

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF EAST HELENA
CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN – ROOM 108 (GYMNASIUM)
COUNCIL MEETING: 7:00 PM
DATE: TUESDAY, APRIL 20, 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 7:08 PM. Councilmember Feist 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, and Fire Chief Troy Maness (via Zoom)

PUBLIC PRESENT: Dave Jensen

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 April 6, 2021 meeting were in the packet for Council’s review. Councilmember Harris made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

CITY COURT REPORT: There was a written report from City Judge Dennis Loveless at the last meeting.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Administration – Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren that the final audit report for FY20 had been received from Strom & Associates; that zoning permit, building permit, and business license applications continued to arrive daily; and that the files pertaining to each address in the city were being digitally archived by Utility Clerk Shipman.

Police Department – Mayor Schell reported that Police Department Administrative Support Specialist Dumas would be curating a new records room for the department and that Officer Harris had resigned.

Public Works - Public Works Director Kevin Ore reported that the samples taken at the metals removal building had been good; that the garbage truck had a hydraulic cylinder replaced and needed the garbage storage floor relined; that the park restrooms were open for the season and should probably be replaced rather than repaired; that he was working with Pool Manager Kimber Mook to hire lifeguards for the summer; that he was working with RPA to replace the aging, previously identified, wastewater lines and associated water lines in Pacific Street; and that the caisson and new public water supply (Wylie Well #4) projects were moving forward.

Volunteer Fire Department - Fire Chief Troy Maness reported that the rescue truck had been in the shop for repairs a few times.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. **East Helena Cemetery Future Cost Analysis** – City Attorney Elverum reported that this item was getting close to be ready to present to the council and move forward with a future decision for it to be placed on the ballot. There was no public comment. This was an information-only item.
2. **Montana Environmental Trust Group New Public Water Supply Well Agreement** – An information packet was on the council table. Public Works Director Ore said that the test well near the wastewater treatment plant would be used as a monitoring well to keep it active. Mayor Schell said that this agenda item would be an action item at the next meeting. There was no public comment. This was an information-only item.
3. **AARP FitLot Fitness Park in Kennedy Park Agreement** – Attachment A of the draft agreement was in the council packet. The draft independent contractor agreement and program planning guide were on the council table. There was no public comment. Councilmember Harris made a motion to move forward with the agreement including any changes City Attorney Elverum deemed applicable. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
4. **Utility Easement Review and Possible Vacate 804 E. Groschell St.** – There were two marked-up plats in the council packet. Public Works Director Ore confirmed that the utilities were located in the easement, not the yards. Mayor Schell said he was trying to learn what happened with the plats and figuring out the solution with Surveyor Tom Stark. City Attorney Elverum noted that there would be a cost to remove any encumbrances. There was no public comment. Councilmember Leland made a motion to table. Councilmember Harris seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
5. **Montana Legislature 2021 Session Update** – SB385 regarding special districts and SB260 regarding zoning were included in the council packet. Mayor Schell updated council on how each could affect the city. There was no public comment. This was an information-only item.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **City of East Helena Recycling Considerations for Current Post Office Location** – A map of the proposed new location at the City’s wastewater plant off of Plant Road was in the council packet. Public Works Director Ore explained that an excessive amount of employee time was being diverted to clean up the household trash and debris that is being dumped at this location and that non-resident users contribute to this problem. He requested Council’s approval to move the recycling bins to the yard waste collection site near the wastewater treatment plant. There was no public comment. Councilmember Harris made a motion to approve. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
2. **City of East Helena Composting Program** – Better Roots Composting’s information and the city garbage ordinance were in the council packet. Public Works Director Ore presented Better Roots Composting’s request to offer composting services to East Helena residents. This is a new program that is being implemented throughout the valley. City Attorney Elverum said that the garbage ordinance would need to be updated so that residents could opt to purchase this service. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to update the garbage ordinance to allow the composting program. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
3. **City of East Helena Pool Sign** – The draft designs were in the council packet and on the council table. There was no public comment. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve the design that included the swimmers. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. Councilmembers Dahl, Leland, and Feist voted aye. Councilmember Harris voted no. The motion passed.
4. **City of East Helena Main Street Park Pavilion Sign** – The draft designs were in the council packet and on the council table. There was no public comment. Councilmember Harris made a motion to approve the round design. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

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

- 1.) Public Notice for East Helena City Council Growth Policy Public Hearing scheduled for Tuesday, May 4, 2021, 7PM, City Hall gymnasium.
- 2.) MSU Local Government Center Invitation to Attend 2021 Municipal Elected Officials Virtual Conference May 4-6, 2021.
- 3.) Montana Department of Commerce Website information on the Montana Emergency Rental (Utility) Assistance Program, printed 4/17/2021.
- 4.) March 29, 2021 Carroll College SARS-CoV-2 Wastewater Testing result graphs from the latest samples for the City of East Helena & Helena.

The AARP Community Challenge Application was on the council table and thanked Councilmember Feist for his work on the application. Mayor Schell reported that he had discussed Smelter Road, Leon Road, and water testing wells with Cindy Brooks of METG; that Bradi Watkins planned on querying vendors at the Saturday Farmers Market in Helena to gauge interest in her proposed Thursday event at JFK Park; that he received a request to stake a large tent at JFK Park; and that he had attended an MBAC meeting.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' REPORTS:

Don Dahl had nothing to report.

Wesley Feist reported that he had helped write an AARP Community Challenge Application.

Kelly Harris reported that he had discussed building codes with Mayor Schell.

Judy Leland had nothing to report.

LEGAL REPORTS: City Attorney Elverum reported that he had received a call from a developer regarding the city's wastewater system capacity and that his work to move the police department forward continued.

PAYMENT OF BILLS: Claims 293759 through 293790 were presented for Council's review. Councilmember Leland made a motion to pay the bills. Councilmember Harris seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

SPECIAL MEETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Main Street Park Motorcycle Bike Blessing Event, Saturday, April 24, 2021, 11AM to 3PM, Main Street Park

MEETING SCHEDULE:

1. East Helena Council Meeting and Public Hearing, Tuesday, May 4, 2021, 7PM, City Hall Room 108 (Gym) {Growth Policy Update Public Hearing}
2. East Helena Council Meeting, Tuesday, May 18, 2021, 7PM, City Hall Room 108 (Gym)

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Schell adjourned the meeting at 8:32 PM.

ATTEST:

Clerk/Treasurer

Mayor