

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

2                                   **Thursday, August 20, 2026**

3                                   **at 5:30 p.m.**

4                                   **in the Helper City Council Chamber**

5                                   **19 South Main Street**

6                                   **Helper, Utah 84526**

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8  
9   **ATTENDANCE:**

10   Mayor Lenise Peterman

11  
12   **Council Members:**

13     Tyson Damron – Virtual

14     Robert Olson - Absent

15     Ruth Lee

16     David Palacios

17     Edward Chavez – Late

18   **City Staff:**

19   Community Administrator: Cole Stapley

20   City Recorder: Traci Bishop

21   Police Chief: Sean Draper

22         Police Officer: None

23   Public Works Co-Directors:

24   DJ Romero & Brittany Hansen – Both Absent

25   City Attorney: Dominique Kiahtipes

26   Museum Director: Roman Vega - Absent

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28  
29   **CITIZENS:**

30   Jeanann Zmerzlikar

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32  
33   **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

34   None.

35   **DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF WAGE INCREASE FOR ADMINISTRATIVE**  
36   **AND LIBRARY STAFF, OR ROLE REPLACEMENT.**

37   The mayor said this came up in the last meeting. There are some labor dollars that the city  
38   would like to attribute back to the administrative staff who is assuming additional  
39   responsibilities and had already lost 8 hours when budgeting was done. The admin staff are  
40   prepared to take on the other responsibilities. For admin staff, an additional \$2 an hour  
41   would be a total of \$13,728 with benefits and wages included. To give both at the library a  
42   \$.50 raise would be \$1,121.25 which brings the total to \$14,849.25 which leaves about  
43   \$4,719 left that could be distributed, left in the budget, etc. If it was left it would sit in the  
44   general fund. Community Administrator Cole Stapley said he was happy to answer any  
45   questions or run any numbers. Council member Ed Chavez then asked if the museum could  
46   be given a raise out of the \$4,719 left.

47  
48   Mr. Stapley questioned if he was wanting to give them another raise, to which Council  
49   member Chavez said the museum was not included on the breakdown. The reason for that

was due to the fact that the museum staff had been given a 7.5% raise in the previous council meeting. Council member David Palacios said that time had gotten cut back, which went away because they are absorbing the Deputy Recorder's role between the City Recorder, Mr. Stapley, and the Treasurer. Mr. Stapley said they are losing a bit of flexibility with that, but are willing to work together, communicate, and make sure that it is a good work-life balance. Council member Palacios asked the City Recorder, Traci Bishop, if she was okay with absorbing the extra work. She affirmed that she is, and said the admin staff works really cohesively together.

Discussion was held regarding how duties would be distributed, as well as re-visiting this topic in December to ensure that the admin staff are not getting overwhelmed with the extra duties. Council member Tyson Damron stated that the city has talked about giving raises many times in the past and the difficulties of it. He said that all of the money that they are discussing should not be stock-piled, but given back to the employees, who the council always talks about investing in. Council member Ruth Lee said that while she understood what Council member Damron was saying, it was very rare that there was extra money that would show up in the general fund but there are usually costs and expenses that pop up unexpectedly. Council member Damron said this money was already in the budget for wages and he would like to give it in wages, to which Council member Chavez agreed.

Mr. Stapley said that giving \$.14 an hour to the rest of the permanent employees excluding the library, museum and admin, that would be \$4,382. That would leave about \$400 afterward to go in the general fund. This \$.14 would go to the police department and those in Public Works.

Council Member Chavez moved to approve the wage increase for admin and library staff, with the amendment of including the raises for the police department and Public Works.

Council member Lee seconded. 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  |     |    |        |

## **DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF BUDGETARY CUTS IN SUPPORT OF MUSEUM STAFF PAY INCREASE.**

Mayor Lenise Peterman said she wanted the council to look at this to see where in the budget needs to be tightened for the 7.5% raise. Council member Lee said the numbers discussed previously were presented in last year's budget. At this time, the budget does not have those funds to support the raise, which Council member Lee said she had tried to explain previously. There is a need to cut the budget somewhere to afford the increase. Council member Lee stated that she does not believe it is fair to cut from other departments. Cutting the gift shop budget would be a good start and would allow the other

departments to not be affected. Mr. Stapley explained that the 7.5% wage increase added \$2,942 to the budget for the rest of the year. The gift shop has \$7,000 and the thought is to lower it to \$4,000 for now to balance the budget back out.

Mr. Stapley spoke with Museum Director Roman Vega in regard to some sort of point-of-sale system to help see where the museum is with gift shop purchases, what items they are getting, etc. Mid-year changes to the budget depending on where the museum is with funding was also brought up as a possibility. About \$500 a month is generally spent in the gift shop monthly. There is a way to fund it without impacting the budget as approved in July.

Council Member Lee moved to approve cutting the museum's gift shop budget to \$4,000 re-allocate it to employee wage increase. Council member Chavez seconded. 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>Lee</u>            | <u>X</u>   |           |               |
| <u>Damron</u>         | <u>X</u>   |           |               |
| <u>Palacios</u>       | <u>X</u>   |           |               |
| <u>Chavez</u>         | <u>X</u>   |           |               |
| <u>Motion passed</u>  |            |           |               |

#### ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Council Member Palacios moved to adjourn. 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>Lee</u>            | <u>X</u>   |           |               |
| <u>Damron</u>         | <u>X</u>   |           |               |
| <u>Palacios</u>       | <u>X</u>   |           |               |
| <u>Chavez</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 special meeting held on August 20, 2026.

  
Lenise Peterman  
Mayor

  
Traci Bishop  
City Recorder

Approved on September 3, 2026