

## MINUTES OF THE HELPER CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, November 6, 2025

at 6:30 p.m.

## in the Council Chambers

19 South Main Street

Helper, Utah 84526

## ATTENDANCE:

Mayor Lenise Peterman

### **Council Members:**

David Dornan

Robert Olson

Lori Barrett

David Palacios

Edward Chavez · Excused

### City Staff:

Community Administrator: Cole Stapley

### City Recorder: Traci Bishop

Deputy Recorder: Shaley Vasquez

Police Chief: Sean Draper

Police Officer: Garrett Newman

### Public Works Co-Directors:

DJ Romero & Brittany Hansen

City Attorney: Dominique Kiahtipes

## CITIZENS:

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

## PUBLIC COMMENT

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

## APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 2, 2025 COUNCIL 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.

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

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

46  
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49 **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF CLOSING MAIN STREET**  
50 **NOVEMBER 28<sup>TH</sup>, DECEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup> AND 6<sup>TH</sup> FOR CHRISTMAS TOWN PARADE.**  
51

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

57  
58 Council Member Palacios moved to close Main Street for the Christmas Town  
59 festivities. Council Member Dornan seconded the motion. Motion carried, the  
60 council roll call vote is as follows:

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

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64 **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE 2025-04, AN**  
65 **ORDINANCE SETTING CITY COUNCIL MEETING DATES FOR 2026.**  
66

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

72 and City Recorder Traci Bishop clarified that they are proposed for January, March,  
73 April, May, August and October. More meetings in the beginning toward budget  
74 and a couple toward the end of the year. They are Thursdays as well.  
75

76 Council Member Palacios moved to approve ordinance 2025-04 approving council  
77 meeting dates for 2026. Council Member Olson seconded the motion. Motion  
78 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

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80

81

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

84

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

91

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

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

Motion passed

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

100

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

113  
114 A lot of other cemeteries around the state are using it, according to Council member  
115 Palacios, and he stated that the cemetery is important to the city. To help others  
116 out is also the best part of the system.

117  
118 Council Member Palacios moved to approve Mountain View Cemetery GIS upload.  
119 Council Member Dornan seconded the motion. Motion carried, the council roll call  
120 vote is as follows:

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

121  
122  
123 Motion passed

## DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF LEASING A MINI EXCAVATOR.

124  
125 Public Works Co-Directors DJ Romero and Brittany Hansen spoke on this, along  
126 with Council member Palacios, who explained that the current mini-ex is dated and  
127 broke down. Upon digging into repair costs, they were high for the old machine and  
128 it wouldn't be money well spent to try and fix it. Mr. Romero and Ms. Hansen have  
129 been working hard to find a replacement. Council member Palacios explained that  
130 the mini-excavator is used for a lot of stuff in the city and it is a handy machine to  
131 have. He said the Co-Directors have worked hard to find the right machine at the  
132 right cost. Mr. Romero said that the motors went down on the old one and to replace  
133 them is \$8,000 to \$10,000. They received 3 different quotes and with the preferred  
134 quote, Mr. Romero said that it is a little bigger than what they already had and will  
135 have attachments to go with it to mow many places.

136

137 Ms. Hansen said there is a jackhammer attachment as well, which will help in  
138 digging graves and hitting big rocks in the cemetery. They received two prices on  
139 two different machines, one a bit smaller and one bigger, but they will honor the  
140 same price on either one. Next year, the lease can be continued, a new one can be  
141 drawn up or a 3-year lease-to-own option can be chosen. Council member Dornan  
142 remarked that one is a foreign source out of the United Kingdom. Ms. Hansen said  
143 that the one that they would prefer to go with is local, out of Salt Lake. The  
144 salesman for the preferred machine has been visiting and been very communicative.  
145 They are also willing to service it as-needed. Optional equipment was also debated,  
146 such as a "thumb" for the machine. Council member Olson asked how long the old  
147 machine was broken, to which the answer was about 3 months.  
148

149 In Spring Canyon, Waste Water Logistics was paid a chunk of money a few years  
150 ago to be compliant with the state, but if they get the bush-whacker with the  
151 machine, it would allow Public Works to clean up the canyon themselves. Council  
152 member Dornan asked about a bigger trailer, which would be needed. Mr. Romero  
153 said that they would come back with a request for a trailer later on. Council  
154 member Palacios said this is an enclosed cab, temperature conditioned, and it is a  
155 nice machine. The old machine is a '96. Council member Olson asked about the  
156 lease-to-own terms, which are \$12,000 for a year. At the end of that year, there is an  
157 option to release the equipment or have a new lease. Mr. Romero said they would  
158 surplus the old machine, which would help out of the cost for the new machine.  
159 Council member Palacios said this machine will do all that is needed from it. It will  
160 be worth the time and expense.  
161

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

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

165  
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168 **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION**  
169 **FOR THE LAND WATER CONSERVATION GRANT PROGRAM FOR \$580,000.**  
170

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

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

183

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

195

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

202

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

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

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208

209 DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF STREET LIGHTS COSTING  
210 \$1,785.

211  
212 Mr. Romero explained that he came to work really early one day and realized that  
213 there were 3 streetlights out on the overpass. Rocky Mountain Power was able to fix  
214 two for now, one is completely shot but the other two are leaking. Changing them  
215 was recommended, but they cannot say how long the repairs will be effective. Mr.  
216 Romero said this is a safety hazard and the \$1,785 is the cost for all 3. Helper City  
217 is responsible for the lights that are found on the overpass for US-6. This was  
218 credited as a no-brainer, as there is a need for street lights.  
219

220 Council Member Barrett moved to approve street lights for \$1,785. Council Member  
221 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>
Dornan	X	—	—
Olson	X	—	—
Barrett	X	—	—
Palacios	X	—	—
Chavez	—	—	X

Motion passed

222  
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225 **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF WAIVING LATE FEES FOR**  
226 **RESIDENTS WHO PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED HEAT ASSISTANCE IN 2024 OR**  
227 **2025.**  
228

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

239  
240 Council Member Dornan moved to approve waiving late fees for residents who  
241 previously received HEAT assistance in 2024-25 as re-written. Council Member  
242 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>
Dornan	X	—	—
Olson	X	—	—
Barrett	X	—	—
Palacios	X	—	—

<u>Chavez</u>	—	—	—	X
<u>Motion passed</u>				

243

244

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

247

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

252

253 Council Member Olson moved to table this agenda item. Council Member Palacios  
254 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>
Dornan	X	—	—
Olson	X	—	—
Barrett	X	—	—
Palacios	X	—	—
Chavez	—	—	X

Motion passed

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256

257 **DICUSSION ON WILDCAT DONATION EXPENSES.**

258

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

270

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

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

280

## 281 DISCUSSION ON LIMB PILE.

282

283 Fire Chief Matt Montoya said that about two months ago, he discussed the liability  
284 of the limb pile with the public works co-directors. Although it is a great asset to the  
285 citizens of Helper, there have been many that have abused it and dumped garbage,  
286 which is an ongoing issue. Out-of-towners also bring large trucks filled to the pile.  
287 He said that Helper is one of the last entities to be burning limb piles and the issue  
288 is that there is a large hillside behind the pile. He said it is only a matter of time  
289 before the fire spreads. About halfway up the hill, the city limits runs into BLM  
290 grounds and there will be a major fine if it gets into the BLM ground. As the Fire  
291 Chief, after this year, he is not going to allow any more burning or dumping. Public  
292 Works agrees and said they have stopped people with roll-off dumpsters taking  
293 things up there. There has been couches, hot tubs, etc previously dumped.  
294

295 Council member Dornan said that he had a concern about people that didn't want to  
296 pay a fee dumping the load anywhere. He also brought up the city incurring a  
297 charge on taking loads over to the county landfill. Ms. Hansen said the city spring  
298 clean-up would stop as the city would not be able to take that many loads clear to  
299 Price. During the same time, Price City does offer for people to take items to the  
300 landfill at no fee for a limited time. Mr. Romero explained that the spring clean-up  
301 is done for a month straight and there would not be a way to continue that. Mayor  
302 Peterman also pointed out that where the cemetery expansion is going will be  
303 directly next to the current limb pile. Chief Montoya said that, even with staging a  
304 fire truck, there can still be a fire and there is too much at stake to continue it.  
305 Chief Montoya said winter burning will not solve anything as the lower pressure  
306 will cause more smoke.  
307

308 One more spring burn will be allowed in 2026 to get rid of the pile and then it will  
309 be closed from that point on. Chief Montoya also said that during drought years, it  
310 makes no sense to continue to burn the pile. Mayor Peterman asked how this would  
311 be communicated with the citizens, such as placing a notice on the back of the bill.  
312 Once the burn pile is gone, the gate will be closed and signage will be placed.  
313 Administratively, Chief Montoya has the authority to say that the pile will be no  
314 more without action from the council. The pile has been closed for some time and  
315 more dumping won't be allowed as of the meeting. Chief Montoya said he would  
316 meet with the City to determine how to communicate the fate of the limb pile with  
317 the citizens.  
318  
319

320 **REPORTS ONLY FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS AND DEPARTMENT HEADS.**  
321

322  
323 **CLOSED MEETING-PROPERTY & LEGAL UPDATES**  
324  
325 Council Member Olson moved to approve opening closed meeting. Council Member  
326 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>
Dornan	X	—	—
Olson	X	—	—
Barrett	X	—	—
Palacios	X	—	—
Chavez	—	—	X
<u>Motion passed</u>			

327  
328 A Closed Meeting Sworn Statement was signed and notarized for the record.  
329  
330 Council Member Palacios moved to approve closing the closed meeting. Council  
331 Member Barrett seconded the motion. Motion carried, the council roll call vote is as  
332 follows:

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

333  
334  
335 **ADJOURNMENT:**  
336  
337 There being no further business, Council Member Palacios moved to adjourn.  
338 Council Member Dornan seconded the motion. Motion carried, the council roll call  
339 vote is as follows:

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

340  
341

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

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349 Lenise Peterman  
350 Mayor

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354 Approved on December 4th, 2025



Traci Bishop  
City Recorder