

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF EAST HELENA
CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN - ROOM 110
COUNCIL MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING: 6:30 PM
DATE: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 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 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, Police Chief Mike Sanders, Deputy Police Chief Ed Royce, City Attorney Pete Elverum, and Fire Chief Roger Campbell (via Zoom)

PUBLIC PRESENT: Greg Wirth and Dave Jensen

ABSENT/EXCUSED: City Judge Dennis Loveless

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. **FY25 Municipal Budget** – The published notice and Draft Resolution 612 were included in the council packet. Mayor Harris noted that the final budget contained the changes requested by Council at the last meeting. This was an information-only item.
2. **FY25 Municipal Budget** – Mayor Harris called for public comment on the proposed budget. Dave Jensen commented in opposition to certain budget lines. Mr. Jensen provided a written version of his comments for the record.
3. **FY25 Municipal Budget** – Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve the budget. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

(0:05:35) PUBLIC COMMENTS: Dave Jensen commented in opposition to certain allocations of funds, the performance of city staff, and certain pavement repairs. Mr. Jensen provided a written version of his comments for the record.

(0:09:55) APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The draft minutes of the August 20, 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: City Judge Dennis Loveless was excused.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

(0:10:20) Administration – Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren reported that she completed the USDA-RD loan reporting, attended the RAISE grant kickoff meeting, and that MASBO had officially moved out of their office space on the second floor of city hall.

(0:11:25) Police Department – Police Chief Mike Sanders reported that the department had been short-staffed last month due to injuries and a resignation, but that the injured officers would be cleared for duty soon. An open position announcement will be posted. Police Administrative Support Specialist Jones will attend Terminal Agency Coordinator (TAC) training.

(0:13:15) Public Works – A written report was included in the council packet. Public Works Director Kevin Ore reported that the garbage truck had broken down and garbage service will be delayed until a truck can be borrowed from Tri County Disposal. He attended the RAISE grant kickoff meeting.

(0:15:20) Volunteer Fire Department - Fire Chief Roger Campbell reported that the department had been training two new members and four new applications had been received. He thanked city staff for their assistance with the budget and background checks.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **(0:17:15) Prickly Pear Estates Common Boundary Line Relocation** – A copy of the proposed certificate of survey was in the council packet. Greg Wirth of Stahly Engineering explained that the relocation would create Tract 12-A and assign its zoning as Residential-2. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the boundary line relocation. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
2. **(0:18:55) West Gail Street (North Borrow Pit) Weed & Vegetation Issues** – Copies of a narrative and 9 pictures were included in the council packet. Dave Jensen discussed the city's nuisance vegetation ordinance, asserted that the city was not in compliance with its own ordinance on the street where he lives, and requested that Council instruct personnel to treat the north borrow pit of West Gail Street like other East Helena properties. Mr. Jensen provided a written version of his comments for the record. Public Works Director Ore assured Council that West Gail Street was being maintained in the same manner as other residential streets. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to keep a keen eye on the north borrow pit of Gail Street and concrete trucks washing out in the right of way. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. Councilmembers Feist, Dahl, and Leland voted aye. Councilmember Ferguson voted no. The motion passed.
3. **(0:27:50) Maintenance Foreman Job Description** – The position announcement and job description were included in the council packet. (0:28:15) Dave Jensen commented in opposition to the creation of the position. Mr. Jensen provided a written version of his comments for the record. Councilmember Ferguson made a

motion to approve the Maintenance Foreman job description. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. **(0:29:45) East Helena Street Improvements 2024 Bid Award** – The bid tabulations were on the council room table. Public Works Director Ore reported that bids were significantly less than expected and recommended approval of Helena Sand & Gravel’s bid. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to award the street improvements project to Helena Sand & Gravel. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

(0:32:30) MAYOR’S REPORT: Mayor Harris reported that he attended the Board of Health meeting and the RAISE grant kickoff meeting. He presented keys to new homeowners at the Habitat for Humanity dedication event.

COUNCILMEMBERS’ REPORTS:

(0:34:20) Don Dahl reported that he attended the RAISE grant kickoff meeting.

Judy Leland had nothing to report.

(0:34:55) Wesley Feist reported that he attended the Chamber of Commerce meeting at Florence Crittenton and Coffee with the Chamber. He talked with the Montana Jewish Project regarding the Star of David windows and presented keys to new homeowners at the Habitat for Humanity dedication event.

Suzanne Ferguson had nothing to report.

(0:38:20) LEGAL REPORT: City Attorney Elverum lauded city staff for their performance and dedication to the city. He stressed the need to replace the aging garbage truck.

(0:40:30) PAYMENT OF BILLS: Claims 297879 through 297923 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 17, 6:30 p.m., City Hall Room 110
2. East Helena City Council Meeting, Tuesday, October 1, 6:30 p.m., City Hall Room 110

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Harris adjourned the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

ATTEST:

Clerk/Treasurer

Mayor