

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF EAST HELENA
CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN - ROOM 110
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING: 6:00 PM
DATE: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 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 6:00 p.m. Councilmember Ferguson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CITY OFFICIALS & STAFF PRESENT: Mayor Kelly Harris, Council President Don Dahl, Councilmember Wesley Feist, Councilmember Suzanne Ferguson, Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren, City Attorney Pete Elverum, Public Works Director Kevin Ore, City Engineer Brad Koenig, and Water Rights Attorney John Bloomquist

PUBLIC PRESENT: Jacob Kuntz and Jeremy Morris

ABSENT/EXCUSED: Councilmember Judy Leland

PUBLIC COMMENTS: There was no public comment on any non-agenda items.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **(0:00:45 Recording 1) Discussion on City of East Helena Water Rights in Response to the Letter from Lieutenant Governor Juras** – The council packet included copies of an email and a letter dated September 15, 2025 from Lieutenant Governor Juras setting forth the state’s final effort to resolve the Prickly Pear Creek water rights presently held by the Montana Environmental Custodial Trust. A copy of the Montana Environmental Trust Group’s offer letter dated November 4, 2024 was also included for reference. Water Rights Attorney John Bloomquist’s basic overview of the Lieutenant Governor’s letter and a map of the former ASARCO property with projected land use were on the council room table. Mayor Harris gave a brief history of the events leading up to the current meeting. Water Rights Attorney John Bloomquist discussed the city’s existing water rights and future needs. City Engineer Brad Koenig discussed the city’s future water needs with respect to projected development. Mr. Bloomquist and Mr. Koenig agreed that the water rights offered could not meet the needs of the city’s projected growth and answered questions from Council.
(0:57:25 Recording 1) Mayor Harris moved the meeting to closed executive session to discuss legal strategy. Members of the public were excused from the meeting. No action was taken during the closed portion of the meeting.
(0:00:01 Recording 2) Mayor Harris reopened the meeting to the public. Council discussed their response to the Lieutenant Governor’s letter. There was no public

comment. Councilmember Ferguson made a motion to send a letter of response stating that the current offer is not adequate to meet the needs of the proposed use of the lands from the ASARCO properties and that the City of East Helena is not in a position to accept this nominal offer and seeks further discussions on an adequate amount of ASARCO water rights for the city. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

MEETING SCHEDULE:

1. East Helena City Council Meeting, Tuesday, October 7, 6:30 p.m., City Hall Rm 110
2. East Helena City Council Meeting, Tuesday, October 21, 6:30 p.m., City Hall Rm 110

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Harris adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

ATTEST:

Clerk/Treasurer

Mayor