

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**CITY OF EAST HELENA**  
**CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN - ROOM 110**  
**COUNCIL MEETING: 6:30 PM**  
**DATE: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2025**  
**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 Leland led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CITY OFFICIALS & STAFF PRESENT:** Mayor Kelly Harris, Council President Don Dahl, Councilmember Judy Leland, Councilmember Suzanne Ferguson, Councilmember Wesley Feist, Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren, Public Works Director Kevin Ore, City Attorney Pete Elverum, Police Chief Mike Sanders, Deputy Police Chief Ed Royce, and Patrol Officer Chris Kirkegaard

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** John Finn, Andrea Eckerson, Carolyn Jones, Helen Fandrich, Shaun Murgel, Kathleen Hunthausen, Andy Hunthausen, Adam Gill, Jeff Downhour, Gretchen Krumm, Jim Stipcich, Brian Obert (via Zoom), Dave Jensen (via Zoom), and Callie Aschim

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

**(0:00:50) PRESENTATION:**

1. **Montana Commercial Property Assessed Capital Enhancements (C-PACE)** - Carolyn Jones presented information about the Montana Department of Commerce’s program that empowers commercial building owners to save money by financing energy efficiency, water conservation, and renewable energy improvements. She answered questions from Council. This was an information-only item.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** There were no public comments on non-agenda items.

**(0:13:55) APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The draft minutes of the January 7 and January 21, 2025 meetings were included in the council packet. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the January 7, 2025 minutes as presented. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. Councilmembers Feist, Dahl, and Ferguson voted aye. Councilmember Leland abstained. The motion passed. Councilmember Feist noted a correction to the venue in New Business 2 of the January 21, 2025 minutes. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve the January 21, 2025 minutes as amended. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. Councilmembers Dahl, Leland, and Ferguson voted aye. Councilmember Feist abstained. The motion passed.

**CITY COURT REPORT:** A report about courts of limited jurisdiction was included in the council packet. A written financial report was on the council room table. City Judge Dennis Loveless was excused.

**DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:**

**(0:15:55) Administration** – A copy of METG’s December status report was included in the council packet. A copy of an email from Mary Harlow of the League of Women Voters was on the council room table. Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren reported that local elementary school students would once again be touring city hall on February 27<sup>th</sup> for 227 Day and that the county extended the invitation to participate in their community needs assessment hearing again this year.

**(0:17:50) Police Department** – A copy of the Missouri River Drug Task Force’s case statistics was included in the council packet. Police Chief Mike Sanders reported that there had been 446 calls-for-service in January; one of the patrol cars had been damaged by an angry citizen; he will be serving on the Helena Police Department’s promotion board; he will attend the Jefferson County Sheriff’s Department meet-and-greet; and that the surplus vehicles had been sold.

**(0:22:55) Public Works** – A written report was included in the council packet. A copy of MDT’s crosswalk study was also included in the council packet. Public Works Director Kevin Ore reported overfilled garbage cans are in fact reported to the utility clerk and charged for an extra dump; the RAISE grant’s name has been changed to BUILD; he met with the school district regarding crosswalks; and that Habitat for Humanity would like to do a day-of-service for the community.

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

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

1. **(0:27:25) New Town Pump Deviation from Garbage Ordinance** – Mayor Harris reported that there was no update since last meeting. There was no public comment. Councilmember Leland made a motion to table. Councilmember Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
2. **(0:28:15) First Reading of Ordinance 292 Regulating Jake Brakes** – The draft ordinance was included in the council packet. City Attorney Elverum discussed the details of the draft ordinance. Council discussed adding a reference to the relevant fines to the draft and posting appropriate signage. (0:30:45) Kathleen Hunthausen commented in support of the ordinance. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance 292 as amended. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **(0:32:25) Lewis & Clark Library East Helena Branch Feasibility Study** – The presentation was included in the council packet. Library Director John Finn, East Helena Branch Librarian Andrea Eckerson, and Jeff Downhour of Mosaic Architecture discussed a proposed feasibility study to integrate a new public library

into Kennedy Park. They answered questions from Council. Written public comment from School District Superintendent Dan Rispens in support of the feasibility study was on the council room table. (0:49:05) East Helena High School Athletic Director Shaun Murgel commented in favor of the feasibility study. (0:49:25) Library Board member Helen Fandrich commented in favor of the feasibility study. (0:50:15) President and CEO of the Helena Area Chamber of Commerce Callie Aschim commented in favor of the feasibility study. (0:51:10) County Commissioner Andy Hunthausen commented in favor of the feasibility study. (0:50:15) Jim Stipcich commented in favor of the feasibility study. (0:53:25) President of the Friends of the East Helena Library Kathleen Hunthausen commented in favor of the feasibility study. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the feasibility study.

Councilmember Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. **(0:55:30) Disposal of Surplus Firearms** – Draft Resolution 614 was included in the council packet. Police Chief Sanders presented the department’s request to dispose of firearms owned by the city and purchase new firearms with proceeds from the sale. Patrol Officer Chris Kirkegaard presented information on the new firearms the department intends to procure. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve Resolution 614. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion.
3. **(1:03:15) Oak Avenue East Valley Middle School Speed Zone** – Satellite pictures of the area in question were included in the council packet. Mayor Harris reported that the county and the school district were looking at reducing the speed limit on Oak Avenue which is partially owned by the city. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the school speed zone on Oak Avenue. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**(1:06:40) MAYOR’S REPORT:** Mayor Harris reported that he attended the Montana League of Cities and Towns (MLCT) meeting; met with Mary Hollow and Cindy Brooks regarding METG’s reappointment; and that he attended the Helena Exchange Club’s awards ceremony.

**COUNCILMEMBERS’ REPORTS:**

**Don Dahl** had nothing to report.

**Judy Leland** had nothing to report.

**(1:09:35) Wesley Feist** reported that he met with representatives of the C-PACE program.

**Suzanne Ferguson** had nothing to report.

**(1:10:30) LEGAL REPORT:** City Attorney Elverum noted that penalties for jake brakes were already included in statute. He reported that he was tracking issues of interest to the city in the legislature.

**(1:11:25) PAYMENT OF BILLS:** Claims 298429 through 298474 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, February 18, 6:30 p.m., City Hall Room 110
2. East Helena City Council Meeting, Tuesday, March 4, 6:30 p.m., City Hall Room 110

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mayor Harris adjourned the meeting at 7:41 p.m.

ATTEST:

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Clerk/Treasurer

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Mayor