

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF EAST HELENA
CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN - ROOM 110
COUNCIL MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING: 6:30 PM
DATE: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 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 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 (via Zoom), Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren, Public Works Director Kevin Ore, City Attorney Pete Elverum, and Police Chief Mike Sanders

PUBLIC PRESENT: Shaun Murgel, Nancy Marks, Linda Kent, Dave Jensen, and Dan Hill

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

(0:00:40) EAST HELENA HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES UPDATE: East Helena High School Athletic Director Shaun Murgel updated Council on upcoming winter sports and events. He passed out schedules.

(0:04:15) PUBLIC COMMENTS: Boulder Monitor Publisher Nancy Marks introduced herself and Reporter Linda Kent to Council. She handed out copies of the Boulder Monitor and took a picture of the city council and staff.

(0:08:15) APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The draft minutes of the November 19, 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 Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CITY COURT REPORT: City Judge Dennis Loveless was excused.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

(0:08:45) Administration – Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren reported that staff had been preparing for the Christmas Stroll and that she would be attending meetings with Doxo and the Transportation Advisory Committee.

(0:09:15) Police Department – Police Chief Mike Sanders reported that there had been 455 calls-for-service in November; he attended a meeting with County IT; went to the Criminal

Justice Citizens Council meeting (CJCC) meeting regarding overcrowding in the jail; and that the department was preparing for the Christmas Stroll.

(0:11:25) Public Works – A written report was included in the council packet. Public Works Director Kevin Ore reported that he had been working with the new Town Pump to provide garbage removal services for their trash compactor for which the city didn't own a compatible garbage truck; that the city should be able to purchase plow trucks from the county soon; and that he and Wastewater Superintendent Pursley would be touring two different types of wastewater plants.

Volunteer Fire Department - Fire Chief Roger Campbell was excused.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. **(0:14:00) Second Reading of Ordinance 290 Providing that the East Helena Municipal Code Be Amended by Revising Chapter 6.1.3, Public Drinking, Defining Public Places to Preclude Kennedy Park, Main Street Park, and the Downtown Commercial District Along Main Street from 1st Street to Thurman Avenue** – Mayor Harris noted that no changes were made since the first reading of the ordinance. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the second reading of Ordinance 290. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **(0:14:55) East Clark Street Sewer District Interlocal Agreement** – City Attorney reported that he was working on a full rewrite of the agreement. (0:15:45) Dan Hill commented in favor of reestablishing the agreement. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to table. Councilmember Feist seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
2. **(0:17:00) Montana Internet Service Agreement** – A copy of the agreement was in the council packet. Public Works Director Ore noted that Montana Internet would provide free internet service for city hall, the recreation hall, the swimming pool, and the wastewater treatment plant in exchange for allowing a tower to be installed on the roof of city hall. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the agreement. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
3. **(0:18:35) Water Rights Attorney Bloomquist's Letter** – The draft letter was included in the council packet. Mayor Harris noted that this letter was a response to the METG's November 4th letter offering a certain amount of water rights on the former ASARCO property to the city. City Attorney Elverum confirmed that Water Rights Attorney Bloomquist's letter encapsulated that more water rights were in the best interests of the city. Council discussed some of the finer points of the letter. There was no public comment. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve the letter. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
4. **(0:28:35) Floating Holiday Discussion** – Mayor Harris discussed the possibility of giving staff a floating holiday in lieu of alternating Election Days off. He noted that

the state had recently made the same change. Council indicated that they were open to seeing the proposal on a future agenda. This was an information-only item.

(0:31:15) MAYOR'S REPORT: Mayor Harris reported that he had been working on water rights, a garbage service solution for the new Town Pump's trash compactor, a policy for jake brakes, preparations for the Christmas Stroll, and that he had found a potential home for the Star of David windows with the Montana Jewish Project.

COUNCILMEMBERS' REPORTS:

(0:38:55) Don Dahl reported that there would be a Planning Board meeting on December 12th and a Zoning Commission meeting on December 19th regarding the Vigilante West subdivision.

Judy Leland had nothing to report.

(0:39:45) Wesley Feist reported that he had attended the meeting regarding the Star of David windows and the Montana Jewish Project, visited with Commissioner Hunthausen regarding the possibilities for the East Helena library, and that he received a message from the Helena Area Community Foundation regarding possibilities in East Helena. He noted that he will be attending the Helena Area Chamber of Commerce small business expo and the opioid abatement trust meeting.

(0:42:15) Suzanne Ferguson commented in favor of a new library in East Helena.

(0:42:30) LEGAL REPORT: City Attorney Elverum reported that he had been working on the new agreement with the East Clark Street Sewer District and that court was going well.

(0:42:50) PAYMENT OF BILLS: Claims 298218 through 298265 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, December 17, 6:30 p.m., City Hall Rm 110
2. East Helena City Council Meeting, Tuesday, January 3, 6:30 p.m., City Hall Room 110

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Harris adjourned the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

ATTEST:

Clerk/Treasurer

Mayor