

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**CITY OF EAST HELENA**  
**CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN - ROOM 110**  
**COUNCIL MEETING: 6:30 PM**  
**DATE: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2023**  
**JOIN ZOOM MEETING: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/3787705872>**  
**CONFERENCE CALL-IN: 1-253-205-0468 MEETING ID: 378 770 5872**

**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, City Attorney Pete Elverum, and Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** Dave Jensen

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

**(0:00:29) PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Dave Jensen commented in opposition to the cost projections in RPA's January 17<sup>th</sup> wastewater rate presentation. Mr. Jensen provided a written version of his public comments for the record.

**(0:10:10) APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The draft minutes of the February 7, 2023 meeting were included 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. The motion passed unanimously.

**(0:11:05) CITY COURT REPORT:** A written report from City Judge Dennis Loveless for the month of January 2023 was included in the council packet.

**DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:**

**(0:11:21) Administration** – A copy of the city's 2023 BaRSAA allocation and a copy of MMIA's early employee benefit adjustment for FY24 were included in the council packet. A copy of the current benefit elections was on the council room table. Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren reported that both would be on future meeting agendas.

**Police Department** – A written report was on the council room table. Police Chief Mike Sanders was excused.

**(0:12:50) Public Works** – A written report and a copy of METG's January 2023 Status Report were included in the council packet. Public Works Director Kevin Ore reported that the wastewater treatment plant was not accepting septic loads in order to stay in DEQ compliance; the Montana Avenue lift station pump will be replaced; there had been vandalism in and near Kennedy Park: he had received requests for street sweeping from

residents; and NorthWestern Energy plans to replace gas lines along Clark Street over the summer.

**Volunteer Fire Department** - Fire Chief Troy Maness was excused.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

1. **(0:23:35) Ordinance 284 Amending Title 7, Chapter 4 of the City Code of the City of East Helena, Montana, to Provide for Establishing and Modifying Sewer Rates and Charges by Resolution – 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading** – A copy of the first reading of the ordinance was included in the council packet. No changes had been made to the ordinance since the first reading. Dave Jensen commented in opposition to increasing wastewater rates. Mr. Jensen provided a written version of his public comments for the record. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve the second reading of Ordinance 284. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **(0:25:08) Reappointment of City Judge Dennis Loveless** – A copy of the certification of appointment form was included in the council packet. Mayor Harris requested Council’s approval to reappoint Judge Loveless to a four-year term. Council discussed asking the judge to come to a council meeting to discuss the trends he’s seeing in the courtroom. There was no public comment. Councilmember Leland made a motion to reappoint City Judge Dennis Loveless. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
2. **(0:29:14) Boy Scouts Request to use the Gym March 4, 2023, 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM** – Mayor Harris presented Eric Sommer’s request for the scouts to use the gym at no charge to prep for a fundraiser as they did last year. There was no public comment. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve the request. Councilmember Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**(0:29:54) MAYOR’S REPORT:** Mayor Harris reported that he had attended meetings regarding development south of the highway; he met with the county regarding future grants; and that he’d been approached about being on the radio to promote the upcoming United Way St. Patrick’s Day event in East Helena.

**(0:32:11) COUNCILMEMBERS’ REPORTS:**

**Don Dahl** reported that he had attended the Planning Board meeting and the meeting with Stahly Engineering regarding Valley Drive.

**Judy Leland** reported that she had received phone calls from residents regarding trucks on the highway using Jake brakes.

**Wesley Feist** reported that he attended the Community Needs Assessment public hearing and the Vision Helena retreat.

**Suzanne Ferguson** had nothing to report.

**(0:36:41) LEGAL REPORT:** City Attorney Elverum reported that he had attended some of the same meetings as the mayor and councilmembers. He clarified that state law says the city

judge can be elected or appointed and that city code requires the judge to be appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the city council every four years.

**(0:38:25) PAYMENT OF BILLS:** Claims 295937 through 296023 were presented for Council’s review. Councilmember Leland made a motion to pay the bills. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**SPECIAL MEETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

1. 227 Day, Monday, February 27, 2023

**MEETING SCHEDULE:**

1. East Helena Council Meeting, Tuesday, March 7, 2023, 6:30 PM, City Hall Room 110
2. East Helena Council Meeting, Tuesday, March 21, 2023, 6:30 PM, City Hall Room 110

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mayor Harris adjourned the meeting at 7:09 PM.

ATTEST:

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Clerk/Treasurer

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Mayor