

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF EAST HELENA
CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN - ROOM 110
COUNCIL MEETING: 6:30 PM
DATE: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 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 Dahl led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CITY OFFICIALS & STAFF PRESENT: Mayor Kelly Harris, Council President Don Dahl, Councilmember Judy Leland, Councilmember Wesley Feist (via Zoom), Councilmember Suzanne Ferguson, Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren, Public Works Director Kevin Ore, City Attorney Pete Elverum, and Police Chief Mike Sanders

PUBLIC PRESENT: Dave Jensen (via Zoom)

ABSENT/EXCUSED: City Judge Dennis Loveless and Fire Chief Roger Campbell

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

(0:00:40) APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The draft minutes of the January 16, 2024 meeting were included in the council packet. Councilmember Dahl noted a spelling error. There was no public comment. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CITY COURT REPORT: City Judge Dennis Loveless was excused.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

(0:01:30) Administration – Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren reported that she had attended the East Helena Police Commission meeting; participated in the wastewater improvements project funding call; noted that the city had been approved for loans for the wastewater improvements; and reported that zoning and building permit activity had increased since the approval of the Vigilante Subdivision Phase III final plat.

(0:03:10) Police Department –Police Chief Mike Sanders reported that there had been 329 calls-for-service during the month of January which were mostly for traffic violations, but included 18 welfare checks and 7 auto accidents; Officers Johnston, Morris, and Royce are attending online training for supervisors; and that the department provided crash data to Stahly Engineering to use in the RAISE grant application for improvements to Montana Avenue/Valley Drive.

(0:07:45) Public Works - A written report was included in the council packet. Public Works Director Kevin Ore reported that there would be a wastewater presentation at the March 5th meeting; a water main break was repaired in the 400 block of East Riggs Street; he attended a meeting with the water rights attorney and would be attending another soon; and the handrail on the west stairs of City Hall had been repaired.

Volunteer Fire Department - Fire Chief Roger Campbell was excused.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **(0:12:45) Confirmation of Patrol Officer Kyle Butler** – Relevant Montana Code and administrative rules and the East Helena Police Commission’s Certificate of Qualification of Applicant were included in the council packet. Police Chief Sanders discussed Kyle Butler’s qualifications. There was no public comment. Councilmember Ferguson made a motion to confirm Kyle Butler as a patrol officer for the city. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
2. **(0:15:40) Road Project Funding HB 355** – The notice of public hearing, a map of roads and streets proposed to be improved, and a list of available funds eligible for distribution to Montana cities and towns through HB 355 were included in the council packet. Public Works Director Kevin Ore recommended applying this funding towards the paving of the 100 blocks of Lewis, Dudley, and Clinton Streets, the repaving of the 100 Block of East Groschell Street, and the repaving of the 400 and 500 Blocks of East Riggs Street. Total amount of paving will be determined once bids are opened. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
3. **(0:18:30) Local Agency Guidelines (LAG) Agreement, MDT, Valley Drive TA Grant** – A copy of the draft agreement was included in the council packet. Public Works Director Ore and City Attorney Elverum discussed the agreement with Council. There was no public comment. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve the agreement. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
4. **(0:22:35) Resolution 600 Calling for an Election on the Question of Conducting a Local Government Review and Establishing a Study Commission to Do So** – A copy of the MSU Local Government Center’s timeline and sample budget as well as draft Resolution 600 were included in the council packet. City Attorney Elverum summarized the resolution. Councilmember Feist noted an error in the language of the resolution. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve Resolution 600 as amended. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

(0:25:25) MAYOR’S REPORT: Mayor Harris reported that he had attended the Board of Health meeting; attended the Planning Board meeting; presented the flag flown at City Hall on Rick Pyfer Day, January 22, 2024 to Rick’s family; and updated Council on the letters of support being submitted for the RAISE grant.

COUNCILMEMBERS’ REPORTS:

(0:29:00) Don Dahl reported that he attended the Planning Board meeting and that there would be a public hearing at the upcoming Zoning Commission meeting regarding the proposed annexation of the Iron Horse Landing subdivision.

Judy Leland had nothing to report.

(0:29:35) Wesley Feist reported that he had received positive comments about the plowing in East Helena; attended School District 9’s long-term infrastructure planning meeting; attended Coffee with the Chamber; and that he attended the Opioid Abatement Trust meeting.

Suzanne Ferguson had nothing to report.

(0:31:20) LEGAL REPORT: City Attorney Elverum reported that he had discussions regarding the updates to the subdivision regulations discussed at the Planning Board meeting and that City Court was keeping busy with traffic violations and auto accidents.

(0:32:15) PAYMENT OF BILLS: Claims 297178 through 297232 were presented for Council’s review. Councilmember Leland made a motion to pay the bills. Councilmember Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

MEETING SCHEDULE:

1. East Helena Zoning Commission Meeting, Tuesday, February 13, 6:00 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 7:04 p.m.

ATTEST:

Clerk/Treasurer

Mayor