

1 **MINUTES OF THE HELPER CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

2 **Thursday, November 6, 2025**

3 **at 6:30 p.m.**

4 **in the Council Chambers**

5 **19 South Main Street**

6 **Helper, Utah 84526**

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9 **ATTENDANCE:**

10 Mayor Lenise Peterman

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13 **Council Members:**

14 David Dornan

15 Robert Olson

16 Lori Barrett

17 David Palacios

18 Edward Chavez - Excused

19 **City Staff:**

20 Community Administrator: Cole Stapley

21 City Recorder: Traci Bishop

22 Deputy Recorder: Shaley Vasquez

23 Police Chief: Sean Draper

24 Police Officer: Garrett Newman

25 Public Works Co-Directors:

26 DJ Romero & Brittany Hansen

27 City Attorney: Dominique Kiahtipes

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31 **CITIZENS:**

32 Nancy Elkins, Debbie Davis, Temple Jackson, Kathy Fausett, Roman Vega, Jen
33 Buttrick, Matt Montoya

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36 **PUBLIC COMMENT**

37 Pam Juliano requested to make a public comment regarding the recent Trunk or
38 Treat – Exhibit A.

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41 **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 2, 2025 COUNCIL**
42 **MEETING.**

On line 131, Council member David Dornan asked for clarification for viewers. The
line read “accept the ordinance as written” and he requested that the word new or
proposed be put before the word ordinance.

Council Member Palacios moved to approve the October 2, 2025, minutes with the amendments discussed. Council Member Barrett seconded the motion. Motion carried, the council roll call vote is as follows:

Council Member	Yes	No	Absent
Dornan	X		
Olson	X		
Barrett	X		
Palacios	X		
Chavez			X
Motion passed			

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF CLOSING MAIN STREET NOVEMBER 28TH, DECEMBER 5TH AND 6TH FOR CHRISTMAS TOWN PARADE.

For the Electric Light Parade, the times would be from 5 p.m. until the parade is finished. Nov. 28th is for the Lights On Ceremony, which is always a challenge as children walk in the dark, Mayor Lenise Peterman explained, to get to the stage. That event seems to be forgotten for closure and she ensured it was included this time.

Council Member Palacios moved to close Main Street for the Christmas Town festivities. Council Member Dornan seconded the motion. Motion carried, the council roll call vote is as follows:

Council Member	Yes	No	Absent
Dornan	X		
Olson	X		
Barrett	X		
Palacios	X		
Chavez			X
Motion passed			

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE 2025-04, AN ORDINANCE SETTING CITY COUNCIL MEETING DATES FOR 2026.

Mayor Peterman said the council would notice that secondary meeting dates were put in, especially around budget, which is a slight change. The Nov. meeting was altered to a Wednesday so that in the future, it would not conflict with the Catholic Carnival dates. She also stated that if there is no business, a meeting can be cancelled. Council member Bob Olson asked if the work meetings were every month,

and City Recorder Traci Bishop clarified that they are proposed for January, March, April, May, August and October. More meetings in the beginning toward budget and a couple toward the end of the year. They are Thursdays as well.

Council Member Palacios moved to approve ordinance 2025-04 approving council meeting dates for 2026. Council Member Olson seconded the motion. Motion carried, the council roll call vote is as follows:

<u>Council Member</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Absent</u>
<u>Dornan</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Olson</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Barrett</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Palacios</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Chavez</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u>X</u>
<u>Motion passed</u>			

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW MEMBER TO THE HELPER CITY LIBRARY BOARD.

Helper City Library Director Diana Grant was joined by Jennifer Buttrick. Ms. Grant explained that as a Utah State Library, they are required to have a library board and they lost two people and are down to four. The board can have up to 9 members and Ms. Buttrick is one of the candidates. She has been to a couple of meetings and is really interested. Ms. Buttrick briefly introduced herself and said she grew up in a library and loves reading.

Council Member Dornan moved to approve Jennifer Buttrick to the library board. Council Member Barrett seconded the motion. Motion carried, the council roll call vote is as follows:

<u>Council Member</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Absent</u>
<u>Dornan</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Olson</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Barrett</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Palacios</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Chavez</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u>X</u>
<u>Motion passed</u>			

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF MOUNTAIN VIEW CEMETERY GIS UPLOAD FOR \$5,000 FROM FRANSON CIVIL ENGINEERING.

Mayor Peterman explained that City Hall has this information in paper and created an Excel a few years ago that is wonky. The city struggles to know what plots have been sold and who is in what resting spot. The GIS system has a cemetery component that can be activated. Mayor Peterman said this would speak with the Excel file and help to utilize the system when selling or filling plots and will make good records. City Recorder Mrs. Bishop explained that she won't even sell a plot until she speaks with Cemetery Sexton DJ Romero, who physically checks the plots as it is all over the place. With the upcoming expansion, the city can incorporate it right away and it is also public-facing, meaning that once it is activated and populated, those visiting the cemetery can access the cemetery GIS to find the space. Council member David Palacios said as the council member assigned the cemetery, this is money well spent.

A lot of other cemeteries around the state are using it, according to Council member Palacios, and he stated that the cemetery is important to the city. To help others out is also the best part of the system.

Council Member Palacios moved to approve Mountain View Cemetery GIS upload. Council Member Dornan seconded the motion. Motion carried, the council roll call vote is as follows:

<u>Council Member</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Absent</u>
<u>Dornan</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Olson</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Barrett</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Palacios</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Chavez</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u>X</u>
<u>Motion passed</u>			

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF LEASING A MINI EXCAVATOR.

Public Works Co-Directors DJ Romero and Brittany Hansen spoke on this, along with Council member Palacios, who explained that the current mini-ex is dated and broke down. Upon digging into repair costs, they were high for the old machine and it wouldn't be money well spent to try and fix it. Mr. Romero and Ms. Hansen have been working hard to find a replacement. Council member Palacios explained that the mini-excavator is used for a lot of stuff in the city and it is a handy machine to have. He said the Co-Directors have worked hard to find the right machine at the right cost. Mr. Romero said that the motors went down on the old one and to replace them is \$8,000 to \$10,000. They received 3 different quotes and with the preferred quote, Mr. Romero said that it is a little bigger than what they already had and will have attachments to go with it to mow many places.

Ms. Hansen said there is a jackhammer attachment as well, which will help in digging graves and hitting big rocks in the cemetery. They received two prices on two different machines, one a bit smaller and one bigger, but they will honor the same price on either one. Next year, the lease can be continued, a new one can be drawn up or a 3-year lease-to-own option can be chosen. Council member Dornan remarked that one is a foreign source out of the United Kingdom. Ms. Hansen said that the one that they would prefer to go with is local, out of Salt Lake. The salesman for the preferred machine has been visiting and been very communicative. They are also willing to service it as-needed. Optional equipment was also debated, such as a "thumb" for the machine. Council member Olson asked how long the old machine was broken, to which the answer was about 3 months.

In Spring Canyon, Waste Water Logistics was paid a chunk of money a few years ago to be compliant with the state, but if they get the bush-whacker with the machine, it would allow Public Works to clean up the canyon themselves. Council member Dornan asked about a bigger trailer, which would be needed. Mr. Romero said that they would come back with a request for a trailer later on. Council member Palacios said this is an enclosed cab, temperature conditioned, and it is a nice machine. The old machine is a '96. Council member Olson asked about the lease-to-own terms, which are \$12,000 for a year. At the end of that year, there is an option to release the equipment or have a new lease. Mr. Romero said they would surplus the old machine, which would help out of the cost for the new machine. Council member Palacios said this machine will do all that is needed from it. It will be worth the time and expense.

Council Member Chavez moved to approve the leasing of the Century mini-excavator. Council Member Barrett seconded the motion. Motion carried, the council roll call vote is as follows:

<u>Council Member</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Absent</u>
<u>Dornan</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Olson</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Barrett</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Palacios</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Chavez</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u>X</u>
<u>Motion passed</u>			

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION FOR THE LAND WATER CONSERVATION GRANT PROGRAM FOR \$580,000.

Mayor Peterman explained that the Land Water Conservation Fund provides funding for the acquisition or development of outdoor recreation spaces. It can protect Public Lands, improve recreation facilities, preserve natural landscapes,

and ensures these resources are available for future generations. The grant requires a match and can go from \$200,000 to \$2,000,000 in the request. Helper has been fortunate to receive a cash donation that will come in by the end of the year by the Houston family and is \$580,000 to put toward the baseball and softball field improvements. Katelyn Groves, Head Softball Coach at USU Eastern, spoke on the hopeful uses for the grant funding. She said that they are looking to take out grass and add in turf for the conservation of water and the time from Public Works. Dugouts and amenities needed will be utilized as well as pushing to have other teams play at the fields.

The current dugout infrastructures cannot house a full college team at this time. However, the grant and the donation from the Houston family will be a game changer to recruit athletes, be competitive and draw in additional players and teams to the area. John and Bobby Houston both played at the Gardner Field and have a sentimental attachment to it, according to Mayor Peterman. They were very gracious in saying they would donate the match. Council member Dornan stated that he does not see a downside in applying for the grant. The mayor explained the grant opened Oct. 15th and closes Jan. 15th, 2026. The Houston's have asked her to write a letter, which she did, and they are working with their financial folks to get the check to Helper by the end of the year so that when the grant is submitted, the cash match can be confirmed.

Mayor Peterman said that this is federal dollars, but Utah State has received the largest amount of funding for this program ever, which is about 5.6 million dollars. The mayor said they are ripe to turn that space into a collegiate field. She thinks the city will see a return on investment and this is not coming from the city's budget, but a gift as a match. Council member Palacios said that Helper is very fortunate to have USU Eastern play there.

Council Member Dornan moved to approve the grant application to the Land Water Conservation Fund. Council Member Barrett seconded the motion. Motion carried, the council roll call vote is as follows:

<u>Council Member</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Absent</u>
<u>Dornan</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Olson</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Barrett</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Palacios</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Chavez</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u>X</u>
<u>Motion passed</u>			

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF STREET LIGHTS COSTING \$1,785.

Mr. Romero explained that he came to work really early one day and realized that there were 3 streetlights out on the overpass. Rocky Mountain Power was able to fix two for now, one is completely shot but the other two are leaking. Changing them was recommended, but they cannot say how long the repairs will be effective. Mr. Romero said this is a safety hazard and the \$1,785 is the cost for all 3. Helper City is responsible for the lights that are found on the overpass for US-6. This was credited as a no-brainer, as there is a need for street lights.

Council Member Barrett moved to approve street lights for \$1,785. Council Member Palacios seconded the motion. Motion carried, the council roll call vote is as follows:

<u>Council Member</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Absent</u>
<u>Dornan</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Olson</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Barrett</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Palacios</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Chavez</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u>X</u>
<u>Motion passed</u>			

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF WAIVING LATE FEES FOR RESIDENTS WHO PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED HEAT ASSISTANCE IN 2024 OR 2025.

Mrs. Bishop said citizens have come in concerned due to the government shutdown. The HEAT program is not accepting applications right now or granting anything and those in City Hall thought it was something that could benefit those recipients. Mayor Peterman voiced her support, saying with the shutdown they are suffering and it is not their fault. During conversation, it was clarified that the years reflect when residents qualified, as 2025 applications have not yet been accepted. Council member Olson clarified that the late fees would be waived for now, during the shutdown. The amendment to clarify read "waiving late fees in November and December for residents who were granted approval for HEAT assistance in 2024 up to the end of 2025."

Council Member Dornan moved to approve waiving late fees for residents who previously received HEAT assistance in 2024-25 as re-written. Council Member Palacios seconded the motion. Motion carried, the council roll call vote is as follows:

<u>Council Member</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Absent</u>
<u>Dornan</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Olson</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Barrett</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Palacios</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

<u>Chavez</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Motion passed</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF WAIVING LATE FEES FOR UTILITY BILLS – VENICE KULA.

Ms. Kula was not in attendance, though Deputy Recorder Shaley Vasquez explained the item a bit. She gets paid after late fees are assessed and she continually gets the fees, which is a hardship for her. The possibility of asking for more than one billing date, a policy approach, etc. was briefly raised.

Council Member Olson moved to table this agenda item. Council Member Palacios seconded the motion. Motion carried, the council roll call vote is as follows:

<u>Council Member</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Absent</u>
<u>Dornan</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Olson</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Barrett</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Palacios</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Chavez</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u>X</u>
<u>Motion passed</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

DICUSSION ON WILDCAT DONATION EXPENSES.

Mayor Peterman explained that basically \$66,000 have been committed. There's a total unspent of roughly \$30,000. The Police Dept. spent their portion, as well as Admin. For the museum, Director Roman Vega said they have spent what was needed for security and computers. Upon talking with Community Administrator Cole Stapley, the remaining \$12,000 should be held onto until the new year to see about possibly needing other funding elsewhere. The cemetery came in under for the engineering by \$10,000. For Public Works, they are waiting for the sprinkler work. Mr. Stapley said that Public Works had a bigger budget for utility beds but they were able to find something that worked better. The library has not spent anything yet, as there are going to be some CLEF funds available via application. They are holding off on spending for now.

Mayor Peterman said she thinks it looks good. Council member Olson asked what will be done with the \$10,000 extra from the cemetery, to which Mr. Stapley said it would be put back into the cemetery as the expansion progresses, as long as the council approves it. It was acknowledged that the cemetery is a high priority. Mayor Peterman said she believes everyone got a win out of the donation and that is huge for the city. She commended the council for how the funding was handled. For the Rio, they were granted \$10,000 and Kenny Driggs submitted an invoice for the

materials, etc. He is out of the state at the moment so they are not sure where he is in the projects.

DISCUSSION ON LIMB PILE.

Fire Chief Matt Montoya said that about two months ago, he discussed the liability of the limb pile with the public works co-directors. Although it is a great asset to the citizens of Helper, there have been many that have abused it and dumped garbage, which is an ongoing issue. Out-of-towners also bring large trucks filled to the pile. He said that Helper is one of the last entities to be burning limb piles and the issue is that there is a large hillside behind the pile. He said it is only a matter of time before the fire spreads. About halfway up the hill, the city limits runs into BLM grounds and there will be a major fine if it gets into the BLM ground. As the Fire Chief, after this year, he is not going to allow any more burning or dumping. Public Works agrees and said they have stopped people with roll-off dumpsters taking things up there. There has been couches, hot tubs, etc previously dumped.

Council member Dornan said that he had a concern about people that didn't want to pay a fee dumping the load anywhere. He also brought up the city incurring a charge on taking loads over to the county landfill. Ms. Hansen said the city spring clean-up would stop as the city would not be able to take that many loads clear to Price. During the same time, Price City does offer for people to take items to the landfill at no fee for a limited time. Mr. Romero explained that the spring clean-up is done for a month straight and there would not be a way to continue that. Mayor Peterman also pointed out that where the cemetery expansion is going will be directly next to the current limb pile. Chief Montoya said that, even with staging a fire truck, there can still be a fire and there is too much at stake to continue it. Chief Montoya said winter burning will not solve anything as the lower pressure will cause more smoke.

One more spring burn will be allowed in 2026 to get rid of the pile and then it will be closed from that point on. Chief Montoya also said that during drought years, it makes no sense to continue to burn the pile. Mayor Peterman asked how this would be communicated with the citizens, such as placing a notice on the back of the bill. Once the burn pile is gone, the gate will be closed and signage will be placed. Administratively, Chief Montoya has the authority to say that the pile will be no more without action from the council. The pile has been closed for some time and more dumping won't be allowed as of the meeting. Chief Montoya said he would meet with the City to determine how to communicate the fate of the limb pile with the citizens.

REPORTS ONLY FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS AND DEPARTMENT HEADS.

CLOSED MEETING-PROPERTY & LEGAL UPDATES

Council Member Olson moved to approve opening closed meeting. Council Member Palacios seconded the motion. Motion carried, the council roll call vote is as follows:

<u>Council Member</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Absent</u>
<u>Dornan</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Olson</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Barrett</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Palacios</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Chavez</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u>X</u>
<u>Motion passed</u>			

A Closed Meeting Sworn Statement was signed and notarized for the record.

Council Member Palacios moved to approve closing the closed meeting. Council Member Barrett seconded the motion. Motion carried, the council roll call vote is as follows:

<u>Council Member</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Absent</u>
<u>Dornan</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Olson</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Barrett</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Palacios</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Chavez</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u>X</u>
<u>Motion passed</u>			

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Council Member Palacios moved to adjourn. Council Member Dornan seconded the motion. Motion carried, the council roll call vote is as follows:

<u>Council Member</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Absent</u>
<u>Dornan</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Olson</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Barrett</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Palacios</u>	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Chavez</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u>X</u>
<u>Motion passed</u>			

I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record
of the Helper City Council meeting held on Thursday, November 6th, 2025.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Lenise Peterman", written over a horizontal line.

Lenise Peterman
Mayor

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Traci Bishop", written over a horizontal line.

Traci Bishop
City Recorder

Approved on December 4th, 2025