

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF EAST HELENA
CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN - ROOM 110
COUNCIL MEETING & PUBLIC HEARINGS: 6:30 PM
DATE: TUESDAY, AUGUST 2, 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 6:30 PM. Councilmember Dahl 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, Police Chief Mike Sanders, Fire Chief Troy Maness, and City Attorney Pete Elverum

PUBLIC PRESENT: Sally Nyland, Blaine Verbanac, Charlie Hull, Sally Hull, Blair Verbanac, and Steve Strong (via Zoom)

ABSENT/EXCUSED: City Judge Dennis Loveless

PUBLIC HEARING 1:

1. **East Helena Cemetery District No. 1** – A copy of the mailing that had gone out to all property owners and registered voters within city limits was in the council packet. Draft Resolution 571 and a report on protest and comment forms returned from the mailing were on the council room table. Forty-eight of the responses received were in opposition and 26 responses were in support of creation of the proposed cemetery district. City Attorney Elverum reported that, based on the number of responses to the mailing, Council could move forward with a ballot referendum for the voters to decide whether to create the cemetery district. This was an information-only item.
2. **East Helena Cemetery District No. 1** – Mayor Harris called for public comment on the referendum. No written public comment had been received in addition to the protest and comment forms.
Blaine Verbanac commented in opposition to the possibility of the city taking on a privately owned cemetery.
Sally Nyland commented that more financial information was needed and that she was opposed to the proposed cemetery district.
Charlie Hull commented on his concerns that, as a renter, he didn't have a vote on the proposed cemetery district.
Blair Verbanac commented in opposition to the proposed acquisition of the cemetery by the city.
Steve Strong (via Zoom) was unable to comment because of technical difficulties and will submit his comments to City Hall.
3. **East Helena Cemetery District No. 1** – Council discussed their preference that it be put to a vote. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve Resolution 571 for a

Referendum on Creation of East Helena Cemetery District No. 1. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING 2:

1. **An Ordinance Revising Meetings by Amending Chapter 5 of Title 1 of the East Helena City Code** – The public notice and draft Ordinance 280 were in the council packet. City Attorney Elverum explained that the code was updated to reflect the recent change in meeting time. He said the ordinance could be written to specify a certain time or allow the time to be fixed by resolution to avoid future code updates on the same matter. This was an information-only item.
2. **An Ordinance Revising Meetings by Amending Chapter 5 of Title 1 of the East Helena City Code** – Mayor Harris called for public comment on the proposed code update and received none. No written public comment had been received.
3. **An Ordinance Revising Meetings by Amending Chapter 5 of Title 1 of the East Helena City Code** – Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve Ordinance 280 with the provision that the meeting time be fixed by resolution. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING 3:

1. **Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Fiscal Budget Amendment** – The public notice and draft Resolution 570 were in the council packet. Clerk/Treasurer Thorngren presented the proposed FY22 budget amendments to Council. This was an information-only item.
2. **Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Fiscal Budget Amendment** – Mayor Harris called for public comment on the proposed budget amendment and received none. No written public comment had been received.
3. **Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Fiscal Budget Amendment** – Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve Resolution 570 Authorizing Amendment of the 2021-2022 Municipal Budget. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Sally Nyland thanked Council, Mayor Harris, and Public Works Director Ore for the new American flag in Kennedy Park; asked if Chief Sanders needed to be confirmed to the Safety Committee; and noted that the Public Works crew was listed on the website, but not the Police Department.

Blaine Verbanac noted that equipment and vehicles can be requested from the DOD by Fire Chief Maness.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The draft minutes of the July 19, 2022 meeting were in the council packet. There was no public comment. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Councilmember Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CITY COURT REPORT: A written report from City Judge Dennis Loveless for the months of June and July 2022 was in the council packet.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Administration – Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thornngren reported the following:

- She attended the wastewater system improvement funding call.
- Deputy Clerk Shannon was chosen to be a member of the Montana Courts of Limited Jurisdiction Automation Committee.
- She had been working on FY22 year-end closing and the FY23 budget.

Police Department – Police Chief Mike Sanders reported the following:

- The department received 533 calls-for-service and issued 109 citations in July.
- Policy establishment and implementation using Lexipol is 80% complete.
- Interviews for the Police Administrative Support Specialist had been conducted the previous day and a conditional offer of employment was made.
- The department was invited to the PureView Community Celebration at Kennedy Park on August 12th.
- The Helena Police Department invited the EHPD to attend their active shooter and first responder trainings.

Public Works – A written report was in the council packet. Public Works Director Kevin Ore reported the following:

- Sewer jetting is finished for the year.
- The concrete in the new water tank passed the strength test.
- He met with MJD Contractors about the new water supply well, McClellan Creek caisson, and pedestrian bridge projects.
- The swimming pool has been very busy with the hot weather. It will close for the season on August 27th.
- The 2008 Dodge pickup is not totaled after all.
- He's been busy with the FY23 budget.

Volunteer Fire Department - Fire Chief Troy Maness reported the following:

- He has moved but is still within the required 15-minute response distance.
- The department is down two EMTs.
- The department, like other fire departments, is still struggling to recruit and retain members. He is considering monetary incentives for volunteers who show up on calls.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Police Department Patrol Vehicle Acquisition** – An estimate for a new patrol vehicle and the Capital Improvement Fund spreadsheet were in the council packet. Police Chief Sanders reported that the 2013 Ford Explorer needed extensive repairs, that he had located a suitable replacement vehicle, and that the department had enough in the capital fund to buy it. He requested Council's approval to purchase the new vehicle. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to purchase the new patrol vehicle. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
2. **Public Works Purchase of One-Ton Pickup** – Public Works Director Ore requested Council's approval to replace the 1993 Chevy pickup using capital funds and enterprise funds. There was no public comment. Councilmember Ferguson made a

motion to approve the purchase of a one-ton pickup. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

MAYOR’S REPORT: Mayor Harris reported the following:

- He attended the Police Administrative Support Specialist interviews.
- He attended the Board of Health meeting.
- He attended the wastewater system improvement funding call.
- He’s been working on the FY23 budget.

COUNCILMEMBERS’ REPORTS:

Councilmember Dahl reported that he attended the Police Administrative Support Specialist interviews.

Councilmember Leland reported that she toured Ten Mile Creek with the Water Quality Protection District.

Councilmember Feist reported on the following:

- He attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Galaxy Roasters.
- The Chamber of Commerce would be hosting a brunch for retirees looking to reenter the workforce.
- He and Mayor Harris would be speaking on Hometown (East) Helena.
- He will be doing another walking tour of downtown businesses.

Councilmember Ferguson had nothing to report.

LEGAL REPORTS: City Attorney Elverum reported that he had been keeping busy with court and that the police presence in town was making a difference.

PAYMENT OF BILLS: Claims 295317 through 295356 were presented for Council’s review. Councilmember Leland made a motion to pay the bills. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

MEETING SCHEDULE:

1. East Helena Council Meeting & Public Hearing, Tuesday, August 16, 2022, 6:30 PM, City Hall Room 110
2. East Helena Council Meeting & Public Hearing, Tuesday, September 6, 2022, 6:30 PM, City Hall Room 110

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Harris adjourned the meeting at 7:33 PM.

ATTEST:

Clerk/Treasurer

Mayor