

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF EAST HELENA
CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN - ROOM 110
COUNCIL MEETING: 6:30 PM
DATE: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 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 Feist 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, and City Attorney Pete Elverum

PUBLIC PRESENT: Jacob Kuntz, Carolyn Jones, and Dave Jensen (via Zoom)

ABSENT/EXCUSED: City Judge Dennis Loveless, Police Chief Mike Sanders, and Fire Chief Roger Campbell

(0:00:40) PUBLIC COMMENTS: Jacob Kuntz of the Helena Area Habitat for Humanity discussed the organization’s Critical Home Repair and Habitat Helping Hands programs. He handed out information on both.

(0:06:40) APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The draft minutes of the February 4, 2025 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:

(0:07:10) Administration Department – A copy of Lewis and Clark County Elections’ mail ballot written plan was included in the council packet. Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren reported that the Montana Municipal Interlocal Authority (MMIA) employee benefits program early rate indication for FY26 predicted a base rate adjustment of 9-13%.

Police Department – A written report was on the council room table. Police Chief Mike Sanders was excused.

(0:08:15) Public Works Department – A written report was included in the council packet. Public Works Director Kevin Ore reported that the cold temperatures were affecting the clarifiers at the wastewater treatment plant; a court date for the city’s water rights is

forthcoming; and that staff has been moving lots of snow and calling residents prone to frozen water lines.

Volunteer Fire Department - Fire Chief Roger Campbell was excused.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. **(0:11:55) New Town Pump Deviation from Garbage Ordinance** – A draft agreement was included in the council packet. Mayor Harris reported that some data had been received from Tri County Landfill on the tonnage of compacted solid waste being produced by the new Town Pump. He noted that the tonnage cost along with an administrative fee would be passed on to Town Pump in lieu of providing city garbage services as the city doesn't have equipment to service garbage compactors at this time. (0:13:10) Dave Jensen commented in opposition to the proposed agreement. Mr. Jensen provided a written version of his comments for the public record. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the agreement as presented. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
2. **(0:19:55) Second Reading of Ordinance 292 Regulating Jake Brakes** – The first reading of the ordinance was included in the council packet. Mayor Harris noted that no changes had been made. There was no public comment. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve the second reading of Ordinance 292. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **(0:20:25) Resolution of Intent to Establish a Property Assessed Capital Enhancement (PACE) Program** – Draft Resolution 615 was included in the council packet. Mayor Harris noted that the resolution was the result of the Montana Department of Commerce's presentation at the previous meeting. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve Resolution 615. Councilmember Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
2. **(0:21:30) Star of David Window Mount Display** – An estimate for the mount display was included in the council packet. Public Works Director Ore noted that there was about \$9,000.00 invested in the restoration of the windows and that the mount displays would keep them safe. There was no public comment. Councilmember Feist made a motion to approve the purchase of the mount displays and seek any outside funding that may be available. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

(0:24:50) MAYOR'S REPORT: Mayor Harris reported that he had been receiving calls regarding snow plowing and snow piles; he had been in discussions regarding water rights; and he dropped by Coffee with the Chamber. He thanked the public works and police department for helping residents and motorists deal with the weather.

COUNCILMEMBERS' REPORTS:

(0:27:05) Don Dahl requested clarification on the status of the RAISE grant.

Judy Leland had nothing to report.

(0:28:55) Wesley Feist reported that he had visited with a representative of AARP; he attended Hometown Helena; and that he attended Community Blend (formerly Coffee with the Chamber). He will be attending the Lewis and Metro Clark Opioid Abatement Trust meeting and the Helena Building Industry Association networking event at the brewery.

Suzanne Ferguson had nothing to report.

(0:31:25) LEGAL REPORT: City Attorney Elverum reported that attorney Gavin Voeller, his substitute while he is at legislature, was doing a good job.

(0:31:55) PAYMENT OF BILLS: Claims 298475 through 298528 were presented for Council’s review. Councilmember Leland made a motion to pay the bills. Councilmember Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

MEETING SCHEDULE:

1. East Helena City Council Meeting, Tuesday, March 4, 6:30 p.m., City Hall Rm 110
2. East Helena City Council Meeting, Tuesday, March 18, 6:30 p.m., City Hall Rm 110

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Harris adjourned the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

ATTEST:

Clerk/Treasurer

Mayor