

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF EAST HELENA
CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN - ROOM 110
COUNCIL MEETING: 6:30 PM
DATE: TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2024
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 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, Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren, Public Works Director Kevin Ore, City Attorney Pete Elverum, and City Engineers Brad Koenig and Ryan Seyler

PUBLIC PRESENT: Roy Fair, Quinten Gonzalez, Odell Cantrell, John Brown, Dave Jensen (via Zoom), Cindy Brooks (via Zoom), and Mary Hollow (via Zoom)

ABSENT/EXCUSED: City Judge Dennis Loveless, Police Chief Mike Sanders, and Fire Chief Roger Campbell

***Mayor Harris moved the meeting to New Business #2 at this time.

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

(0:03:55) PRESENTATION:

- 1. Water Master Plan Update** – A written version of the presentation was included in the council packet. Enlarged maps were on the council room table. Engineers Brad Koenig and Ryan Seyler of Robert Peccia & Associates (RPA) discussed how the city’s rapid growth would affect the water system, projected water demands, water source needs, capacity, water rights, and infrastructure. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the updates to the water master plan. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

(0:54:15) APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The draft minutes of the January 2, 2024 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: A written report for the month of December 2023 was included in the council packet. City Judge Dennis Loveless was excused.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

(0:54:50) Administration – Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren reported that there would be a resolution regarding the 2024 Local Government Review at the next meeting; the recreation hall was getting more use now that it can be rented by the hour; and that there had been a glitch during the most recent emailing of the utility bills.

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

(0:57:30) Public Works – A written report was included in the council packet. Public Works Director Kevin Ore reported that the department had been responding to frozen pipes; the clarifier froze over at the wastewater treatment plant; Maintenance Workers Carpenter and Cox had been preparing for their water operator certification exams; he had been working with the water rights attorney; and that Stahly Engineering was progressing on the RAISE grant to improve Montana Avenue/Valley Drive. He updated Council on the department’s snow plowing strategy and schedule.

Volunteer Fire Department - Fire Chief Roger Campbell was excused.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **(1:10:05) Resolution of Respect and Esteem for Rick Pyfer** – Mayor Harris expressed his appreciation for Rick Pyfer. There was no public comment. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve the resolution. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
2. **(0:00:55) Request to use Main Street Park for Bike Blessing 2024, Saturday, April 27th** – Roy Fair of the Servants for Christ Motorcycle Ministry, Helena, Montana requested Council’s approval to use Main Street Park including the pavilion, portable toilets, garbage cans, and electrical service at no charge for the annual Bike Blessing. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the request. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. ***Mayor Harris returned the meeting to the Public Comments section at this time.
3. **(1:12:20) METG Access Agreement Update** – The original agreement and the update were included in the council packet. Public Works Director Ore explained that an amendment was needed to update access to the groundwater monitoring wells on city-owned property that have been abandoned by the Montana Environmental Trust Group. There was no public comment. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve the update to the agreement. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
4. **(1:13:40) Reappointment of Councilmember Suzanne Ferguson to the Zoning Commission** – A copy of the Planning Board/Zoning Commission roster was included in the council packet. Mayor Harris thanked Councilmember Ferguson for her service on the commission. There was no public comment. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to reappoint Suzanne Ferguson to the Zoning Commission. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. Councilmembers Dahl, Feist, and Leland voted aye. Councilmember Ferguson abstained. The motion passed.

5. **(1:15:00) Letter of Support for Prickly Pear Land Trust’s Montana Trails Stewardship Grant** – A copy of the letter of support was included in the council packet. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the letter. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

(1:16:05) MAYOR’S REPORT: Mayor Harris reported that he attended Rick Pyfer’s funeral; attended the Board of Health meeting; attended the Patrol Officer interview; and met with Stahly Engineering regarding the RAISE grant.

COUNCILMEMBERS’ REPORTS:

(1:19:50) Don Dahl reported that he had attended Rick Pyfer’s funeral and that there would be a Planning Board meeting on the 24th.

(1:20:05) Judy Leland reported that she had attended the Patrol Officer interview and the tour of the new Valley Bank.

(1:20:50) Wesley Feist reported that he had attended Rick Pyfer’s funeral; toured the new Valley Bank; attended the MBAC board meeting; and that he plans to attend the school district’s long-term infrastructure meeting.

Suzanne Ferguson had nothing to report.

(1:22:20) LEGAL REPORT: City Attorney Elverum reported that he attended the meeting with the developers of Prickly Pear Estates; city court was going well; and that Officer Morris will be the acting police chief while Chief Sanders is away.

(1:27:00) PAYMENT OF BILLS: Claims 297127 through 297177 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, February 6, 6:30 p.m., City Hall Room 110
2. East Helena City Council Meeting, Tuesday, February 20, 6:30 p.m., City Hall Room 110

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Harris adjourned the meeting at 7:57 p.m.

ATTEST:

Clerk/Treasurer

Mayor