

**MEETING MINUTES**

**CITY OF EAST HELENA**

**CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN - ROOM 110**

**COUNCIL MEETING: 7:00 PM**

**DATE: TUESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2022**

**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 Harris called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Councilmember Feist 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 (via Zoom), Councilmember Judy Leland, Councilmember Wesley Feist, Volunteer Fire Chief Troy Maness (via Zoom), Acting Police Chief Kirk Johnston, Public Works Director Kevin Ore, City Attorney Pete Elverum, and Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Bryan Sandrock, Mayme Folio, Marty Folio, JW McClintic, Lynda O'Donnell, Rob Creel, Suzanne Ferguson, Sandy Hughes, Sally Nyland (via Zoom), Dave Jensen, (via Zoom), Ryan Madsen, and Sam Madsen

**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 January 4, 6, and 10, 2022 meetings were in the council packet. There was no public comment. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve the January 4, 2022 minutes with a correction to the name of one of the meeting attendees. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve the January 6, 2022 minutes as presented. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve the January 10, 2022 minutes as presented. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

**CITY COURT REPORT:** A written report from City Judge Dennis Loveless is expected at the next meeting.

**DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:**

**Administration** – Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren reported that she had met with Trisha Bodlovic of Robert Peccia & Associates about administering the city's ARPA grants; that she'd attended the wastewater capacity, rates, and funding meeting with Brad Koenig of Robert Peccia & Associates, Mayor Harris, and Public Works Director Ore; and that the preparations for the AARP FitLot summer classes had begun.

**Police Department** – Acting Police Chief Kirk Johnston reported that he and Acting Patrol Officer Ken Harris had a busy week updating administrative functions, equipment inventories, and vehicle inspections; had been coordinating with neighboring law enforcement agencies for equipment, weapons

certifications, coverage scheduling, and training; that he'd been working with Lexipol on policies, certifications, and procedures; that the department was now taking calls-for-service; and that they had met with the school resource officer. He thanked Council for trusting him with his position and said that the Lewis and Clark Sheriff's Department, Helena Police Department, and Montana Highway Patrol had been very supportive.

**Public Works** - Public Works Director Kevin Ore reported that year-end reports had been submitted to DEQ, that the garage door at the metals plant had failed and was being replaced, that a water main had broken in Moontown, that the garbage and plow trucks had been repaired, that the snow piles had been hauled off, and that the water meter order was still delayed. He said that the water meters were read by radio frequency and that they had no 5G network capability.

**Volunteer Fire Department** - Fire Chief Troy Maness reported that he had been training new members.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

1. **Montana Environmental Trust Group New Public Water Supply Well Agreement** – There was no update and the agreement was still awaited. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to table. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **Casino Operations in Community** – Drae's Casino Operations Manager Mayme Folio addressed the perception that casinos attract criminal activity to East Helena due to the city's allowance of extended hours of operation. She discussed the policies and employee training in place and the casino's willingness to work with law enforcement to curtail drugs and crime in the community. Bryan Sandrock of Drae's Casino explained how unidentified people were not allowed in the establishment. There was no public comment. This was an information-only item.
2. **Volunteer Fire Department By-Laws** – A copy of the by-laws was in the council packet. Fire Chief Troy Maness reported that the updated by-laws aligned with city ordinance and answered questions from Council about how the department qualifies members for retirement benefits. Council requested a version of the by-laws with tracked changes as well as the Fireman's Relief Association's by-laws. Bryan Sandrock commented that changes to the original document should be tracked and that a cap could be placed on membership incentives. Councilmember Feist made a motion to table. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
3. **Adventures in Cardboard** – An email from Eric Dymit requesting use of the area behind Kennedy Park with proposed dates and a map of the area were in the council packet. Public Works Director Ore reported that the group had used the park well last year. Mayme Folio and Bryan Sandrock noted that Drae's Casino had lots of cardboard to offer. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the requested dates and same rates. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
4. **Boy Scout Troop 1212 Request to Use Fire Hall Mondays 6-8 PM** – The use agreement was in the council packet. Ryan Madsen answered question from Council and requested use of the Fire Hall for Troop 1212's weekly meetings at no charge. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
5. **Capital Transit Memorandum of Understanding** – A copy of the MOU was in the council packet. City Attorney Elverum reported that there were no changes to the contract, but that the East Helena bus line was not currently running due to staffing issues. Rob Creel asked for

clarification on the payment. Bryan Sandrock suggested prorating the \$4,060 payment to account for lapse in service. Councilmember Feist made a motion to table until bus service is confirmed. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

6. **Vigilante Subdivision Lift Station Latecomers Agreement** – A copy of the agreement was in the council packet. Public Works Director Ore reviewed the agreement with Council. This was an information-only item.
7. **Appointment of Ward 2 Councilmember** – The names and contact information for 11 residents interested in filling the position were on the council room table. City Attorney Elverum noted that Council had 30 days from January 3<sup>rd</sup> to fill the open council seat. Lynda O'Donnell, an applicant for the position, introduced herself to Council. Councilmember Feist made a motion to table until a 6:00 PM special meeting prior to the next regular council meeting on February 1<sup>st</sup>. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
8. **Water Quality Protection District Board Representative** – The WQPD board roster was in the council packet. Clerk/Treasurer Thorngren reported that although there had been resident interest in the position, she had learned that the board representative from East Helena needed to be a city official. Council discussed getting copies of the WQPD's by-laws and meeting schedule. Bryan Sandrock commented in favor of obtaining the by-laws. Councilmember Feist made a motion to table. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
9. **Wage Band for New Patrol Officer Hires and Deputy Police Chief** – A proposed wage table was on the council room table. City Attorney Elverum and Council discussed pay for Deputy Chief and Patrol Officer positions and how it would be adjusted as experience was gained in the department. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve \$65,000/year (\$31.25/hour) for the Deputy Police Chief and a 2% increase per pay grade step for hourly police department employees. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
10. **Montana State Games: Shape Up Montana** – Program information was in the council packet. Clerk/Treasurer Thorngren requested Council's permission to register the staff team. There was no public comment. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

**MAYOR'S REPORT:** Mayor Harris reported that he had been working on recruiting for the police department and had attended the orientation for the Board of Health.

**COUNCILMEMBERS' REPORTS:**

**Don Dahl** reported that he had attended the special meetings.

**Wesley Feist** reported that he had attended the special meetings, helped with police department recruitment, and had attended the MBAC meeting.

**Judy Leland** reported that she had attended the special meetings.

**LEGAL REPORTS:** City Attorney Elverum reported that he had been working on recruitment for the police department and that Acting Chief Johnston and Officer Harris were doing well.

**PAYMENT OF BILLS:** Claims 294660 through 294703 were presented for Council's review. There was no public comment. 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, February 1, 2022, 7PM, City Hall Room 110
2. East Helena Zoning Commission Meeting, Thursday, February 3, 2022, 6:30PM, City Hall Room 110

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mayor Harris adjourned the meeting at 8:23 PM.

ATTEST:

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Clerk/Treasurer

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Mayor