

**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF EAST HELENA
CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN - ROOM 110
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING: 5:30 PM
DATE: THURSDAY, JANUARY 6, 2022**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: Mayor Harris called the meeting to order at 5:34 PM. Councilmember Leland led the Pledge of Allegiance. Masks and physical distancing were recommended for those in attendance at City Hall.

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Kirk Johnston, Ken Harris, Mike Misowic (via Zoom), Sally Nyland (via Zoom), Nolan Lister, Lynn Maness (via Zoom), and Scott St. Clair (via Zoom)

ABSENT/EXCUSED: None

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Temporary Appointment as Acting Chief of Police – Kirk Johnston** – The job description and verification of POST certification were in the council packet. State code regarding appointment to the police force and residency requirements and the certificate of qualification from the East Helena Police Commission were on the council room table. Kirk Johnston answered questions from Council. Councilmember Feist made a motion to appoint Kirk Johnston as Police Chief for 30 days beginning January 10, 2022. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
2. **Temporary Appointment as Patrol Officer – Ken Harris** – The job description and verification of POST certification were in the council packet. State code regarding appointment to the police force and residency requirements and the certificate of qualification from the East Helena Police Commission were on the council room table. Ken Harris answered questions from Council. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to appoint Ken Harris as Patrol Officer for 30 days beginning January 10, 2022. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
3. **Police Officer Starting Salary Adjustment and Bonus for New Hires** – Police department budget and expenditure reports, requested police department salary increases, and Mayor Harris' January 4, 2022 press release were in the council packet. A report on current local law enforcement salaries and proposed East Helena Patrol Officer salary was on the council room table. City Attorney Elverum and Mayor Harris discussed the proposed salary increase and bonus with Council. There was no public comment. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve a starting annual salary of \$62,004.80 DOE for non-POST certified Patrol Officers with a \$2,500 bonus upon POST certification and another \$2,500 bonus after successful completion of 1 year. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve a starting annual salary of \$62,004.80 DOE for POST certified Patrol Officers with a \$2,500 bonus upon hire and another \$2,500 bonus after successful completion of 6 months. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. Councilmembers Feist and Dahl voted aye. Councilmember Leland voted no. The motion passed.
4. **Chief of Police Bonus** – Council, Mayor Harris, and City Attorney Elverum discussed appropriate

salary and bonus for the chief of police position. There was not public comment. Councilmember Dahl made a motion for a \$7,500 bonus for the Chief of Police upon hire and another \$7,500 bonus upon successful completion of 1 year. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

MAYOR'S REPORT: Mayor Harris had nothing to report.

COUNCILMEMBERS' REPORTS:

Don Dahl had nothing to report.

Wesley Feist had nothing to report.

Judy Leland had nothing to report.

LEGAL REPORTS: City Attorney Elverum reported that advertising to fill the open police department positions was a priority. A special meeting to set the police chief salary and advertising budget was scheduled for Monday, January 10, 2022 at 11:00 AM.

MEETING SCHEDULE:

1. East Helena Council Meeting, Tuesday, January 18, 2022, 7PM, City Hall Room 110
2. East Helena Council Meeting, Tuesday, February 1, 2022, 7PM, City Hall Room 110
3. East Helena Zoning Commission Meeting, Thursday, February 3, 2022, 6:30PM, City Hall Room 110

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Harris adjourned the meeting at 7:04 PM.

ATTEST:

Clerk/Treasurer

Mayor