

1                                   **MINUTES OF THE HELPER CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
2                                   **Thursday, April 2nd, 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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12   **Council Members:**

13     Tyson Damron

14     Robert Olson

15     Ruth Lee

16     David Palacios

17     Edward Chavez

18                                   **City Staff:**

19                                   Community Administrator: Cole Stapley

20                                   City Recorder: Traci Bishop

21                                   Deputy Recorder: Shaley Vasquez

22                                   Police Chief: Sean Draper

23                                   Police Officer: Absent

24                                   Public Works Co-Directors:

25                                   DJ Romero & Brittany Hansen – Hansen Absent

26                                   City Attorney: Dominique Kiahtipes

27                                   Museum Director: Roman Vega

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29   **CITIZENS:**

30   Nathan Strain, Aidan Mortensen, Wyatt Boyle, Oran Stainbrook, Temple Jackson,  
31   Stephanie Olsen, Kristi Telbolt, Casey Hopes, Jared Haddock

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33   **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

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35   No public comment was made.  
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39   **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE MARCH 5<sup>TH</sup>, 2026 MEETING, THE**  
40   **MARCH 19<sup>TH</sup>, 2026 SPECIAL MEETING, AND THE MARCH 18<sup>TH</sup>, 2026 WORK**  
41   **MEETING.**

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43   Council member David Palacios stated that he found one spelling error in the  
44   March 5<sup>th</sup> minutes. On line 97, Roosevelt was misspelled.

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Council Member Palacios moved to approve the minutes with the update. Council Member Damron 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>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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**DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF AWARDING REVIEW AND UPDATE OF MUNICIPAL CODE.**

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Mayor Lenise Peterman said that they were going to move around agenda items per Council member Palacios’s request. He and Council member Bob Olson looked at two companies. One was Hansen Planning Group and the other was Capital Typing. As they went through, they found that Hansen was also a Utah company and Helper would get more out of it. The other company said that the process would incur more costs depending on what all needed to be complete, while Hansen would cover it all. Council member Olson said not only was Hansen a cheaper source, they were a local source. Council member Ruth Lee said what stood out to her with Hansen was that they had a lot more one-on-one listening sessions, which she believes is good for the community. Council member Olson asked if the funding was coming from the Wildcat Donation Fund, to which Mayor Peterman said it was.

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The mayor added that updating the Municipal Code is much needed.

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Council Member Palacios moved to award the update of the Municipal Code to the Hansen Company. 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>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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**DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF A \$0.50 PAY INCREASE FOR BRAD MORTENSEN.**

Public Works Co-Directors Brittany Hansen and DJ Romero said when they hired Brett Densley they had made a mistake with the wages. The starting pay is \$16 an hour and they should have started Mr. Densley at \$15 and given him a bump later on. However, he was started at \$16 and he is making more than Mr. Mortensen, who is more experienced. To make that right, they would like to give him that \$0.50 raise. Council member Palacios said that he believes that Mr. Mortensen has been stepping up lately, and is earning his CDL.

Council Member Palacios moved to approve the pay increase. Council Member Chavez 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>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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**DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF TREE TRIMMING COSTS FOR THE WALKWAY.**

Public Works Co-Directors Hansen and Romero stated that they had contacted Tolbert Tree Trimming, based out of Orangeville in Emery County. The tree trimming would be on the walkway and Tolbert has good pricing. Tolbert has a chipper, and provided two quotes for the Mining Museum Park all the way to the Parkway Pavilion Park. The cost would cover 12 trees and Tolbert would focus solely on this job until it is complete. Council member Palacios said that Tolbert is very reputable, while Council member Tyson Damron said that he has worked with him personally and he is very polite and does good work. From the beach to the park, according to Hansen, it is tough to get in there, so Public Works would help in that endeavor.

Council Member Palacios moved to approve the tree trimming costs for the walkway by Tolbert Tree Trimming. Council Member Damron 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>Olson</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>

Lee	X		
Damron	X		
Palacios	X		
Chavez	X		
Motion passed			

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**DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF KIWANIS DUCK RACE - AUGUST.**

Mayor Peterman said this would take place during the Arts Festival, though it was requested to be tabled as they were not available for the meeting.

Council Member Chavez moved to table the duck race until the following meeting. Council Member Palacios seconded the motion. Motion carried, the council roll call vote is as follows:

Council Member	Yes	No	Absent
Olson	X		
Lee	X		
Damron	X		
Palacios	X		
Chavez	X		
Motion passed			

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**DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF LOCAL CONSENT FOR HELPER ARTS, MUSIC AND FILM FESTIVAL.**

Mayor Peterman invited Oran Stainbrook to speak, who is the new Arts Festival director. Mr. Stainbrook said they are requesting to have the event from August 20<sup>th</sup> to August 23<sup>rd</sup> and close down Main Street as well. He said if there are any suggestions, questions, or concerns about this year's festival, he would love to hear them. He is currently educating himself on the history of the festival and meeting with Main Street businesses. Council member Palacios stated that he appreciated him taking it on. Mayor Peterman said that the local consent is a bit early as she is helping Mr. Stainbrook, training to get it completed, as it is not for the faint of heart.

Council Member Chavez moved to approve local area consent for the Helper Arts, Music and Film Festival. Council Member Lee 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>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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143 **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF CLOSING MAIN STREET FOR**  
 144 **THE HELPER ARTS, MUSIC AND FILM FESTIVAL.**

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146 Mayor Peterman stated that Mr. Stainbrook had mentioned this during the  
 147 previous agenda item. The closure would be from Thursday, August 20<sup>th</sup> to Sunday,  
 148 August 23<sup>rd</sup>. It would be the standard Depot St. closure up to the park, as the Post  
 149 Office is not blocked. The fire station would be left open as well.

150

151 Council Member Lee moved approve the street closure for the Helper Arts Festival.

152 Council Member Palacios seconded the motion. Motion carried, the council roll call

153 vote 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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157 **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF ACCEPTING LOCOMOTIVE**  
 158 **DONATION.**

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160 Roman Vega, Museum Director, was joined by Nathan Strain with the Promontory  
 161 Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society to speak on this. Mr. Vega said  
 162 that for many years, there was discussion on getting a train in the city. For the past  
 163 eight (8) years, they have been working through this process. There are a couple of  
 164 locations that have been looked at, and this train is 100 feet long, meaning that a  
 165 great location for the city, for tourism, for attraction, etc., was needed. There were  
 166 issues in some of the areas looked at, but the left field of Gardner Field was looked  
 167 at with Public Works, Mr. Strain's team, and the USU Eastern Baseball team.

168 Logistically and financially, Mr. Vega said that it will be a great location. Mr. Strain  
169 went over the locomotive, SD 40-T2, and said it's spent a lot of time running trains  
170 between Provo and Denver.

171  
172 Under an admissions agreement with the Federal Government, some of the  
173 locomotives had to be made unusable. This engine in question is one of them. Mr.  
174 Strain said that if the city accepts the donation, they can work more on logistics in  
175 getting the train to the city. Mr. Vega said that the train will pay for itself, because  
176 the "guts" of the train will be re-sold. Any costs that are needed should come from  
177 that. Mr. Strain explained that the park is a great location in terms of the railroad,  
178 as it is close to the tracks and will be easier to remove and relocate. Council member  
179 Damron asked if a discussion had been had with Utah Railway in regard to storing  
180 the locomotive while logistics are being figured out. Mr. Strain said that right now,  
181 Mr. Vega is working on obtaining funds. Tourism dollars are being sought.

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183 Council member Lee also said that if it is approved today, it will not be here in a  
184 month. The goal is spring 2027. Council member Lee has also reached out to Union  
185 Pacific and others to get numbers. Council member Damron asked if the item on the  
186 table is asking to be accepted tonight without knowing dollar amounts. He also  
187 wanted to be sure that Mr. Strain and his team are going to see the sale of the parts  
188 throughout the entire process. Mr. Strain said that, barring an act of God, they plan  
189 to see the project through, also stating that even if the worst-case scenario came  
190 down to it, even just the weight of the copper would work toward paying for the  
191 project. Mr. Vega said that he has been told that dollar amounts for the locomotive  
192 parts can be in excess of \$50-\$60,000 and some of the money will go back to the  
193 museum for improvements.

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195 Mr. Vega said he understands Council member Damron's concerns, but the train  
196 will pay for itself. Mr. Strain also ensured that he and his team are committed to  
197 the project and seeing it through. Council member Palacios suggested that Mr. Vega  
198 get in touch with the property owner by center field about a possible property trade.  
199 Council member Chavez said that the owner had stated previously he would be  
200 interested in a trade. Council member Palacios said that he is concerned about the  
201 desired location, as he has already had residents call and say they do not want the  
202 train in the neighborhood. Mayor Peterman said that council could accept the  
203 donation of the locomotive without approving a location right away. Mr. Vega said  
204 he is open to suggestions for placing it basically anywhere, but he would really like  
205 it accepted, as this opportunity will not come around again.

206  
207 Council member Olson said that Helper wants the train, there is just an issue on  
208 where to put it. Mayor Peterman summarized by saying that council would like to  
209 have it be known that the location was not determined yet, and that once amounts  
210 are decided upon, that the council is made aware right away. She said there may be  
211 opportunities for funding to assist this, but not knowing an amount makes it hard.

212 The mayor wants cost to be transparent as quickly as possible. Council member Lee  
213 said they are diligently working for grants, etc. She wanted to be clear on that, and  
214 assured the council they are trying very hard.

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216 Council Member Palacios moved to accept the locomotive with the condition that a  
217 location has not been selected and once costs are available, they will be given to the  
218 council. Council Member Chavez seconded the motion. Motion carried, the council  
219 roll call vote 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>_____</u>	<u>X</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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## 223 **DISCUSSION OF COMMUNITY IMPACT BOARD APPLICATION.**

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225 Mayor Peterman and Mr. Stapley attended a training, and she wanted to inform the  
226 council of what they are thinking. Helper is looking to submit two applications this  
227 year. One is for the cemetery expansion for roughly \$315,000 and the second  
228 application will be for road maintenance, including all of the micro-surfacing, the  
229 mill and fill, and will be about \$1.5 million. The mayor said that they do anticipate  
230 the CIB giving an amount for a grant and then asking Helper to do a loan for the  
231 rest. They have asked for two separate applications, not one combining the projects.  
232 Mr. Stapley said that paying for this would be the selling of the new plots in the  
233 cemetery and possible C funds and Highway Tax for the roads. The mayor said that  
234 the city is down to around 35 plots and the cemetery is very much in need.

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236 She wanted to make the council aware that public hearings will be coming up, they  
237 want the public to get engaged, and the purpose for this is important. The mayor  
238 said she is not asking for action, just informing.

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## 242 **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF SUBMITTING A**

## 243 **CONGRESSIONAL SPEND DIRECTIVE TO SENATOR CURTIS.**

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245 Mayor Peterman said the senator is entertaining spend directives and his office  
246 contacted her last week. They have a trail-specific opportunity. The mayor wants to  
247 pursue the River Walkway. Finding matching funds for that is a challenge, so she  
248 saw this as a great opportunity. Council member Olson asked how much money is

249 available, and the mayor said they have not yet given her a cap. The deadline was  
 250 moved as they want to review the request before turning it over the senate. The  
 251 mayor explained that they can shepherd a project through of their own digression.  
 252 She also said that this is a project that is in need. The best, the medium, and the  
 253 cheap were put together to ensure that even if a low amount is given, good work can  
 254 still be done.

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 256 Council Member Chavez moved to approve seeking the directive. Council Member  
 257 Damron 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>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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261 **REPORTS ONLY FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS AND DEPARTMENT HEADS.**

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265 **ADJOURNMENT:**

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269 There being no further business, Council Member Chavez moved to adjourn.

270 Council Member Olson seconded the motion. Motion carried, the council roll call  
 271 vote 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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275 I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record  
 276 of the Helper City Council meeting held on April 2, 2026.

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Lenise Peterman  
Mayor



Traci Bishop  
City Recorder

Approved on May 7, 2026