

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF EAST HELENA
CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN - ROOM 110
COUNCIL MEETING: 6:30 PM
DATE: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 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, Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren, Public Works Director Kevin Ore, Fire Chief Troy Maness, Police Chief Mike Sanders, and Zoning Officer Jeremy Fadness

PUBLIC PRESENT: Shaun Murgel, Rick Pyfer, Cody Jones, Dustin Bauch, Marina Little, and Dave Jensen

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

(0:00:00) PRESENTATION:

1. **East Helena High School Update** – Activities Director Shaun Murgel updated Council on fall and winter sports and events. He thanked the city for the assistance with hanging banners. This was an information-only item.

(0:04:30) PUBLIC HEARING:

1. **Conditional Use Permit Request for 801 East Riggs Street** – The public notice and staff report were included in the council packet. Zoning Officer Fadness explained that the four-plex that had burned March 17, 2021 had been built before the city’s zoning ordinance was implemented. For the non-conforming structure to be rebuilt, a conditional use permit was now required. He recommended approval of the permit request. This was an information-only item.
2. **Conditional Use Permit Request for 801 East Riggs Street** – Mayor Harris called for public comment on the proposed conditional use permit and received none.
3. **Conditional Use Permit Request for 801 East Riggs Street** – Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the conditional use permit. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

(0:06:45) PUBLIC COMMENTS: Dave Jensen commented in favor of reporting the damaged rail on the Main Street bridge over Prickly Pear Creek to the appropriate agency for repair.

(0:08:00) APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The draft minutes of the October 17, 2023 meeting were included 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: City Judge Dennis Loveless was excused.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

(0:08:25) Administration – Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren reported that she had attended the Helena Area Chamber of Commerce’s Lunch with Local Government; she had been working on the FY23 Annual Financial Report; the Halloween Stroll had gone well; she attended the floodplain ordinance review meeting at WWC Engineering; the admin office had been scheduling hourly rentals for the Recreation Hall; and she attended the website meeting with Robert Peccia & Associates.

(0:10:25) Police Department – Police Chief Mike Sanders reported that there had been 220 calls-for-service in October; he attended the quarterly Missouri River Drug Task Force meeting; he attended the Helena Area Chamber of Commerce’s Coffee with a Cop; and the department was awarded a Department of Justice COPS grant.

(0:14:20) Public Works – A written report was included in the council packet. Public Works Director Kevin Ore reported that bids had been opened for the McClellan Creek transmission main and Valley Bank water line abandonment project; there had been progress on the METG water rights earmarked to be transferred to the city; the first snow plowing of the season had gone well and the logistics of plowing the cul-de-sacs in the Highland Meadows subdivision were being worked out; and that the update to the floodplain ordinance would likely be presented within the next few months.

(0:23:35) Volunteer Fire Department - Fire Chief Troy Maness reported that the department had received two new applicants; the fire trucks have been serviced; the lighting at the fire station was repaired; and that he will not be seeking re-election as chief.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **(0:38:10) Request to Use Main Street Park for East Helena Christmas Stroll** – Mayor Harris presented Stacia Winslow’s request to set up in Main Street Park during the Christmas Stroll. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the request. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
2. **(0:39:30) Request to Use Recreation Hall for East Helena Historical Society Annual Dinner** – A copy of the use agreement was included in the council packet. Rick Pyfer was present to request free use of the Recreation Hall for the historical society’s annual dinner on December 20th. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the request. Councilmember Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. **(00:29:30) Volunteer Fire Department Call-Log Stats** – A summary of the department’s 2022 calls-for-service was included in the council packet. Fire Chief Maness discussed the breakdown of the various incident codes with Council. This was an information-only item.
4. **(0:48:25) Donation of Season Family Pool Pass to the East Helena Christmas Stroll** – A copy of the 2024 season pool pass was included in the council packet. Mayor Harris noted that the donation was made every year. There was no public comment. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve the donation. Councilmember Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
5. **(0:48:50) FY24 1st Quarter Budget vs Actual Report** – A copy of the report was included in the council packet. Public Works Director Ore reported that the results were as expected. This was an information-only item.
6. **(0:50:00) Request to Close the Admin Office Friday, November 24, 2023, and Allow Staff to Use Vacation Time** – Mayor Harris presented the office staff’s annual request to close the office on Black Friday and use their vacation time. There was no public comment. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve. Councilmember Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
7. **(0:50:55) Staff Holiday Party** – Councilmember Ferguson suggested possible dates and activities for the party. This was an information-only item.
8. **(0:54:05) Letter of Support for Montana Business Assistance Connection (MBAC) for CRDC Re-Certification** – The draft letter was included in the council packet. Mayor Harris presented Eric Seidensticker’s request for the letter of support. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the letter. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

(0:55:05) MAYOR’S REPORT: Mayor Harris reported that he had attended the Board of Health meeting; he had received many phone calls after the snow storm regarding plowing; a snow sculptor had offered his services for the Halloween and Christmas Strolls; and that he handed out candy at the Halloween Stroll.

COUNCILMEMBERS’ REPORTS:

(0:59:55) Don Dahl reported that he had handed out candy at the Halloween Stroll and that it was well-attended.

(1:02:00) Judy Leland reported that she had handed out candy at the Halloween Stroll and attended the Water Quality Protection District meeting.

(1:02:15) Wesley Feist reported that he had handed out candy at the Halloween Stroll; attended a Vision Helena meeting; attended the Helena Area Chamber of Commerce’s Coffee with a Cop and Lunch with Local Government; and reported that the Chamber of Commerce was looking for volunteers for and upcoming Special Olympics event.

(1:05:00) Suzanne Ferguson reported that she had handed out candy at the Halloween Stroll and attended the Helena Area Chamber of Commerce’s Lunch with Local Government.

LEGAL REPORT: City Attorney Pete Elverum was excused.

(1:05:45) PAYMENT OF BILLS: Claims 296885 through 296967 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 EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. East Helena Christmas Stroll Thursday, December 7, 5:30 p.m.

MEETING SCHEDULE:

1. East Helena City Council Meeting, Tuesday, November 21, 6:30 p.m., City Hall Room 110
2. East Helena City Council Meeting, Tuesday, December 5, 6:30 p.m., City Hall Room 110

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Harris adjourned the meeting at 7:37 p.m.

ATTEST:

Clerk/Treasurer

Mayor