

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF EAST HELENA
CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN - ROOM 110
COUNCIL MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING: 7:00 PM
DATE: TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 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 Leland led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CITY OFFICIALS & STAFF PRESENT: Mayor Kelly Harris, Council President Don Dahl, Councilmember Judy Leland, Councilmember Wesley Feist, Councilmember Suzanne Ferguson, Public Works Director Kevin Ore, Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren, City Attorney Pete Elverum, and City Engineers Brad Koenig and Jeremy Perlinski

PUBLIC PRESENT: Scott St. Clair, Amie Butler, Denise Feller, Shirley Thomas, Sally Nyland, Darcy Bramble, and Dave Jensen

ABSENT/EXCUSED: City Judge Dennis Loveless, Fire Chief Troy Maness, and Police Chief Mike Sanders

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. **Ordinance 279 – An Ordinance Amending Title 7, Chapter 3 of the City Code of the City of East Helena Regarding Sewer Regulations to Align the Regulations with City Engineering Standards and Current City Policies and Procedures**– The public notice and draft ordinance were in the council packet. City Attorney Elverum discussed the proposed updates with Council. This was an information-only item.
2. **Ordinance 279 – An Ordinance Amending Title 7, Chapter 3 of the City Code of the City of East Helena Regarding Sewer Regulations to Align the Regulations with City Engineering Standards and Current City Policies and Procedures** – No written public comment had been received. Mayor Harris called for public comment on the draft ordinance and received none.
3. **Ordinance 279 – An Ordinance Amending Title 7, Chapter 3 of the City Code of the City of East Helena Regarding Sewer Regulations to Align the Regulations with City Engineering Standards and Current City Policies and Procedures** – Council discussed removing cast iron as an allowed pipe material. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve Ordinance 279 as amended. Councilmember Dahl 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 April 5, 2022 meeting were in the council packet. There was no public comment. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

PROCLAMATIONS:

1. **Loyalty Day 2022** – A copy of the proclamation was in the council packet. There was no public comment. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
2. **National Teachers Day 2022** – A copy of the proclamation was in the council packet. There was no public comment. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

PRESENTATION: City of East Helena Growth/Wastewater Flow Update, Headworks & CIPP Project Funding – A copy of the presentation was in the council packet. An updated version was handed out. City Engineers Brad Koenig & Jeremy Perlinski of Robert Peccia & Associates discussed growth projections and proposed infrastructure improvements with Council and answered questions from Dave Jensen.

1. **City of East Helena Growth/Wastewater Flow Projections Map** – A copy of the map was in the council packet. Dave Jensen commented that Council should consider carefully whether to include county residents in future growth calculations and that rates should be going down rather than up. Scott St. Clair commented that he would stop by to ask questions during office hours. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the growth projection map. Councilmember Leland 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 the audit of FY21 had gone well, that the water bond documents had been signed and returned, and that the price of the traditional holiday cookies would be increasing substantially, but that there were other options.

Police Department – A written report from Police Chief Mike Sanders was on the council room table. Mayor Harris reported that the department's new printer had been installed and was working well and that the officers had made some felony arrests.

Public Works - Public Works Director Kevin Ore reported that there had been two sewer backups near Bayard Street; that he had visited wastewater treatment plants in Deer Lodge and Butte; that ARPA funding looked promising for water, but not wastewater; that the water system improvement project construction was going well; that more water meters were on the way; that Spring Cleanup would happen the week of May 9th; that street lights were being repaired; and that chip sealing would not be happening due to increased expense.

Volunteer Fire Department - Fire Chief Troy Maness was excused.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

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

2. **East Helena Cemetery District** – A revised cost estimate was in the council packet. Scenario A proposed paying the startup costs in the first year. Scenario B proposed paying the startup costs over a three-year period. Scott St. Clair commented that spreading the startup costs over three years would increase the likelihood that citizens would accept the cemetery district and that the special improvement district funds would relieve the burden on the general fund. Dave Jensen commented that the cemetery district added more risk than benefit for the citizens of East Helena and that existing staff and equipment should be utilized rather than creating a special improvement district. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve Scenario B. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. Councilmembers Feist, Leland, and Ferguson voted aye. Councilmember Dahl voted no. The motion passed.
3. **Swimming Pool Fee Review** – Lifeguard pay options and swimming lesson rate comparisons were included in the council packet. Public Works Director Ore noted that the city's wage for lifeguards was less than wages offered at neighboring pools and that donations had been received to provide swimming lesson scholarships. There was no public comment. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve the 5th option (Six sessions of lessons ~ 480 students total ~ at \$45/student, \$12.50/hour regular lifeguard pay, \$15.00/hour for lifeguards with added responsibilities). Councilmember Ferguson seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **MASBO Lease Agreement Renewal** – A copy of the agreement was in the council packet. City Attorney Elverum noted that it was essentially the same as the previous agreement. There was no public comment. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
2. **106 W Groschell St. Encroachment Permit** – A copy of the encroachment permit application was in the council packet. Public Works Director Ore explained that the request was to keep a fence in its current location. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve. Councilmember Ferguson seconded the motion. Councilmember Dahl had stepped out of the room briefly. All councilmembers present voted aye.
3. **East Helena Community Garden** – Information about the garden was passed out. Darby Bramble and Amie Butler of Helena Community Gardens were present to spread the word that there would be garden plots available at the East Helena Community Garden located near East Valley Middle School. This was an information-only item.
4. **Flags Placed by Kiwanis along Main Street Park** – Information about the 2022 Kiwanis Flag Display Project was in the council packet. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to table pending more information. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.
5. **Queen City Football Club Block Party on May 6, 2022** – Mayor Harris presented Bridget Johnston's request to close Cleveland Avenue for a free community event outside of Helen's Barbecue. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve closure of Cleveland Avenue for the event. Councilmember Ferguson seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

High Country Vendors Craft Fair at Main Street Park July 9 & 10, 2022 – Council discussed Juli Moden’s request to hold a craft fair at Main Street Park during rodeo weekend. Public Works Director Ore noted that there might be a water main project occurring at the same time near the back third of the park. Scott St. Clair commented that tent stakes could puncture underground sprinkler lines and event insurance may be needed. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve use of the park for \$100, a blanket business license, and coordination with the parks department to located sprinkler lines. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

6. **Series 1999 Water Revenue Bond Reserve Account** – Clerk/Treasurer Thorngren explained that the account was now overfunded due to Resolution 567 authorizing the 2022 water bond and that excess funds could be used to either pay or prepay debt service on the bond. There was no public comment. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to use the excess funds to pay debt service on the 1999 bond. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. All councilmembers voted aye.

MAYOR’S REPORT: Mayor Harris reported that he had attended the audit entrance and exit interviews and that he had presented a Hometown Hero Award to Jemma Barnes who had saved lives by alerting residents during the recent apartment building fire.

COUNCILMEMBERS’ REPORTS:

Don Dahl reported that he had attended the wastewater meetings and the audit exit interview.

Judy Leland reported that she had attended the wastewater meetings.

Wesley Feist reported that he had attended the wastewater meetings, that the MBAC meeting had been cancelled but they would be presenting in East Helena in the future, and that he’d met with the owner of Helen’s Barbecue.

Suzanne Ferguson reported that she had attended the wastewater meetings.

LEGAL REPORTS: City Attorney Elverum reported that he had been working on the updates to the sewer ordinance and that criminal casework in the court had been increasing.

PAYMENT OF BILLS: Claims 294963 through 294995 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, May 3, 2022, 7PM, City Hall Room 110
2. East Helena Council Meeting, Tuesday, May 17, 2022, 7PM, City Hall Room 110

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Harris adjourned the meeting at 8:47 PM.

ATTEST:

Clerk/Treasurer

Mayor