

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**CITY OF EAST HELENA**  
**CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN – GYMNASIUM - ROOM 108**  
**PUBLIC HEARINGS & COUNCIL MEETING: 7:00 PM**  
**DATE: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 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 7:01 PM. Masks and physical distancing were recommended for those in attendance at City Hall. Councilmember Feist led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CITY OFFICIALS & STAFF PRESENT:** Councilmember Don Dahl, Councilmember Judy Leland, Councilmember Kelly Harris, Councilmember Wesley Feist, Mayor James Schell, City Attorney Pete Elverum, Public Works Director Kevin Ore, City Engineer Brad Koenig, and Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** Jennifer Opie, Dave Jensen, Julie Stoner, and Rebecca Hargis

**ABSENT/EXCUSED:** City Judge Dennis Loveless and Fire Chief Troy Maness

**PROCLAMATION: Suicide Prevention Month, September 2021** – The proclamation was in the council packet. Mayor Schell read it aloud. Rebecca Hargis of Elevate Montana, Helena Affiliate was present to speak in favor of the proclamation initiated with the city by Lewis and Clark County Public Health Suicide Prevention Coordinator Jess Hegstrom. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the proclamation. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

1. **Water Rate Increase for Water Infrastructure Projects Scheduled to Start January 1, 2022** – The public notice was in the council packet. Brad Koenig of Robert Peccia & Associates handed out and delivered a presentation to Council. This was an information-only item.
2. **Water Rate Increase for Water Infrastructure Projects Scheduled to Start January 1, 2022** - Mayor Schell called three times each for public comment in support of, opposed to, and neutral toward the proposed water rate increase. Julie Stoner commented that the rate increase was a slap in the face, that it should have been implemented gradually, and that she was disappointed by the way it had been handled.
3. **Water Rate Increase for Water Infrastructure Projects Scheduled to Start January 1, 2022** - Mayor Schell noted that the public notice would be mailed to all residents and that there would be another public hearing on October 5<sup>th</sup>. This was an information-only item.

**PUBLIC HEARING & ACTION ITEM:**

1. **FY21 Budget Amendment** – The published public notice, amendment, and draft resolution were in the council packet. Mayor Schell and Clerk/Treasurer Thorngren discussed the amendments with Council. This was an information-only item.
2. **FY21 Budget Amendment** – Mayor Schell called three times each for public comment in support of, opposed to, and neutral toward the proposed budget amendment and received none.
3. **FY21 Budget Amendment Resolution 556** – Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve Resolution 556 amending the FY21 budget. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

### **PUBLIC HEARING & ACTION ITEM:**

1. **FY22 Budget** – The published public notice and proposed budget were in the council packet. The draft resolution was on the council room table. This was an information-only item.
2. **FY22 Budget** – Mayor Schell called three times each for public comment in support of, opposed to, and neutral toward the proposed budget. Dave Jensen commented that he opposed the department head salary increases; that too much employee time was being charged to the pool, sewer fund, and garbage fund; and that information for the budget meetings was sent out too late. Mr. Jensen provided a detailed written version of his comments on September 21, 2021.
3. **FY22 Budget Resolution 557** – Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve Resolution 557 adopting the FY22 budget. Councilmember Harris seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The draft minutes of the August 16, 2021, August 17, 2021, August 23, 2021, and August 24, 2021 meetings were in the council packet. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve the August 16 minutes as presented. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve the August 17 minutes as presented. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve the August 23 minutes as presented. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve the August 24 minutes as presented. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

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

### **DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:**

**Administration** – A written report was in the council packet. Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren reported that the city was now billing for 92 wastewater connections in Red Fox Meadows Subdivision and that there would be a secure drop box for mail ballots at City Hall on Election Day.

**Police Department** – Mayor Schell reported that Officer Palumbo is working well with the Lewis and Clark Sheriff's Office.

**Public Works** – A written report was in the council packet. Public Works Director Kevin Ore reported that Maintenance Worker Shane Pursley was working to correct a clarifier issue that led to copper and phosphorus violations in August at the wastewater treatment plant; that there had been a water line break in the 200 block of West Main Street: that he'd been working with the east side Town Pump which has been inundated with cardboard after the cardboard bins were relocated from the post office; and that the crosswalks had been installed on Thurman Avenue and Valley Drive. Brad Koenig handed out a comparison of water main equipment bid examples in relation to some questions asked about the upcoming Pacific Street project, discussed them with Council and answered questions from the public. Dave Jensen commented that the project expenses were excessive. Mr. Jensen provided a detailed written version of his comments on September 21, 2021.

**Volunteer Fire Department** - Fire Chief Troy Maness was excused.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

1. **AAAA Big Sky Chapter Montana Air National Guard 9/11/21 5K Fun Run** – A map of the previously approved path of the fun run from Dustin Horswill was in the council packet. There was no public comment. Councilmember Harris made a motion to table. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
2. **Montana Environmental Trust Group New Public Water Supply Well Agreement {New Hydrant Along Wylie Drive at St. Clair Property}** – The signed agreement was in the council packet. Mayor Schell reported that the landowner had signed the agreement and that METG's Public Water Supply

Well Agreement was awaited. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to table. Councilmember Harris seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **Cub Scout Troop 212 Fee Waiver for Fire Hall 6-8PM Every Other Thursday Sept 23rd** – The use agreement and a meeting minute excerpt where previous approval was granted for use of Kennedy Park were in the council packet. Mayor Schell presented Kristin Ophus’ request for the scouts’ use of the Fire Hall every other Thursday at no charge. Dave Jensen comment that the city should get some “sweat equity” out of the kids in exchange for using the Fire Hall. Councilmember Harris made a motion to approve Troop 212’s use of the Fire Hall at no charge for 6 months. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
2. **Main Street Park Fee Waiver & Alcohol Variance for Eagles 4040 Pavilion Brick Placement Team Saturday, Sept. 25, 2021 11 a.m. - until Dark** – The dates previously authorized for the event were found to be unavailable and an alternative date proposed. There was no public comment. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve the fee waiver and alcohol variance for the event. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

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

- 1.) ARPA Ranked Projects List
  - 2.) Latest graph of Carroll College SARS-CoV-2 Wastewater Testing from Lewis and Clark County website from the latest samples for the City of East Helena and Helena
- He reported that he was in the process of preparing a draft RFP for building inspection.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS’ REPORTS:**

**Don Dahl** reported that he had attended the budget meetings and the pool tour.

**Wesley Feist** reported that he hadn’t seen the sheriff’s office patrolling and requested more information about shift coverage. He noted that Andy Shirliff of the Small Business Administration would be touring East Helena businesses in preparation for an SBA event at the brewery.

**Kelly Harris** reported that he had attended the budget meetings and the pool tour.

**Judy Leland** reported that she had attended the budget meetings and the pool tour.

**LEGAL REPORTS:** City Attorney Elverum reported that he had attended the budget meetings and that Officer Palumbo had been doing some felony work. He noted that Officer Palumbo is currently a one-man-show and deserved a show of support.

**PAYMENT OF BILLS:** Claims 294210 through 294266 were presented for Council’s review. Councilmember Leland made a motion to pay the bills. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

**MEETING SCHEDULE:**

1. East Helena Council Meeting, Tuesday, September 21, 2021, 7PM, City Hall Room 110
2. East Helena Public Hearing & Council Meeting, Tuesday, October 5, 2021, 7PM, City Hall Gym Room 108 {Water Rate Increase Public Hearing}
3. East Helena Council Meeting, Tuesday, October 19, 2021, 7PM, City Hall Room 110

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mayor Schell adjourned the meeting at 8:34 PM

ATTEST:

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Clerk/Treasurer

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Mayor