

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF EAST HELENA
CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN - ROOM 110
COUNCIL MEETING: 6:30 PM
DATE: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 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 p.m. Councilmember Feist 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, City Attorney Pete Elverum, Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren, Public Works Director Kevin Ore, City Judge Dennis Loveless, Police Chief Mike Sanders, Zoning Officer Jeremy Fadness, and Fire Chief Troy Maness (via Zoom)

PUBLIC PRESENT: Greg Wirth, Sally Nyland, Stephanie Ward, Landy Leep, and Adam Kensinger

ABSENT/EXCUSED: None

(0:00:00) PUBLIC HEARING 1:

1. **Highland Meadows Major Subdivision Phase 4 Commencement** – The public notice and staff report were included in the council packet. Zoning Officer Fadness discussed the staff report and recommended approval of commencement with the original conditions of approval and the added conditions that the subdivider will provide engineering plans for phase 4 to the city and that the subdivider will dedicate a utility easement to the city if water or sewer infrastructure cannot be provided within the dedicated rights-of-way. This was an information-only item.
2. **Highland Meadows Major Subdivision Phase 4 Commencement** – Mayor Harris called for public comment on the commencement. (0:01:35) Greg Wirth of Stahly Engineering commented in favor of approval of commencement.
3. **Highland Meadows Major Subdivision Phase 4 Commencement** – Councilmember Dahl made a motion to conditionally approve the commencement of phase 4. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

(0:07:15) PUBLIC HEARING 2:

1. **Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Municipal Budget** – The public notice and draft budget were included in the council packet. Mayor Harris noted that the draft budget included the

updates requested at the August 22nd budget meeting. This was an information-only item.

2. **Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Municipal Budget** – Mayor Harris called for public comment on the proposed budget. (0:08:05) Sally Nyland commented in opposition to the proposed increase in the annual fireworks show donation.
3. **Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Municipal Budget** – Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the FY24 budget. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: There was no public comment on non-agenda items.

(0:10:20) APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The draft minutes of the August 15 and August 22, 2023 meetings were included in the council packet. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve the August 15, 2023 minutes as presented. Councilmember Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the August 22, 2023 minutes as presented. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

(0:10:55) CITY COURT REPORT: Criminal violation reports by city from the Montana Courts of Limited Jurisdiction for 2016 through 2022 were on the council room table. City Judge Dennis Loveless reported that there would be a jury trial within the month.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

(0:12:35) Administration – A copy of an email from Lewis and Clark County Elections Administrator Connor Fitzpatrick was on the council room table. Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren reported that the AARP FitLot classes at Kennedy Park had been well-attended and would be wrapping up for the season on September 8th; park rentals had slowed since school started, but gym rentals were increasing; the HB536 fuel tax allocation had been received; and that the city’s general election had been cancelled due to the number of candidates filed.

(0:15:40) Police Department – Police Chief Mike Sanders reported that there had been 441 calls-for-service in August; he attended Coffee with the Chamber at Galaxy Roasting; night shift coverage resumed August 23rd; and that Officer Kirkegaard was attending the Montana Law Enforcement Academy.

(0:17:25) Public Works – A written report was included in the council packet. Public Works Director Kevin Ore reported that the infrastructure project under the highway was nearing completion; contract updates for sewer districts outside city limits would begin soon; the new ortho pumps are working well; the new McClellan Creek water tank had been filled; and the new color-changing lights had been installed in the city hall parking lot lampposts in time for Homecoming. He noted that the East Helena Block Party and 227 Days were scheduled for the following weekend.

Volunteer Fire Department - Fire Chief Troy Maness had not yet arrived via Zoom.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. **(0:23:40) Municipal Solid Waste Disposal Agreement** – The draft agreement was included in the council packet. Mayor Harris reported that the agreement reflected a rate increase. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the agreement. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **(0:25:15) Request to Temporarily Close a Portion of North Cleveland Avenue** – Mayor Harris presented State Farm Agent Joe Mitchell’s request to close a portion of the street for a public event. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve pending the specification of the date of the event. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
2. **(0:31:20) East Helena High School Cheer Boot Painting** – EHHS Head Cheer Coach Stephanie Ward requested Council’s approval to paint boot prints on Main Street and Montana Avenue leading toward the high school as part of the Homecoming celebration. There was no public comment. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve the request. Councilmember Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
3. **(0:33:40) 4-H Kennedy Park Fee Waiver** – A copy of the use agreement was included in the council packet. Mayor Harris presented 4-H Leader/Representative Luke Duran’s request to use the park pavilion at no charge on September 12th. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the request. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
4. **(0:35:00) Floodplain Application Fee Waiver for Segment 2 of the Prickly Pear Greenway Trail** – A map of the trail was included in the council packet. Mayor Harris presented a request from Adam Klein of Pioneer Technical Services, Inc. to waive the floodplain application fee as had previously been done for the first segment of the trail. There was no public comment. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve the fee waiver. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
5. **(0:36:00) City Attorney Contract Renewal** – The draft agreement was included in the council packet. Mayor Harris requested Council’s approval to renew City Attorney Elverum’s contract for another two years. The rate requested was included in the new budget. There was no public comment. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve the contract. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

(0:37:40) MAYOR’S REPORT: Mayor Harris reported that he had attended the Board of Health meeting; he met with the Helena Ambassadors; and that the EHHS football team including Parks Maintenance Worker Declan Turner completed a cleanup project around town.

COUNCILMEMBERS' REPORTS:

(0:41:25) Don Dahl reported that he had received a call from a resident obtaining a setback variance.

(0:42:50) Judy Leland had nothing to report.

(0:42:55) Wesley Feist reported that he had attended Coffee with the Chamber; met with the Helena Ambassadors; and thanked the police department for their presence at the beginning of a new school year; noted that Vision Helena would be collaborating with the city on events throughout the valley; and encouraged everyone to attend Helena Aviation Day.

(0:44:55) Suzanne Ferguson had nothing to report.

(0:45:00) LEGAL REPORT: City Attorney Elverum reported that he had been working on rate adjustment letters to sewer districts connected to the wastewater system.

(0:45:45) PAYMENT OF BILLS: Claims 296681 through 296728 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 City Council Meeting, Tuesday, September 19, 6:30 p.m., City Hall Room 110
2. East Helena City Council Meeting, Tuesday, October 3, 6:30 p.m., City Hall Room 110

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Harris adjourned the meeting at 7:17 p.m.

ATTEST:

Clerk/Treasurer

Mayor