

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**CITY OF EAST HELENA**  
**CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN - ROOM 110**  
**COUNCIL MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING: 6:30 PM**  
**DATE: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 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, Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren, Public Works Director Kevin Ore, Police Chief Mike Sanders, City Attorney Pete Elverum, Deputy Police Chief Ed Royce, and Patrol Officer Chris Kirkegaard

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** Bob Murdo, Eric Mason, Heath Mason, and Dave Jensen

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

**(0:00:40) PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Dave Jensen commented in opposition to City Attorney Elverum’s opinion of his previous public comments. Mr. Jensen provided a written version of his comments for the record.

**(0:07:40) APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The draft minutes of the September 17, 2024 meeting were included in the council packet. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**CITY COURT REPORT:** City Judge Dennis Loveless was excused.

**DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:**

**(0:08:05) Administration** – Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren reported that several people attended the Department of Revenue’s property tax rebate assistance event on September 24<sup>th</sup>; the phone system had been updated; the admin office was working on making credit and debit card payments an option in the office; and that text notifications would be available soon.

**(0:09:50) Police Department** – Police Chief Mike Sanders reported that there had been 440 calls-for-service in September; he met with new captain of the Montana Highway Patrol; he attended Coffee with the Chamber; he attended the Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee

meeting; and that there had been six applicants for the open police officer position of which three will be interviewed.

**(0:12:30) Public Works** – A written report was included in the council packet. Public Works Director Kevin Ore reported that the headworks screw auger had failed again; the bid opening deadline for the headworks/CIPP lining project had been extended; 98.3 tons of dried sludge had been hauled to the landfill this year; and that he had talked to the school district regarding the extension of Thurman Street.

**Volunteer Fire Department** - Fire Chief Roger Campbell was excused.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** There was no unfinished business.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **(0:18:15) East Clark Street Sewer District** – Mayor Harris gave a brief history of the district up until the interlocal agreement was terminated. City Attorney Elverum discussed the district’s request for reinstatement of the prior interlocal agreement. (0:21:05) Bob Murdo of Jackson, Murdo & Grant introduced himself on behalf of the bondholder. He answered questions from Council. (0:26:00) President of the former district Heath Mason commented in favor of reinstatement of the interlocal agreement with the district and allowing additional connections to the system. (0:33:30) Dave Jensen commented in support of increasing the rate charged to the district. (0:58:30) Eric Mason commented in favor of reinstatement of the interlocal agreement with the district. Council discussed the preservation of the city’s existing wastewater capacity, adjustment of the rate charged to reflect current rates, the possible application of system development fees, clarification of the actual number of connections within the district, and allowing some time observe payments made and gallons of wastewater produced by the district. Councilmember Ferguson made a motion to table. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
2. **(1:13:15) Cancel or Reschedule November 5<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting** – Mayor Harris noted that city hall would be a polling place on Election Day and that the council meeting fell on that day. There was no public comment. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to cancel the November 5<sup>th</sup> council meeting. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**(1:14:35) MAYOR’S REPORT:** Mayor Harris reported that he had attended the Board of Health meeting; he had attended planning meetings with Public Works Director Ore; and that Helena Sand & Gravel intended to begin work on the roads on October 21<sup>st</sup>.

**COUNCILMEMBERS’ REPORTS:**

**Don Dahl** had nothing to report.

**Judy Leland** had nothing to report.

**(1:19:40) Wesley Feist** reported that he attended the Opioid Abatement meeting; a resident contacted him about abandoned vehicles, overgrown weeds, and community decay; he

attended Coffee with the Chamber; and he received a call from the Montana Jewish Project regarding the Star of David windows.

**Suzanne Ferguson** had nothing to report.

**(1:21:35) LEGAL REPORT:** City Attorney Elverum reported that he attended the RAISE grant meeting; attended the public works coordination meeting; and had been in discussions regarding the roads and truck traffic.

**(1:22:30) PAYMENT OF BILLS:** Claims 298017 through 298059 were presented for Council's review. Councilmember Leland made a motion to pay the bills. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**MEETING SCHEDULE:**

1. East Helena City Council Meeting, Tuesday, October 15, 6:30 p.m., City Hall Room 110

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mayor Harris adjourned the meeting at 7:53 p.m.

ATTEST:

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Clerk/Treasurer

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Mayor