

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

2 **Thursday, March 19, 2026**

3 **at 6:00 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 Tyson Damron

15 Robert Olson

16 Ruth Lee

17 David Palacios

18 Edward Chavez

13 **City Staff:**

Community Administrator: Cole Stapley

City Recorder: Traci Bishop - Absent

Deputy Recorder: Shaley Vasquez

Police Chief: Sean Draper

Police Officer: Absent

Public Works Co-Directors:

DJ Romero & Brittany Hansen

City Attorney: Dominique Kiahtipes - Absent

Museum Director: Roman Vega

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27 **CITIZENS:**

28 Macklane Farmer, Daniel Hawley, Brian Griggs, Derrick Klarr, Nathan Strain

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31 **DISCUSSION ON MASTER TRANSPORTATION PLAN-JONES AND DEMILLE.**

32
33 Macklane Farmer introduced himself and Dan Hawley to council. Mr. Farmer and
34 his colleague Matthew have been working with the city and Mr. Hawley on the
35 project for several months starting back in September or October of 2025. Mr.
36 Farmer went on to state that discussions with the mayor and city staff about doing
37 a "Transportation Master Plan" early of last year. The work actually started in
38 October due to being awarded the funding to do so.

39
40 Mr. Farmer went on to explain that the first step was data collection. Driving
41 around, some may have noticed tubes running across the road on some streets that
42 traffic would drive over and the data would count and classify the vehicles. It would
43 later be explained that the data for those would be shown as blue squares on one of

44 the maps being presented. Mr. Farmer went on to show through his presentation
45 that crash data, road data, pavement assessment was also collected.

46
47 Before diving deep into the website presentation, Mr. Farmer specified that the
48 website was not yet final and a draft presentation was being shown to brief the
49 council to help on understanding what exactly the project is. Mr. Farmer also
50 informed council of the public open house that is set to take place on April 14th from
51 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the auditorium. The link, when finalized, will be posted on
52 Helper's GIS and the Helper City website for public access.

53
54 Mr. Farmer then started going through the website presentation. There is a section
55 on the website that is a socio-economic page. The reason for including that as a tab
56 option is so that the city can have an idea on where they are sitting population wise
57 per capita income, etc. which is very useful for writing grants and things similar.
58 The current information is based on 2020 census data making it old and out of date.
59 There has been a significant jump since in population and income data in the last 5
60 years.

61
62 The next area of the website was the maps of Helper City. The first map being the
63 roadway classification network, briefly explaining that each road on the map has a
64 designated color indicating a classification of road type (red-highways-high volume,
65 purple-major collectors, yellow-minor collectors, black-local traffic). The map also
66 indicates possible areas for the ability for new roads. There are black lines added to
67 indicate new possible road areas. Helper City is very condensed making it
68 extremely hard for expanding.

69
70 There is a roadway surface type map which indicates how the city receives funds.
71 Every year UDOT gives an allocation of funding for roads. The city will receive a
72 document that will be submitted to UDOT to update mileage for the ability to
73 receive an accurate amount of funding.

74
75 Another map shows an average daily traffic, weekday average daily traffic, and
76 annual growth percentage. A heat map is also added to show crashes within the
77 city, dating back to 2010 and could be useful in indicating any "hot spot" within the
78 city to address timely.

79
80 Another hot topic for one of the maps and is asked that council weigh in on is
81 "active transportation", meaning bike and walking paths. It was specifically
82 identified certain areas the city may want to focus any pedestrian-use facilities
83 within the city.

84
85 The next page of presentation showed bridges to know who maintains what (i.e.
86 blue-city, circles-other agencies). The bridges are 20 or more feet in span, meaning
87 there are funding sources to help with those types of bridges expenses.

88
89 Moving on to truck routes, Jones and Demille have been working with UDOT and
90 the county to discuss and collaborate between agencies. UDOT specifically
91 mentioned that there should be no need for trucks to enter into the city itself unless
92 it's making a delivery or special circumstance like highway 6 being shut down.

93
94 Mr. Farmer included that some of the presentation is missing items and that those
95 would be added and complete at the April meeting. Also adding that the planning
96 and zoning board has also been briefed with the same presentation and information
97 the evening prior at their monthly meeting.

98
99 Next discussion on pavement management, it is explained that an AI system is used
100 by attaching an AI system camera to the hood or dash of a vehicle to take pictures,
101 analyze and assess every 10 feet of asphalt while driving down the road. It then gets
102 uploaded to the cloud and the system then analyzes the cracking in every image,
103 scores it, then averages the score and into a segment. Mr. Farmer then shows
104 council examples of photos taken and asks if there is a specific road wanting to be
105 looked at. Councilman Olson answered that he would like to see the scoring for
106 Martin Road. The scoring scale is from 1 to 5 with 1 being great and 5 being
107 terrible, and color coded as green-good, yellow-decent, and red-bad. Mr. Olson also
108 added that from his gathered information from Matthew during the previous night's
109 meeting presentation, the funding typically gets focused towards the predominantly
110 traveled streets leaving the less traveled streets to worsen. The question was asked
111 if there is some sort of way around that so that those ignored streets can get
112 attention. Mr. Farmer clarified that the specific funding that his colleague Matthew
113 is referring to is that UDOT will fund roads that are high in volume/major
114 collectors. It was stated that there are other avenues (i.e. CIB grant, federal grants,
115 etc.).

116
117 Mr. Farmer went on to explain more about the AI Assessment of the cracking and
118 listing the different types of cracking that can be identified, adding that there is a
119 somewhat controversial recommendation when it comes to focus and repairing
120 roads. That recommendation being keeping the good roads good and letting the bad
121 roads to continue to fail until funding to fully repair the road can be acquired. The
122 reason being, is that bad roads are extremely pricey to fix and financially it is easier
123 to maintain good roads than to completely repair the bad roads and then letting
124 your good roads become bad. The scoring from 1 to 2 ½ are considered good and
125 need to be reserved with different types of treatments. Scoring from 2 ½ to 3 ½ are
126 roads that can be maintained. And scoring from 3 ½ and above are considered too
127 far gone to fix and need full reconstruction. Mr. Farmer went on to compliment
128 Helper City as being one of the better maps scoring wise that he's seen with the
129 exception of a few undesirable roads.

130

131 A couple other maps go over city wide road conditions and a timeline of repair and
132 another indicating every location of a manhole throughout the city.

133
134 To end the presentation, Mayor Peterman stated that she likes trying to coordinate
135 with Carbon County and UDOT so that different plans are not created and together
136 there can be a cohesive front which could then place the city on the UDOT list
137 quicker and consider Helper's project higher. Also stating that the timeline of work
138 needed to be done on roads is really beneficial because it gives the city a road map
139 to follow. Mr. Stapley also included that this helped guide applying for the joint
140 highway funds.

141
142 Councilman Olson asked the question if there was access to US 6 making it safer
143 and if it can be suggested by the city or by the engineering team. Mr. Farmer
144 answered that there have been discussion of the Maverick and Poplar Street
145 intersections and the spring glen intersection as well. Stating that there is already
146 a process in motion for Spring Glen so it was less focused. Mr. Hawley updated that
147 he was told that the Spring Glen plans are postponed and being reassessed after the
148 public comment period. Mr. Farmer included that they have some drawings made
149 up specifically for the Maverick section in hopes to reconfigure that intersection
150 that will be suggested to UDOT, also stating that UDOT has a very critical process
151 to follow.

152
153 In conclusion, Mr. Farmer relayed that the next steps in the process, they are
154 finishing the public map and will be given to the city withing the next week or two.
155 Advertising will be done for the open house and creating access ways for public
156 comment. Public comment will be open for a couple weeks and then be turned over
157 to council for review.

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161 **DISCUSSION ON LOCOMOTIVE DONATION.**

162
163 Nathan Strain & Derrick Klarr introduced themselves and their friend Brian
164 Griggs before council. Mr. Strain explained that they are just a group of people
165 whom are involved in the preservation of historic interests, specifically old railroad
166 equipment. A little over a year ago Mr. Klarr informed Mr. Strain of a for Rio
167 Grande engine locomotive that had some significance to the local area and was
168 scheduled to be destroyed making it never to be used again. Over the course of the
169 last year, the exact unit number has changed, making it a different locomotive but
170 is also known to this area. A critical point has come as to what to do. The
171 corporation that owns the locomotive is the parent company of Utah Railway:
172 Genesis & Wyoming. They have expressed their willingness to donate the locomotive
173 specifically to the city or a non-profit associated with the city. There have been
174 discussions with the Helper Museum about where to place to locomotive and are to

175 the point of getting to the logistics of how to get the locomotive from Missouri to
176 Helper.

177
178 Mr. Strain explained that there are two locomotives, both were a part of Rio Grande
179 and have some relation to what had been used historically here in Helper. Both
180 units have had holes cut in to their engine blocks making them unable to be used as
181 locomotives but are still otherwise largely intact. Right now, from a logistics stance
182 would be moving one of the locomotives here and preparing them for display. The
183 idea of keeping the locomotive largely intact is that once they are moved here, they
184 still have several usable components that could be removed and sold for use at a
185 good market rate helping with the costs of the transport.

186
187 Mr. Klarr stepped in to give an idea on cost expenses for the transport and
188 restoration of the engine as Mr. Strain did not quite have a full idea on numbers
189 yet. Mr. Klarr also stated he's not aware of how much this project has already been
190 discussed. Mr. Stapley then informed Mr. Klarr that this is just a discussion for
191 council to get as much information on the project as possible before a decision is
192 made that will be at the next scheduled council meeting at the beginning of April.

193
194 Mr. Klarr began by stating he had initially been told that both of the units had bad
195 wheels (six-wheel sets per locomotive) and would need to be replaced before legal transport
196 quoting roughly around \$15,000 to \$12,000 for transport and roughly \$1,000 to \$1,200 per
197 wheel for six wheels. Since then, he has learned that one of the locomotives has been
198 verified to have good wheels making it legal to transport. There may be a little bit of an air
199 brake issue which is not a big concern and Mr. Simms is pretty familiar with air brake
200 systems. The biggest concern is the cost to transport. They have working with Utah
201 Railway: Genesis and Wyoming to possibly utilize the martin shop that is currently
202 leased out to Wildcat to store the locomotive during prep work.

203
204 Mr. Klarr informed that they are all from around the Wasatch front but are willing
205 to volunteer some of their time to come down here to guide and help with the
206 logistics of the locomotive as they all are knowledgeable and experienced in
207 preservation of historic locomotives.

208
209 Mr. Strain showed a picture of both locomotives and specified which of the two
210 would be the most desirable. Mayor Peterman asked on average how long would it
211 take to transport from Missouri to which she was answer that it'd take around two
212 weeks' time. Mayor Peterman also asked to clarify that there is a place to park the
213 locomotive during deconstruct and repair until it is place. Mr. Klarr informed Mayor
214 and council that Wildcat has deferred the request back to Genesis & Wyoming. He
215 had also stopped in Provo on his way down before the council meeting and spoke to
216 Jake Harrison, the general manager at Utah Railway. They spoke of the "sample"
217 insurance document Mr. Klarr had submitted for them to review, neither found any
218 concerns and Mr. Harrison passed it along to their legal team to review.

219

220 Mr. Klarr then went on to explain that he was under the impression that the Helper
221 Museum was a non-profit (501c3) museum and recently found out it is not. Further
222 explaining, from his understanding, that for Genesis & Wyoming to receive the
223 write off, they would need to donate to a non-profit but there may be a possibility
224 they could donate the unit it to the city and still receive the benefit. It is something
225 they would have to look in to. Mr. Klarr brought up there being a few non-profits
226 that have worked with the city before to which Mr. Stapley added there are a few
227 that could be directed to, to look at. Mr. Klarr also added that he is with the
228 Promontory Chapter in Salt Lake City and is also a non-profit. They have
229 experience in this process having done it a few times as well which could be another
230 option to explore. However, they have recently gotten another locomotive with the
231 intent to restore donated by Genesis & Wyoming and is unsure if they would be
232 willing to donate another to the same organization.
233

234 Discussion continued, specifying that once the locomotive gets to Helper, there are a
235 lot of internal parts that would be removed but would not affect the cosmetic
236 presentation of the unit. A location to place the engine indefinitely would also need
237 to be determined. There was some discussion on potential locations and what would
238 need to be considered for certain locations. Museum Director Vega also added that
239 the only difference in discussion was initially he was told components in the engine
240 would be removed and salvaged before transport, decreasing the weight. Mr. Klarr
241 informed that, that had initially been the plan but it was realized that the appraisal
242 value was higher with the components left inside. By leaving the components, the
243 write off amount is higher and the components can be removed here and sold to
244 cover the costs of the project making it a win-win situation.
245

246 Mr. Klarr went on to state that his brother, who was unable to make it is a
247 mechanic for the Utah Transit Authority (UTA) Front Runner, and he himself is on
248 the operations side. Together along with Mr. Griggs, they are very knowledgeable in
249 the railroad industry. After assessing the locomotive, Mr. Klarr informed that the
250 project they are currently working on is estimated around \$25,000 in paint due to
251 rust conditions. The locomotive to bring to Helper is not as in rough condition and
252 he strongly believes that the value of components inside would cover the costs along
253 with a lot of local and volunteer work. Mr. Vega directed to the Mayor that the
254 museum board is supposed to meet the following night and will discuss potential
255 placements for the engine and will then bring those ideas over to council for
256 decision.
257

258 Mr. Stapley informed council that there would be an upfront cost with the hope of
259 the sale of the components covering much if not all of the expenses. If the sale does
260 not cover the entire expense, there would need to be funds for the display portion of
261 the project, also stating that Mr. Klarr has done a number of other restore and
262 preservation projects, one currently being on display in Ogden. Along those lines of

263 fees, Mr. Klarr mentioned that there would need to be some sort of monthly storage
264 fee in order to make it a binding contract and without it creates legal issues.

265
266 Councilman Tyson Damron asked two questions, one being how long Mr. Klarr
267 would propose the project take. Mr. Klarr responded that it would depend on the
268 team that could be assembled. With it being a smaller community than the Salt
269 Lake valley, it could potentially take longer even with some volunteered time by
270 himself and his colleagues. His guess would be potentially sometime in to summer
271 of 2027. Councilman Damron responded that council needs to be mindful of the
272 rental fee (i.e. \$100/month) for storage and length of time that fee accrues. The
273 second question was if there will be assistance in listing and selling of the
274 components removed. Mr. Klarr answered that he and Mr. Griggs are very
275 knowledgeable when it comes to listing, selling, scrapping as they both have their
276 own business in the matter.

277
278 Councilman Palacios asked if the components are all still usable. Mr. Klarr responded that
279 the components that would be removed and resold are all useable. There was a bit more
280 discussion on the process of the project. Councilman Damron asked if there was any type of
281 coverage for volunteers had there be an accident. Mr. Klarr informed that there would be
282 coverage for “registered volunteers” and that it has been discussed with the city
283 coverage for local volunteers. Mr. Stapley briefly went over some coverage details
284 and waivers. Mr. Klarr specified that the volunteers would mainly be there to assist
285 with prep work, etc. The heavy-duty work (i.e. crane) would be for the hired
286 contractor and their crew. Council discussed more details and contacts they have
287 with Union Pacific Railroad.

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291 **DISCUSSION ON 2026 FYE BUDGET.**

292
293 Community Administrator Cole Stapley started by explaining to council by going
294 over the preliminary financial for February. Looking through, it shows Helper is
295 67% through the fiscal year and will also show trends happening within the report.
296 Also noting that the reason for being a preliminary is due to the sales tax revenue
297 and governmental items are not reflected in to the actual income until two months
298 later. Mr. Stapley then went over some examples to better explain.

299
300 Mr. Stapley had council review their packets and explained that when taking 2
301 months off Helper would be 50% through the year and the numbers are trending
302 pretty on par with the sales tax for this year. RAP sales tax and highway are
303 trending a little lower. And franchise taxes are to be updated as soon as Mr. Stapley
304 gets them added to account receivable.

305
306 Looking at revenue within the budget, Mr. Stapley informed that Helper will need
307 to ask for reimbursements on pool grants. State liquor fund allotment will be the

308 beer tax grant and has not been received yet. Mr. Stapley then goes over more
309 details of what has or needs to still come through and reflect on the report.

310
311 Mr. Stapley informed council that there are a couple more meetings before the main
312 budget meeting when they will need to create the official budget for year 2027. The
313 goal Mr. Stapley would like to achieve within the next month is to schedule
314 meetings with himself and all department heads to go over budgets. April and
315 May's work meetings also got rescheduled due to conflicting schedules and for
316 proper time for posting public hearing notices.

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320 **DISCUSSION ON 2027 FYE BUDGET.**

321
322 Mr. Stapley informed council that one of the things he wanted to highlight on 2027
323 budget is that if Helper City's employees are in the tier 2 defined benefit hybrid
324 system. Two years ago, employees had to start paying a portion in to by .81%. This
325 year that will be raising 1.3%. Mr. Stapley stated that there are options to look in to help
326 with that cost (i.e. raises or current participation with an increased expense.) It also needs
327 to be considered that public safety's rate is at 4.73% and will be going to 5.98%. The first
328 time it was introduced was in 2025 and it was decided by council for the city to pick
329 up that expense for public safety. The city is only allowed to pick up the expense for
330 public safety employees and not for those considered in public safety.

331
332 Specifically for public safety, Mr. Stapley went over options on whether to pick up
333 and cover the expense or not. Councilman Damron added that this is something
334 that is going to need to be considered every year as rates will continue to rise.

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338 Council Member Chavez moved to move into a closed session for legal. Council
339 Member Palacios seconded the motion. Motion carried, the council roll call vote is as
340 follows:

<u>Council Member</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Absent</u>
<u>Olson</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>_____</u>	<u>_____</u>
<u>Lee</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>_____</u>	<u>_____</u>
<u>Damron</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>_____</u>	<u>_____</u>
<u>Palacios</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>_____</u>	<u>_____</u>
<u>Chavez</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>_____</u>	<u>_____</u>
<u>Motion passed</u>			

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CLOSED MEETING – A CLOSED SESSION WAS HELD REGARDING LEGAL & PERSONAL MATTERS.

345
 346 Council Member Palacios moved to move out of a closed session for property.
 347 Council Member Lee seconded the motion. Motion carried, the council roll call vote
 348 is as follows:

<u>Council Member</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Absent</u>
<u>Olson</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>_____</u>	<u>_____</u>
<u>Lee</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>_____</u>	<u>_____</u>
<u>Damron</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>_____</u>	<u>_____</u>
<u>Palacios</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>_____</u>	<u>_____</u>
<u>Chavez</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>_____</u>	<u>_____</u>
<u>Motion passed</u>			


349
 350 A Closed Meeting Sworn Statement was signed and notarized for the record.
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352
 353 **ADJOURNMENT:**

354
 355 There being no further business, Council Member Palacios moved to adjourn.
 356 Council Member Lee seconded the motion. Motion carried, the council roll call vote
 357 is as follows:

<u>Council Member</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Absent</u>
<u>Olson</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>_____</u>	<u>_____</u>
<u>Lee</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>_____</u>	<u>_____</u>
<u>Damron</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>_____</u>	<u>_____</u>
<u>Palacios</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>_____</u>	<u>_____</u>
<u>Chavez</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>_____</u>	<u>_____</u>
<u>Motion passed</u>			

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 360
 361 I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record
 362 of the Helper City Council meeting held on Thursday, March 19th, 2026.
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364
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 366 
 367
 368 Lenise Peterman
 369 Mayor


 Shaley Vasquez
 City Deputy Recorder

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 373 Approved on February 5th, 2026