



HELENA CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

January 13, 2025, 5:00PM

PRE-COUNCIL: Work Session

A discussion and review of City Council agenda items, projects, department, committee, and board liaison reports, and task assigned for City operations and business.

All Members Present.

1. Review 01/13/2025 Agenda Items

- AP/Bill Payments
- 12/09/2024 and 12/18/2024 Meeting Minutes Review
- 01/08/2025 Work Session Meeting Minutes Review

2. Update from Council Boards and Committee Business

Alice Lobell stated that we are still in the process of accepting applications for several vacancies on different boards and wants to wait to discuss applicants until next meeting when Council is back to five members.

3. Mayor's Update

New City Hall build is beginning to go vertical. Thanks to Fire Department, Police Department, and Public Works for all their planning for the snow day, everything went well, and we may be expecting more snow next Monday.

4. Presentation of TAG Team Grant Recommendations

Alice Lobell stated that the TAG Team worked very hard to go over all applications received and had a great spreadsheet listing good reasons for approvals/denials. If a teacher was denied and wants more information, they can contact TAG board for more information and are always welcome to apply again. Next round of TAG grants will be coming up around March.

5. Discussion of Council President Pro Tempore Appointment

Ongoing – tabled until full council can be present to discuss

6. Discussion of Council Liaison Vacancies

Ongoing – tabled until full council can be present to discuss

7. Discussion of Grievance Committee Member

The council appointed Kevin Bullock at the special-called meeting on 12/18/2024, and full-time city employees voted and elected Ben Nichols as the second member. They are to get together and decide on the final member, and then begin reviewing any outstanding grievances.

8. Discussion of Vacant Position on HOT Board

One member of HOT Board has resigned – will need to decide when applications will be open and how long.

9. Continuation of Discussion to Modify Mayor's Salary and Separate Mayor from Helena Utility Board; Discussion of Modification of Council Salaries

All Council Members agree that Council salaries should stay the same for this next term.

City Attorney Brian Hayes informed the Council that the only way to change the Mayor from part-time to full-time would be a local act, and we are too late for that deadline this year. He reached out to Representative Hulsey, and she stated that it would have to be next year at the earliest, so any Mayoral salary decisions will be for a part-time Mayor for at least the next year.

Chris Willis restated that there's no real way to enforce job tasks and duties on an elected official, and that would essentially rely on the public to hold the Mayor accountable. We hope that we get someone qualified for the position, but as an elected official there is no guarantee, and with that being said Willis would prefer a part-time Mayor and a full-time City Administrator, but that would ultimately be up to the next Council.

Hal Woodman states that we need to establish a salary at this point, and is not opposed to a salary around \$130,000/year, but would want to make sure that the public is aware of why the salary is raising so drastically from the current \$25,000/year.

He would also like to follow whatever the federal guidelines state for mileage reimbursement. Woodman's first idea for Mayor salary was around \$75,000/year as a base salary. He doesn't want to discourage candidates from applying based on salary, but also doesn't want to go too high on compensation, noting that packages options will add to the overall appeal.

Alice Lobell notes that the Mayor's salary has been the same for the past 12 years between City salary and Utilities salary, around \$130,000/year.

Laura Joseph is suggesting a Mayor salary of \$130,000/year, plus reimbursing health insurance of up to \$400/month, vehicle allowance of maybe \$2500/year or a City vehicle, but not both.

All City Council members agree that health insurance should be offered to the Mayor at the same rate offered to employees, if possible; choice of either a City vehicle or car allowance of \$2500-\$5000/year; salary of \$100,000/year as a base. Historically, the Mayor's salary has been around \$130,000/year split between the City and Utilities, but since job duties are now to be separated that is something else to consider.

10. Confirmation of 01/27/2025 Meeting date.

There being no further business the work session was dismissed at 5:44 pm.

ATTEST:



Madison Harris
City Clerk

SIGNED:



Alice Lobell
Council President



HELENA CITY COUNCIL

January 13, 2025

MINUTES HELENA CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING January 13, 2025

The Council of the City of Helena met in a regularly scheduled meeting on Monday night, January 13, 2025, in the Helena Municipal Building at 6:00 P.M., regular place and time for holding said meetings.

Council President Alice Lobell called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M.

Alice Lobell led the prayer.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Teen Council member Alyson Ragland.

Roll Call

Present: Alice Lobell, Chris Willis, Laura Joseph, and Harold Woodman

Members: Alice Lobell, Chris Willis, Laura Joseph, Harold Woodman

Absent:

Visitors: Mayor Puckett, City Attorney Brian Hayes, Fire Chief Chris Miller, Police Chief Brad Flynn, Bill Miller, Dan Dearing, Jason Poe, DJ Jones, and others (list attached)

Council President Alice Lobell declared a quorum present, and meeting was open for business.

5. Minutes Approved/Corrected from Prior Meeting(s)

Chris Willis made a motion to approve the Pre-Council minutes and regular meeting minutes on December 9, 2024, with a second by **Harold Woodman**.

AYE: Chris Willis, Alice Lobell, Harold Woodman

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Laura Joseph

Motion carried.

6. Minutes Approved/Corrected from Prior Meeting(s)

Chris Willis made a motion to approve the special called meeting minutes on December 18, 2024, with a second by **Laura Joseph**.

Roll Call:

AYE: Chris Willis, Laura Joseph, Alice Lobell, Harold Woodman

NAY: None

Motion carried.

7. Minutes Approved/Corrected from Prior Meeting(s)

Chris Willis made a motion to approve the special called work session minutes on January 8, 2025 with a second by **Laura Joseph**.

Roll Call:

AYE: Chris Willis, Laura Joseph, Alice Lobell.

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Harold Woodman

Motion carried.

8. Revenue Report: Bill Payment

Chris Willis made a motion to approve the bills with a second by **Harold Woodman**.

AYE: Chris Willis, Alice Lobell, Laura Joseph, Harold Woodman

NAY: None

Motion carried.

9. Municipal Operations Report from Mayor J. Brian Puckett:

Mayor Puckett wanted to thank the Fire Department, Police Department, and Public Works for their preparations this past weekend with the winter weather. They all submitted action plans ahead of time and everything went very smoothly; all teams works diligently and kept the City safe. Registration is now open for Spring Sports with the Parks Department. The repaving of the Bentmoor connection to the Hillsboro Trail is scheduled for April, having to wait on the weather to warm up before they can get started. The turn lane project at 17/58 is making progress, purchase agreements for easements were finalized recently, and the estimated time for completion of the new turn lane is in June.

10. Appointment of Vacant Council Place 2

Laura Joseph made a motion to appoint Andy Healy to the vacant position of Council Place 2; with a second by **Harold Woodman**.

AYE: Laura Joseph, Harold Woodman, Alice Lobell, Chris Willis

NAY: None

Motion carried.

11. Appointment of Council Liaison Vacancies – Helena Utilities Board, Beautification Board, Economic Development Board

Alice Lobell tabled to next meeting, when Council will have all five members to discuss.

12. Proclamation 01132025 – January 2025 as Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Month

Whitney Bennett from the Junior League of Birmingham's Anti-Human Trafficking Committee received the proclamation presented by Mayor Puckett.

13. Acceptance of Employee-Elected Grievance Committee Member – Jonathan "Ben" Nichols

Chris Willis made a motion to accept Employee-Elected Grievance Committee Member, Jonathan "Ben" Nichols; with a second by **Laura Joseph**.

Roll Call Vote:

AYE: Alice Lobell, Chris Willis, Laura Joseph, Harold Woodman, and Andy Healy

NAY: None

Motion carried.

14. Acceptance of HOT Board Member Resignation – Jason Pruitt

Laura Joseph made a motion to accept HOT Board Member Resignation – Jason Pruitt; with a second by **Harold Woodman**.

Roll Call Vote:

AYE: Alice Lobell, Chris Willis, Laura Joseph, Harold Woodman, and Andy Healy

NAY: None

Motion carried.

15. Council Comments

Alice Lobell: I want to thank the TAG Board for all of their hard work in reviewing applications and deciding which applications to approve.

Andy Healy: I want to thank the Council for the selection, and want to say that this was a fantastic process and was very educational. I look forward to learning and serving the City.

Harold Woodman: I want to echo the Mayor on thanking the Fire Department, Police Department, and Public Works on all of their hard work preparing for the winter weather. Prayers to the Howard family from the recent accident on I65. And welcome Andy Healy to the Council!

Laura Joseph: I'd also like to echo the Mayor on thanking the Fire Department, Police Department, and Public Works on all of their hard work preparing for the winter weather. Welcome Andy Healy, I look forward to having you on the Council! And since Andy Healy was on the TAG Board, we will have a vacancy there that will need to be filled.

Chris Willis: Congrats to Andy Healy! We had all great applicants and interviews, but we look forward to working with you. Thank you to the Grievance Committee members for volunteering to serve.

16. Adjourn

There being no further business meeting was adjourned at 6:20 pm.

ATTEST:



Madison Harris
City Clerk

SIGNED:



Alice Lobell
Council President