

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF EAST HELENA
CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN - ROOM 110
COUNCIL MEETING: 6:30 PM
DATE: TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2023
INTERNET ZOOM MEETING: <https://zoom.us/j/84979380604>
CONFERENCE CALL-IN: 1-301-715-8592 MEETING ID: 849 7938 0604

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: Mayor Harris called the meeting to order at 6:30 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, Fire Chief Troy Maness, and Police Chief Mike Sanders

PUBLIC PRESENT: Dave Jensen

ABSENT/EXCUSED: City Judge Dennis Loveless and City Attorney Pete Elverum

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Dave Jensen commented that money spent on sidewalks and retaining walls on Pacific Street should have been spent on proposed wastewater projects; commented in opposition to a wastewater rate increase and new debt; and proposed implementing taxes on all non-East Helena resident private and commercial property owners within a 5-mile radius East Helena city limits to offset police department expenses. Mr. Jensen provided a written version of his comments for the record.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The draft minutes of the December 20, 2022 meeting were included in the council packet. Dave Jensen requested additions to his public comments in New Business #4. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve the minutes. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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 many business licenses and some dog licenses had been renewed; there had been no new zoning or building permit applications, but several water meters had been purchased for existing new construction; Highland Meadows had delivered on the irrevocable letter of credit promised at a previous meeting; Rachel Ward of the Department of Commerce will do a presentation on the Montana Main Street Program at the February 7th meeting; and that she had requested a one-month due-date extension on the FY22 Annual Financial Report.

Police Department – Police Chief Mike Sanders reported that the East Helena Police Department had received 3,045 calls-for-service in 2022; a new AR-15 had been ordered

with the proceeds from the sale of surplus firearms; and Officer DeBoo completed an instructor development course and is now certified to teach law enforcement classes. He commended City Attorney Elverum's work with the police department.

Public Works – A written report was included in the council packet. Public Works Director Kevin Ore reported that RPA would do a presentation on wastewater rates at the January 17th meeting; the price of water meters had been increased by ten percent; Christmas trees will be picked up all month; and the city crew was working to fill potholes.

Volunteer Fire Department - Fire Chief Troy Maness reported that he will have more information about a possible merger with other area fire departments after the next East Valley Fire Department trustee meeting; fire departments in Montana are feeling the loss of apparatus mechanic Sean Garner; five members the department will compete in the Lymphoma and Leukemia Society Firefighter Stairclimb; and a new member was coming onboard.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. **Valley Drive Funding / Grant Applications** – Public Works Director Ore reported that Clint Smith of Stahly Engineering was ill and would be present at a future meeting. Dave Jensen commented that the final construction model should reflect the ultimate beneficiaries of the new road and that the city should cost-effectively secure as much grant funding as possible. Councilmember Leland made a motion to table. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **FY23 2nd Quarter Budget vs. Actual Report** – A report of FY23 budget versus actual expenditure for all funds was included in the council packet. Public Works Director Ore reported that the annual budget was on track pending reimbursement for some engineering expenses. He discussed individual line items with Council. This was an information-only item.
2. **Resolution of Respect and Esteem for Wayland D. Smith** – Draft Resolution 579 was on the council room table. Mayor Harris expressed appreciation for Wayland Smith's time as City Electrical Inspector. There was no public comment. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve Resolution 579. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

MAYOR'S REPORT: Mayor Harris reported that Deputy Clerk Shannon would be retiring and commended her work.

COUNCILMEMBERS' REPORTS:

Don Dahl had nothing to report.

Judy Leland had nothing to report.

Wesley Feist reported that he might not be able to attend the February 7th meeting.

Suzanne Ferguson had nothing to report.

LEGAL REPORT: City Attorney Elverum was excused.

PAYMENT OF BILLS: Claims 295826 through 295866 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, Tuesday, January 17, 2023, 6:30 PM, City Hall Room 110
2. East Helena Council Meeting, Tuesday, February 7, 2023, 6:30 PM, City Hall Room 110

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Harris adjourned the meeting at 7:06 PM.

ATTEST:

Clerk/Treasurer

Mayor