



**HELENA CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING**

May 20, 2026, 6:00PM

PRE-COUNCIL: Work Session

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

All Members present. Work Session started at 6:00PM.

1. Review of the YTD Budget

Mayor Rosener presented budget report to Council through 03.31. Mayor states he has reviewed Admin, Fire, and Police; still some questions on revenue as to what will not be recurring for the rest of the fiscal year. After further review with revenue and remaining departments is completed, we will share again and post to the website for the public. Clerk was not provided with a copy of the budgets presented to Council for record-keeping.

There being no further business, the work session was dismissed at 6:29PM.

ATTEST:

Madison Harris
City Clerk

SIGNED:

Brooke Dodson
Council President



HELENA CITY COUNCIL

May 20, 2026

MINUTES HELENA CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL CALLED MEETING May 20, 2026

The Council of the City of Helena met in a special-called meeting on Wednesday night, May 20, 2026, in the Helena Municipal Building at 6:30 P.M., the regular place and time for holding said meetings.

Council President Brooke Dodson called the meeting to order at 6:36 P.M.

Council member Andy Healy led the prayer.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Council member Cathy Hammann.

4. Roll Call

Present: Cathy Hammann, Andy Healy, Dennis Wilson, Brooke Dodson, Jeff McDaniels

Members: Cathy Hammann, Andy Healy, Dennis Wilson, Brooke Dodson, Jeff McDaniels

Absent:

Visitors: Fire Chief Chris Miller, Police Chief Mike Wood, Dan Dearing, Bill Miller, Jason Poe, and others (see attached list)

Council President Brooke Dodson declared a quorum present, and meeting was open for business.

5. Approve/Deny – Employee Handbook

COUNCIL COMMENT:

HEALY: We have received comments from departments, and timing has fallen on us hard with a June 1 effective date, but we can always make changes as needed. I think it's a good idea to go ahead and approve tonight. We have received good suggestions that can always be implemented later.

DODSON: We have the option to review and reconsider changes at any time with the handbook, and we are open to that at any time.

HAMMANN: Question, we have three holidays left in this fiscal year that would be paid out if the handbook is passed tonight; do we know what that dollar amount would be?

MAYOR ROSENER: It is not budgeted at this time for public safety for those three holidays.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

SILAS LINDSEY – 821 STONERIDGE DRIVE: Spoke in opposition to paying out holiday time; stating that the majority of the Fire Department wants the time, not the money. States that the Union has been told that this will be a money saving opportunity for the City, and when they have asked how this will save money and have not received any answers. Also pointing out that the remaining holidays in this fiscal year have not been budgeted to be paid out at this time.

SILAS LINDSEY SR – 823 STONERIDGE DRIVE: States that the needs of the Fire Department and Police Department should be the biggest concerns we have as a City; asking that the City look at the full scope of this before a vote.

DAVID WOOD, POLICE CHIEF: This is not solely a Fire Department or Police Department issue, and the Police Department has not been involved in any of these discussions. Most of the Police Department likes the idea of being paid for the holiday, or compensated for working the holiday.

DOROTHY CARLISLE – 3782 HELENA ROAD: The Fire Department has to spend more time away from their family than any other department; money is not what they are concerned about, they are more concerned about time with their families.

COUNCIL COMMENT:

WILSON: This role requires difficult decisions to be made; I am asking the Mayor to get all parties involved at the table to really discuss all angles of this and work this out. As the only member of Council with a family member in the Fire Department, I understand how difficult this is. I encourage all to come back to the table and discuss.

HAMMANN: Referring back to Ordinance 1030-2025 Council Rules and Procedure, Section 6.16 states that a vote involving the approval of funds should wait until the next meeting unless we have unanimous consent. My interpretation is that this is a large expenditure that has not been budgeted before now, and a vote should wait until the next meeting.

DODSON: Attorney Hayes, could you clarify?

ATTORNEY HAYES: Are you waiving attorney-client privilege? I would recommend a vote if so.

ROLL CALL vote to waive attorney-client privilege:

AYE: Cathy Hammann, Andy Healy, Dennis Wilson, Brooke Dodson, Jeff McDaniels

NAY:

Motion carried.

ATTORNEY HAYES: The City incurs the cost of the holiday time either way, whether baked into the budget or to be paid out when an employee leaves. Without truly digging and doing research, I can't say whether when it has been paid has an effect on the budget. Council sets the holiday schedule, and as it stands is either rolled/banked, or paid; currently paid for Admin, Parks, Public Works, but not sure about Public Safety.

MAYOR ROSENER: In terms of the budget on holiday pay, I cannot give specific numbers on that. I also could not quantify back in January with the passing of the budget when employees choose to use that holiday time. This has never been quantified before now, but having it paid out across the board for all employees will allow us to better predict costs going forward. I can work on getting those numbers from Police and Fire and get back to Council. We will find the funds, we will take care of our people.

HAMMANN: I have no doubt that we will take care of our people, but if we are changing policy we need to have all of that information before we make a decision. We need to stop running this City by the seat of our pants, and get all of the information before a decision is made.

ATTORNEY HAYES: I would like to remind you all that the new Civil Service Act is in effect, and section 9 does state that we will have a handbook in effect by June 1.

DODSON: Hayes, do we need immediate consideration to pass this tonight?

ATTORNEY HAYES: I need time to dig in, can we have a 15 minute recess?

Jeff McDaniels made a motion to recess for 15 minutes at 6:55PM; with a second by **Dennis Wilson**.

AYE: Cathy Hammann, Andy Healy, Dennis Wilson, Brooke Dodson, Jeff McDaniels

NAY:

Motion carried.

ROLL CALL vote to reconvene at 7:20PM:

AYE: Cathy Hammann, Andy Healy, Dennis Wilson, Brooke Dodson, Jeff McDaniels

NAY:

Motion carried.

FURTHER COMMENT:

CHIEF MILLER: May I address the Council? I want you to answer truthfully. As Chief, I don't want my people to think I don't support them, have I ever done anything to paint a picture that I don't support the Fire Department in what they want? Have I been forthcoming with any information that you've asked for?

MAYOR ROSENER: Yes, and you have even reached out to me to make sure that the Fire Union has an opportunity to speak and voice their opinions.

CHIEF MILLER: I wanted to make it clear. I want to take the liability off of the City. I was just accused of not supporting you (directed to Fire Department staff in attendance), but I want to make it clear that I do support you.

MAYOR ROSENER: Councilwoman Hammann, a rough estimate on the cost for the three remaining holidays that you asked for would be about \$60,000 for Public Safety; we can shift funds from updating our software to cover that for the remainder of this fiscal year and wait to start the software updates until the first quarter of the next fiscal year.

Andy Healy made a motion to approve Employee Handbook; with a second by **Dennis Wilson**.

AYE: Andy Healy, Dennis Wilson, Brooke Dodson, Jeff McDaniels

NAY: Cathy Hammann

Motion carried.

6. Period for Public Comment – 3 Minutes per Resident, to Sign in with City Clerk between Work Session and Council Meeting

Residents wanting to speak will sign-in with City Clerk prior to the meeting and will be given three minutes to speak.

MAYOR ROSENER: I understand that this was not well received and I am not well-liked right now. We did run on making tough decisions. I understand the concerns from your families, however these benefits were not stripped, and you will be compensated. My son is a fireman for another City, so this is near and dear to me. After analyzing after our last meeting, we are in alignment with other cities, if not exceeding other cities at this time. If a member of the Fire Department takes one day of vacation, that equals five days off as you work 24 on, 48 off. Compare that to the Police Department and they couldn't get that same benefit. I want you all to hear me, this handbook can be revisited. If you have an issue or a problem, I will sit down with you and revisit and look at it. I will keep my word, and my door is always open. We did put in a lot of recommendations from both the Police and Fire and the Fire Union. We were faced with one of the toughest decisions we've had to make since taking office, and I believe we have made the right decision, but I will admit if I am wrong down the line.

7. Council Comments

Jeff McDaniels: Mayor, I appreciate you acknowledging that the handbook can be revisited. I hate that there is division over a privilege and not a right. Overall wellbeing is your statement and wanting to eliminate that liability for the City. We are currently paying for several bad decisions from previous administration, but I appreciate that we have the opportunity to come back and revisit the handbook if/when needed. I appreciate the privilege of sleeping at night because of what you all do to keep us safe every day. Our rates are competitive and our workforce is strong, which makes us competitive and appealing. I hope no one will judge me as a Council member solely based on this vote tonight.

Andy Healy: No comment.

Dennis Wilson: No comment.

Cathy Hammann: I ran my campaign on listening, to employees and citizens alike. That is my job, and I then take that back to the Council, Mayor, or City Attorney and find answers. This handbook has been a live document with several versions and revisions; several corrections and comments were brought to the attorney and weren't changed or updated. We are not too big of a City to offer different options for holiday time for different departments; and if that's a software issue, we can get the proper software to make timekeeping easier. I think that is only fair for our staff to have that option.

Brooke Dodson: I have read every email that we've received from the Fire Department, which have sent me to the Mayor and attorney as to how this process took place. We've had lots of meetings with department heads, and I feel that this has been a very thorough process, going back to the updated Civil Service Act over the last few months. Attorney Hayes, can we please get clarification on where the language for holiday pay came from?

ATTORNEY HAYES: The language was provided by a Fire Department employee, not Chief Miller. It was previously missed in earlier versions of the handbook by both us and HRM. Our handbook closely mimics Alabaster.

MCDANIELS: One point for clarification. We did approve the final iteration of the handbook that we received earlier today, Version 18, correct?

ATTORNEY HAYES: Yes, that was Version 18.

DODSON: This is a live document that we can hear consideration on at any time; our doors are always open. The Mayor made a good case for when situations may arise. This was not an easy decision for any of us, but I feel that this was the right decision for our City overall.

21. Adjourn

There being no further business meeting was adjourned at 7:48 pm.

ATTEST:



Madison Harris
City Clerk

SIGNED:



Brooke Dodson
Council President