

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

**Thursday, August 19, 2010**

**6:00 p.m.**

**Helper Auditorium**

**Council Chambers**

**19 South Main**

**Helper, Utah 84526**

**ATTENDANCE:**

Mayor Dean Armstrong

**City Staff**

**Council Members:**

Kirk Mascaro  
Chris Pugliese  
Robert Bradley  
Gary Harwood  
Brandon Wise

City Recorder Jona Skerl  
Chief of Police Trent Anderson

Citizens: Raymond and Laurie Telarole, Mike and Kathy Parry, Rhea Parry, Mike James, Roman Vega, Harold Nielsen, William Von Soelen, Harry Reddington, Charlie Felice, Kerry Hanson, Dave Hanson, Steve Giacoletto, Roger and Ruth Metzger, Robert Palacios, Tracy Coon, Gary and Gaylene Nelson, Jodi Mascaro, Summer McBride, Mark Montoya, Ralph Fossat , Lousie Dimick, KC Williams, Valene Young, Pete Palacios, Pete M Palacios, Royce Van Tassell, Chuck and Mary Ghirardelli, Walter Borla, Mary Lou Farish, Jean Boyack, Ronald Mutz, Jeff Zinkovic, John Jones, Debbie Jones, Terry Wiebe, Albert Spensko, Miles Hunsaker, Gaelene Hunsaker , Richard Gallegos, Brenda and Troy Gallegos, Gloria Regis, Martin Martinez, David Palacios, Joe Busio, Rick Davis, Pete Via, Ron Giacoletto, Amanda Holley, Arv Nielson, Sherrie Uzelac, Harold Nielsen, Gene Picco, Delores Slavensky, Rocky Felice, Ralph Fossat, and John Serfustini.

The special meeting of the Helper City Council was called to order by Mayor Armstrong at 6:00.

## **PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED TAX INCREASE RESOLUTION 2010-9.**

Mayor Armstrong opened the public hearing at 6:00 p.m., first explaining how the meeting would be conducted. Mayor Armstrong also explained the purpose of the proposed tax increase. Mayor Armstrong described the short fall in the sales tax revenue and how this would affect the enterprise funds. Mayor Armstrong explained that the general fund runs the city and the enterprise funds, mostly the electric fund, help supplement the general fund revenue short falls. If the property tax increase is passed the funds generated will lessen the transfer amount of funds from the enterprise funds. The enterprise funds can then be used to improve the infrastructure in the city, such as water, electrical and sewer lines. Mayor Armstrong then explained how to read the tax notice, many residents thought that the total bill would be increased 86% only the top line item, which is Helper City's portion is increased. This increase is less than most of you pay for cable television per year stated Mayor Armstrong.

Brenda Gallegos, 303 South Main addressed the council. Ms. Gallegos explained that she pays \$342 a year for flood insurance now with this recent flooding can the city change the flood plain. Mayor Armstrong explained that flood insurance covers flooding from the river not storm water flooding, these are two separate issues. However, the storm drain infrastructure is one of the projects that need to be addressed.

Roman Vega, 305 Reservoir Street, stated that his tax has doubled and he has to get a loan every year to pay. Mr. Vega asked why there was over flow at the water tanks, this has been going on for years. Council Member Harwood's reply was we have to take whatever the springs are giving us and that sometimes causes the tanks to over flow when the usage is down.

Harold Nielson, 272 Duchesne Street, stated that his pension will not cover the tax increase and where will he get the money. There are several residents on pensions and can not afford this high of an increase. Mr. Nielson asked if the city was looking at ways to cut the budget. Mayor Armstrong thanked Mr. Nielson for his comments and explained that the city had lost two employees and will not be replacing them.

Commissioner John Jones addressed the residents and explained the new sales tax laws that were past in 2009, has changed the way the mining industry pays sales tax on mining equipment. This change affected the sales tax revenue with a short fall of about \$100,000. Mr. Jones stated he would be happy to pay the increases in taxes and water rates if the infrastructure will be repaired.

Tracy Coon, 97 Welby Street, commented that she just wanted to make sure she gets a bang for her buck.

Charlie Hamilton 321 North Martin Road, recommend that the city be dissolved and be turned over to the county.

Gary Nielson, 715 Castle Gate Road, expressed concern with turning the city over to the county. Mr. Nielson stated that it is nice to have a policeman when you need them, and have water and power. Mr. Nielson explained that he is on a fixed income and there were no raises in his Social Society but, he is willing to do whatever is needed to keep the city going.

Steven Giacoletto, 517 North Main, informed the council that the sales tax on food, which was lowered from 6% to 3%, hurt Helper. Mr. Giacoletto felt that if the city cut expenses like using red fuel instead of diesel fuel could help. Mr. Giacoletto stated that being business person if his expenses go up he has to jack up the prices and more people will go to Price to shop.

Royce Van Tassell, Taxpayer Association, stated it looks like the explanation to raise taxes was the same as all the other cities across the state. It is because of the economy that sales tax revenue it down and increasing the tax will only hurt the budget and the economy because the people will not have any money to spend. Mayor Armstrong told Mr. Van Tassell that the mining exemption did hurt the sales tax revenue for Helper and we know how much that was compared to the economy and the sales tax formula. Mayor Armstrong felt that Mr. Van Tassell had no standing on this issue and that the residents that he represented should stand up and state their name and speak their concerns.

Commissioner John Jones addressed Mr. Van Tassell's comments by explaining that all the mining exemption did was take money from the cities and put it in the pockets of the mining companies as a tax write off.

Mike James, 225 North Main, stated that 75% of Helper's residents are retired and on a fixed income. When the city hires contractors for building like the Museum addition they should hire local contractors. Mayor Armstrong explained that if the local contractors are within 10% of the lowest bid they would receive the bid. Mr. James asked if the contractors would hire local workers. Mayor Armstrong replied that they try to hire local subcontractors.

Charlie Felice, 110 West 3<sup>rd</sup> North, asked is the money going to go to the general fund and 3-5 years down the road will the sewer, water, electric be the reason to raise it again. Mr. Felice told the council that the Mayor of Wellington cleaning and mowing the lawn because of the sales tax short fall what is our city going to do to cut cost. The residents are willing to sacrifice for the city but what is the city willing to sacrifice. Main Street gets all spruced up for the Art Festival every street should look like Main Street and the Arts Festival should be every day. Mayor Armstrong told Mr. Felice that there were no salary increases for any employees and the city had two employees quit and they will not be replaced.

Ruth Metzger, 455 North Frontage Road, questioned why the city did not have a plan for shovel ready projects for stimulus money. Mayor Armstrong explained that the last Capital Improvement Plan was dated 1986 and most of that plan had been completed. In a previous administration the General Plan had been updated but this administration is working on the Capital Improvement Plan. Ms. Metzger asked if the citizens would be able to see the plan and would the council be accountable for what is in the plan. Mayor Armstrong stated everything is opened to the public for viewing and comments. Ms. Metzger stated that as a realtor the tax increase may make it hard to sell homes in Helper, people are looking at Carbon County as cheap housing and a better place to live. East Carbon had a huge water rate increase and no one wanted to buy a home there. Helper needs to offer more services so residents will stay in Helper and shop. Pete Via 118 Palmer Street spoke about the holes in the streets and there is no sidewalk in front of my home about 3years ago they dug up my water line and the hole is still there. Mr. Via also asked that the weed cleanup be enforced.

Ralph Fossat, 201 1<sup>st</sup> Ave, asked how many police officers Helper City has and why do we need a Detective. Chief Anderson told Mr. Fossat that there are 6 officers and there has been a 30% increase in sexual assaults. Our Detective interviews all the cases which take several hours per case. Mr. Fossat asked about the police taking the cars home and how many police officers are on at time. Chief Anderson explained that only one police officer is on at a time and having the cars at home is a quicker response time and they are taking better care of the car.

Harry Reddington complained that the Museum and Swimming Pool should be opened later for something to do in Helper. Traveler's call his RV Park all the time and ask if there is something to do at night.

Sherrie Uzelac, 57 Welby Street, spoke about no sidewalks across the street and felt that the increase was too high.

Council Member Wise stated that everyone is on a fixed income.

Jean Boyack, 3 South 4<sup>th</sup> Ave, told the residents that everyone need to step up and clean their own weeds and help make the city look good. Ms. Boyack also stated that there is help for those who can not pay the taxes they must check with Carbon County. Delores Slavensky 298 North Martin Rd, stated that she supported the tax increase and thanked the council for a great job.

Ron Mutz, 46 E Street, expressed concern with no businesses in Helper and everyone goes to Price for prescriptions and then shops and eats in Price. Mr. Mutz would like to see more businesses in Helper especially a pharmacy.

Keith Williams 115 West 10<sup>th</sup> North, asked if the business at Utah Railway was paying taxes. Mayor Armstrong informed Mr. Williams that was not a taxable business.

Gene Picco, 77 Dalpiaz Ave, asked how long the money will be in the General Fund. Gaylene Nelson, 715 Castle Gate Rd, stated if the city could combine the library and museum to cut some cost. Ms. Nelson asked if the city to give incentives to new businesses to try and get them to come to Helper.

Summer McBride, 399 Janet Street, understood why the tax increase but, asked if it could be lowered.

Kerry and Dave Hansen, 51 North Main Street, stated that they are not on a fix income and work for every dollar they get. The Hansen's were concerned about renting or selling their building.

Joe Bonacci, 42 Bryner Street, asked what the city would get without the increase. City Recorder Skerl told Mr. Bonacci that currently we receive \$115,718 with the increase in values it would be \$121,194.

Mayor Armstrong closed the meeting at 7:45 P.M.

Council Member Bradley moved to approve Resolution 2010-9 adopting a 65% increase in property tax instead of an 86% increase. Council Member Wise seconded the motion. The Council roll call vote is as follows: Council Members Bradley, Mascaro, Wise and Harwood in favor with Pugliese in opposition Resolution 2010-9 passed by a 4 to1 roll call vote

**DISCUSSION AND/OR APPROVAL ON RESOLUTION 2010-10 BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2010-2011.**

Council Member Wise moved to approve Resolution 2010-10 adopting the budget for fiscal year 2010-2011 with the change in property tax revenue. Council Member Wise seconded the motion. The Council roll call vote is as follows: Council Members Pugliese, Bradley, Mascaro, Wise, and Harwood in favor with no one in opposition Resolution 2010-10 passed by a unanimous roll call vote

There being no further business Council Member Harwood moved to adjourn. Council Member Pugliese seconded the motion. Motion Carried Pugliese, Bradley, Mascaro, Wise, and Harwood voting yes. Meeting adjourned.

I here by certify that the fore going represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Helper City Council meeting held on Thursday, August 19, 2010.

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Dean Armstrong  
Mayor  
Approved on September 2, 2010

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Jona Skerl  
City Recorder