construction, Inc. and the FY21 sewer expenditure budget were in the council packet. Public Works Director Ore requested Council’s permission to reallocate funds in order to move forward with replacement of the two existing pump types with new types of reject pumps at the metals removal building. There was no public comment. Councilmember Harris made a motion to approve. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
6. **Montana Environmental Trust Group Monitoring Well Agreement** – The draft agreement was in the council packet. Mayor Schell said that the agreement formalizes and identifies which wells will be monitored. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve contingent upon City Attorney Elverum’s approval. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

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

- 1.) MSU Local Government Center Invitation to Attend 2021 Municipal Elected Officials Virtual Conference May 4-6, 2021.
- 2.) Montana Law Enforcement Academy flyer/handout from Tuesday, March 20<sup>th</sup> graduation ceremony which included City of East Helena Patrol Officer Michael Palumbo.
- 3.) March 29, 2021 SARS-CoV-2 Wastewater Testing result graphs from the latest samples for the City of East Helena & Helena.

Mayor Schell reported that Wylie Drive was closed for bridge repairs, that he had been working on grants, that he had received a request to lend out the ASARCO antique windows for a Jewish festival in Butte after they are complete with council approval, that Montana Propane had contracted out a certificate of survey for a boundary line relocation that will come before the council, that there would be a wastewater meeting on May 13<sup>th</sup> and water infrastructure will be added to that agenda, that the Jaycee Hall was scheduled to be torn down, that he was working on a potential RFP to revamp of building code process, and that he had received a call concerning litter.

**COUNCILMEMBERS’ REPORTS:**

**Don Dahl** reported that he had attended the Planning Board meeting and the growth policy public hearing. He said there would be another Planning Board meeting in June to go over any legislative changes.

**Wesley Feist** reported that he had attended the Planning Board meeting.

**Kelly Harris** reported that he had attended the Planning Board meeting.

**Judy Leland** reported that she had attended the Easter egg hunt.

**LEGAL REPORTS:** City Attorney Elverum reported that had been busy with items regarding the police department.

**PAYMENT OF BILLS:** Claims 293686 through 293758 were presented for Council’s review.

Councilmember Leland made a motion to pay the bills. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

**SPECIAL MEETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

1. Wylie Drive Closed to Through Traffic April 5<sup>th</sup> - April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at County Canal Bridge

**MEETING SCHEDULE:**

1. East Helena Council Meeting, Tuesday, April 20, 2021, 7PM, City Hall Room 108 (Gym)
2. East Helena Council Meeting and Public Hearing, Tuesday, April 20, 2021, 7PM, City Hall Room 108 (Gym) {Growth Policy Update Public Hearing}

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mayor Schell adjourned the meeting at 9:23 PM.

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk/Treasurer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor