

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF EAST HELENA
CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN - ROOM 110
COUNCIL MEETING: 6:30 PM
DATE: TUESDAY, APRIL 2, 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, Councilmember Suzanne Ferguson, Police Chief Mike Sanders, Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren, Public Works Director Kevin Ore, and City Attorney Pete Elverum

PUBLIC PRESENT: Blaine Verbanac, Eric Dunn, Shawn White Wolf, and Dave Jensen

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

(0:01:05) Dave Jensen commented in opposition to the current trajectory of wastewater system development and commented in support of requiring impact fees from developers and newcomers to the wastewater system. Mr. Jensen provided a written version of his comments for the record.

(0:03:20) Shawn White Wolf updated Council on the progress of the East Helena Senior Citizens Club and announced his intention to create a senior center in East Helena.

(0:05:20) APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The draft minutes of the March 19, 2024 meeting were included in the council packet. (0:05:35) Dave Jensen commented that he did not comment in opposition to the proposed annexation of Iron Horse Landing, but that the developers should be contractually obligated to pay all infrastructure impact fees. Mr. Jensen provided a written version of his comments for the record. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

(0:07:35) Administration – Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren reported that the FY23 audit would occur the week of May 6th; the office was receiving increasing calls for information

about swimming lessons; and she had been working with RPA in preparation for the changeover of the city website.

(0:08:15) Police Department – Police Chief Mike Sanders reported that there had been 377 calls-for-service in the month of March; he gave a presentation on leadership at the Montana Law Enforcement Academy; met with county IT; and that he attended Coffee with the Chamber. He answered questions from Council.

(0:11:30) Public Works – A written report was included in the council packet. Public Works Director Kevin Ore reported that he attended the water rights meeting with METG, DNRC, and FWP; the parks master plan will be presented at the next council meeting; the HB 355 funding request is nearly finished; and the road to the new rodeo grounds will be called Buckle Street.

Volunteer Fire Department - Fire Chief Roger Campbell was excused.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. **(0:16:45) Second Reading of Ordinance 286 Amending the East Helena Land Use Map by Rezoning to Residential District on Certain Lots Prior to Annexation into the City** – A copy of the first reading of the ordinance was included in the council packet. Mayor Harris reported that no changes had been made to it. (0:17:15) Dave Jensen commented that developers should be contractually obligated to pay all infrastructure impact fees. Mr. Jensen provided a written version of his comments for the record. Mayor Harris noted that development fees have been established by the city. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve the second reading of Ordinance 286. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **(0:18:05) Request to Hold a Craft Fair in Main Street Park July 13th** – Clerk/Treasurer Thorngren presented the request from Juli Moden of High Country Vendors to once again hold a craft fair in the park during rodeo weekend. There was no public comment. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve a blanket business license for the event and use of the park for \$100. Councilmember Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
2. **(0:19:30) 2020 Urban Boundaries Map (Associated System Impacts)** – A copy of the map was included in the council packet. Public Works Director Ore requested Council's approval for Mayor Harris to sign the map. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the 2020 Urban Boundaries Map. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
3. **(0:20:35) Main Street Park Gazebo Fee Waiver for VFW Community Cleanup** – Eric Dunn of the VFW was present to request use of the gazebo for volunteers during the event on May 4th. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve free use of the gazebo for the cleanup event. Councilmember Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. **(0:22:15) Temporary (TE) Employment of Pool Manager/ Life Guard Trainer** – A copy of personnel policy regarding temporary employment was included in the council packet. Mayor Hars and Public Works Director Ore discussed the candidate and the requirements of the position with Council. (0:25:45) Dave Jensen commented that insufficient information was provided to make informed public comment and commented in opposition to the position. Mr. Jensen provided a written version of his comments for the record. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve the temporary position. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
5. **(0:27:05) FY24 3rd Quarter Budget vs Actual Report** – A copy of the report was included in the council packet. (0:28:05) Dave Jensen commented that insufficient information was provided to make informed public comment. Mr. Jensen provided a written version of his comments for the record. Public Works Director Ore discussed the report with Council. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the report. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
6. **(0:31:25) FY25 MMIA Group Benefit Elections** – A copy of the current benefit elections and the early rate indication were included in the council packet. The FY25 rates that had been received earlier in the day were on the council room table. Clerk/Treasurer Thorngren reported that the cost per employee would increase by about \$70. (0:33:30) Dave Jensen commented that insufficient information was provided to make informed public comment. Mr. Jensen provided a written version of his comments for the record. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the current benefit elections for FY25. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

(0:35:40) MAYOR'S REPORT: Mayor Harris reported that he had been in discussions regarding pool staffing and the new rodeo grounds; working on a building official/inspector position; and that he attended the water rights meeting with METG, DNRC, and FWP.

COUNCILMEMBERS' REPORTS:

Don Dahl had nothing to report.

Judy Leland had nothing to report.

(0:38:30) Wesley Feist reported that he had attended Hometown Helena; attended Coffee with the Chamber; visited with NorthWestern Energy about upgrades to the system; thanked the VFW for the Easter egg hunt; and noted that he had seen the East Helena Volunteer Fire Department in the news twice recently.

Suzanne Ferguson had nothing to report.

(0:39:50) LEGAL REPORT: City Attorney Elverum reported that he had attended the water rights meeting with METG, DNRC, and FWP; he took a conflict-of-interest case for the City of Helena; court has been going well; and that he attended a coordination meeting with PPLT.

(0:42:05) PAYMENT OF BILLS: Claims 297365 through 297421 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, April 16, 6:30 p.m., City Hall Room 110
2. East Helena City Council Meeting, Tuesday, May 7, 6:30 p.m., City Hall Room 110

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Harris adjourned the meeting at 7:12 p.m.

ATTEST:

Clerk/Treasurer

Mayor