

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF EAST HELENA
CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN - ROOM 110
COUNCIL MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING: 6:30 PM
DATE: TUESDAY, APRIL 4, 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 Ferguson 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, Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren, Police Chief Mike Sanders, and Zoning Officer Jeremy Fadness

PUBLIC PRESENT: Wyatt Wadman and Dave Jensen

ABSENT/EXCUSED: City Judge Dennis Loveless and Fire Chief Troy Maness

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. **(0:00:00) Zoning Variance Request for Fence Height – 502 E Main St** – The public notice and staff report were included in the council packet. Zoning Officer Fadness discussed the report and recommended approval of the variance for the 6-foot fence along the south lot line within the front yard setback from the rear of the house east to the east property line. This was an information-only item.
2. **(0:01:48) Zoning Variance Request for Fence Height – 502 E Main St** – Mayor Harris called for public comment on the proposed variance. There was no public comment.
3. **(0:02:03) Zoning Variance Request for Fence Height – 502 E Main St** – Property owner Wyatt Wadman was present to answer questions from Council. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the variance request. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

(0:03:15) PUBLIC COMMENTS: Dave Jensen commented in opposition to the condition of residential streets and alleys. He commented in favor of prioritizing East Helena residents for swimming lessons. Mr. Jensen hand-delivered a written version of his comments for the record.

(0:07:16) APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The draft minutes of the March 21, 2023 council meeting were included in the council packet. There was no public comment. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CITY COURT REPORT: A written report from City Judge Dennis Loveless for the month of March 2023 was on the council room table.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

(0:07:42) Administration – Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren reported that the Lewis and Clark County Records Committee would be reposting its request for proposals; the office had received many questions about swimming lessons; and summer park reservations were increasing;

(0:09:22) Police Department – Police Chief Mike Sanders reported that there had been 207 calls-for-service in March that resulted in 27 cases; a conditional offer of employment had been extended to Ed Royce; Officer Johnston and Police Administrative Support Specialist Jones had attended CIT training the previous week; and Officer Johnston will attend a firearms instructor training.

(0:10:45) Public Works – A written report was included in the council packet. Public Works Director Kevin Ore reported that the city crew had been working to fill potholes; the city should receive an update on a groundwater discharge permit within the next month; and that the ortho injection pump installation was nearly complete.

Volunteer Fire Department - Fire Chief Troy Maness was excused.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **(0:14:55) Montana Municipal Interlocal Authority (MMIA) FY24 Employee Benefit Elections** – The current benefit elections and the final rate memo were included in the council packet. Clerk/Treasurer Thorngren reported that the increase for the medical benefit program would be 9%. There was no public comment. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve the current benefit elections for FY24. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. Councilmembers Dahl, Leland, and Feist voted aye. Councilmember Ferguson abstained. The motion passed.
2. **(0:18:45) Letter of Support for City of East Helena Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program Application** – A copy of the letter to the Montana Department of Transportation was included in the council packet. Mayor Harris reported that the letter would aid in getting the grant. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the letter of support for the TA grant. Councilmember Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
3. **(0:20:10) Redistribution of Funding / Valley Drive Engineering Expenses** – Budget reports for roads and streets were included in the council packet. Public Works Director Ore requested Council’s approval to use subdivision and school district road proportionate share funds to pay an estimated \$106,400 in Valley Drive engineering fees and reallocate the original budgeted funds to spring street repair. There was no public comment. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve the redistribution of funding. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
4. **(0:27:53) Montana Board of Investments Short Term Investment Pool (STIP) Annual Confirmation** – Copies of Resolutions 582 and 583 were included in the council packet. Clerk/Treasurer Thorngren reported that the resolutions needed to be

updated due to staff turnover. There were no other changes. There was no public comment. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve Resolution 582 confirming the city's STIP participation. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve Resolution 583 confirming the fire department relief association's STIP participation. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

(0:29:57) MAYOR'S REPORT: Mayor Harris reported that the police commission would convene soon to certify a new police department hire.

COUNCILMEMBERS' REPORTS:

Don Dahl had nothing to report.

Judy Leland had nothing to report.

(0:31:43) Wesley Feist reported that he had attended the Chamber of Commerce's Lunch with Local Government; attended Invest in Helena; attended Coffee with the Chamber; attended the Hauser Dam tour with NorthWestern Energy; and recommended Radley Elementary School's 4th Grader presentation on East Helena history.

Suzanne Ferguson had nothing to report.

(0:33:57) LEGAL REPORT: City Attorney Elverum reported that he had attended the meeting with potential developers of the METG property south of Highway 12; that he was working on an ordinance for the TDS franchise agreement; and that he would be going on vacation at the end of the month.

(0:36:18) PAYMENT OF BILLS: Claims 296122 through 296177 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, April 18, 2023, 6:30 PM, City Hall Room 110
2. East Helena Council Meeting, Tuesday, May 2, 2023, 6:30 PM, City Hall Room 110

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

ATTEST:

Clerk/Treasurer

Mayor