

The Independence City Council met in regular session in the council chambers at 5:00 p.m., on Monday, August 26, 2024.

OPENING/ROLL CALL

Mayor Bleichner opened the meeting by calling the meeting to order with Council Members Weber, Hanna, Moore, Prusator, O'Loughlin, and Jensen in attendance. Council Member Huston was excused.

This meeting was available for public attendance. The meeting was also broadcast on the local access channel, YouTube, and Facebook.

APPROVE THE AGENDA

Motion by Council Member Jensen, second by Council Member Moore to approve the agenda as presented for the regular meeting held August 26, 2024. Ayes: All. Absent: Huston.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Council Member Prusator, second by Council Member Hanna to accept and approve the consent agenda that approves the following: 1) The minutes of the August 12, 2024, Regular Meeting. 2) Pat's Tap Class C Retail Alcohol License renewal application that includes living quarters and outdoor service effective September 1, 2024, through August 31, 2025. 3) Bow hunting request from Kevin, Zachary, and Lucas Sidles for the 2024-2025 Bow Hunting Season. Ayes: All. Absent: Huston.

FINANCIALS

Motion by Council Member O'Loughlin, second by Council Member Jensen to approve the following bills for payment. Ayes: All. Absent: Huston.

ADP	IA-SUIER-ALL	\$ 5,830.26
ADP	FED/FICA/STATE-ALL	\$ 34,303.19
AMAZON CAPITAL SERVICES	SUPPLIES-L	\$ 1,014.22
AVFUEL CORPORATION	EQUIP RENTAL-A	\$ 20.00
BIBLIONIX LLC	SERVICES-L	\$ 3,370.00
BOLTON & MENK, INC.	SERVICES-A	\$ 915.00
BOWKER MECHANICAL	SERVICES-L	\$ 303.50
BRODART CO	SUPPLIES-L	\$ 815.00
BRUENING ROCK PRODUCTS IN	ROAD ROCK-ST,PR	\$ 2,407.87
BUCHANAN COUNTY HEALTH CE	SERVICES-CH	\$ 11,344.02
BUCHANAN COUNTY SENIOR CI	H/M ALLOC-CH	\$ 700.00
CARD SERVICES-LIBRARY	MISC EXP-L	\$ 1,902.24
CEDAR BEND HUMANE SOCIETY	SERVICES-AC	\$ 108.00
CENGAGE LEARNING	BOOKS-L	\$ 136.45
CITY LAUNDERING CO INC	BLDG MAINT-PD	\$ 399.09
COONRAD, JERSEY	UMPIRE-PR	\$ 55.00
CORNWELL, KAYLA	REIMBURSE-W	\$ 315.00

CY & CHARLEY'S FIRESTONE	SERVICES-PD,ST,W,PR	\$ 112.00
DAKE, EMMA	UMPIRE-PR	\$ 40.00
DELTA DENTAL OF IOWA	DENTAL INSURANCE	\$ 4,209.80
EAST-CENTRAL IOWA R.E.C.	UTILITY-A,PR,ST,W,CH	\$ 2,529.64
EMPLOYEE BENEFIT SYSTEMS	SAFE-T FUND-ALL	\$ 9,452.11
EPIC CLEAN, LLC	BLDG MAINT-L	\$ 1,400.00
FAHR BEVERAGE INC	CONCESSIONS-PR	\$ 358.50
GENERAL TRAFFIC CONTROLS	SUPPLIES-ST	\$ 365.00
GONZALEZ, EMMA	UMPIRE-PR	\$ 70.00
GPM	SUPPLIES-W	\$ 311.50
GRAINGER INC	SUPPLIES-W	\$ 85.45
GREEN PRO SOLUTIONS	SUPPLIES-ST	\$ 2,490.78
HAWKEYE ALARM SIGNAL COMP	SERVICES-L	\$ 300.00
HAWKINS, INC.	CHEMICALS-W	\$ 90.00
HEARTLAND ACRES AGRIBITIO	H/M ALLOCAT-CH	\$ 1,000.00
HOMAN, CARTER	UMPIRE-PR	\$ 90.00
HOOKOM, BAILIE	UMPIRE-PR	\$ 40.00
HUPKE, DEWEY	UMPIRE-PR	\$ 45.00
IA DEPT OF REVENUE	SALES TAX-PR,W	\$ 9,217.69
IA DNR	DUES-W	\$ 1,275.00
INDEPENDENCE BULLETIN-JOU	DUES-L	\$ 109.00
INDEPENDENCE LIGHT & POWE	UTILITIES-ALL	\$ 36,202.60
INRCOG	SERVICES-CH	\$ 1,750.00
INVENTORY TRADING COMPANY	UNIFORM-PD	\$ 37.00
J & R SUPPLY INC	SUPPLIES-W	\$ 250.00
KEYSTONE LABORATORIES INC	LAB ANALYSIS-W	\$ 226.75
KOBLINSKA, BOBBY	UMPIRE-PR	\$ 120.00
KRIVACHECK JANITORIAL SUP	SUPPLIES-ST	\$ 205.50
LEGALSHIELD	303741 EE SHARE F62	\$ 138.66
LYNCH, DAVE	SERVICES-ST	\$ 2,530.00
LYON, DANE	UMPIRE-PR	\$ 110.00
MEIKE, CAIDEN	UMPIRE-PR	\$ 20.00
MIDAMERICAN ENERGY COMPAN	UTILITY-W,ST,PR,CH,PD	\$ 2,622.58
MORONEY, CREIGHTON	SERVICES-ST	\$ 2,350.00
PAYROLL CHECKS	PAYROLL CHECKS	\$ 95,939.10
PENWORTHY COMPANY, THE	BOOKS-L	\$ 546.14
PEPSI-COLA GEN. BOT. IN	CONCESSION-PR	\$ 901.68
PITNEY BOWES GLOBAL FINAN	EQUIP LEASE-CH	\$ 315.48
PUFFETT, JACOB	UMPIRE-PR	\$ 220.00
PURCHASE POWER	POSTAGE-ALL	\$ 270.99
REED, RANGER	UMPIRE-PR	\$ 125.00

ROTO-ROOTER	SERVICES-W	\$ 170.00
ROTTINGHAUS, ANDY	UMPIRE-PR	\$ 90.00
S & K COLLECTIBLES	SHIPPING-W	\$ 28.62
SIDLES, JAKE	UMPIRE-PR	\$ 65.00
SIDLES, LUCAS	UMPIRE-PR	\$ 195.00
SIGNS & MORE	SERVICES-ST,W	\$ 826.64
STATE FARM	BENEFITS-CH,ST,W	\$ 32.72
STATE HYGIENIC LABORATORY	LAB ANALYSIS-W	\$ 14.50
STATE STREET BANK & TRUST	EE SHARE (IPR & IPO)	\$ 5,925.11
STOREY KENWORTHY - MATT P	SUPPLIES-L	\$ 190.71
STRAND ASSOCIATES	SERVICES-W	\$ 62,010.00
TASC	FLEX MEDICAL	\$ 1,963.68
TITAN MACHINERY	VEH MAINT-ST	\$ 2,695.80
TREASURER IOWA UNCLAIM PR	SERVICES-PD	\$ 2,248.00
TRUE VALUE HARDWARE	SUPPLIES-L	\$ 22.99
TRUMBLEE, KENLEIGH	UMPIRE-PR	\$ 55.00
UMB BANK NA	BOND FEES-CH	\$ 1,200.00
VESSCO INC	EQUIP REPAIR-W	\$ 4,975.29
WALMART COMMUNITY	SUPPLIES-W	\$ 195.20
WASTE MANAGEMENT	GARBAGE-PR	\$ 404.97
WBC MECHANICAL INC	EQUIP REPAIR-W	\$ 3,980.97
WELLMARK BCBS	INSURE-CH	\$ 240.40
WELLMARK BCBS	HEALTH BENEFIT	\$ 42,716.47
WILSON, DAVID	UMPIRE-PR	\$ 125.00

CLAIMS TOTAL \$372,783.86; General Fund \$51,086.07; Library \$12,781.78; Hotel-Motel Tax \$1,700.00; Streets Dept-Road Use \$14,423.64; Employee Benefits \$431.08; Urban Renewal-LMI \$1,750.00; Debt Service \$600.00; Cap Project-Airport \$915.00; Cap Outlay Savings/LOST \$290.28; Water Fund \$14,885.97; Water Revenue Bond \$600.00; Sewer Utility Fund \$86,699.37; Self Insurance \$9,329.16; Self Insurance-Enterprise \$122.95. The payroll for August 23, 2024, is not included in the fund breakdown due to a payroll conversion.

REVENUES MONTH TO DATE TOTAL \$516,843.65; General Fund \$141,808.72; Library \$33,369.57; Streets Dept-Road Use \$63,685.15; Employee Benefits \$140.00; Economic Development \$35,145.00; Debt Service \$5,933.33; Debt-Special Assessment \$209.00; Cap Project-Airport \$500.00; Cap Outlay Savings/LOST \$1,951.65; Water Fund \$60,763.43; Water Revenue Bond \$7,832.08; Sewer Utility \$90,805.74; Sewer SRF Sinking \$7,996.66; Sewer Sinking Revenue Bond \$42,422.66; Storm Water \$8,759.25; Self Insurance \$15,313.51; Self Insurance-Enterprise \$207.90.

The July 2024 bank reconciliation, the August 2024 budgeted monthly transfers, and the revenues and expenses by department to date were available for council review and discussion.

HEARINGS & ORDINANCES

Mayor Bleichner stated, pursuant to the agenda, he will now convene a public hearing for the proposed amendment pertaining to Code Section 1.15 Fines and Fee Schedule, specifically the water and sewer fees. Bonita Davis, 704

Pine Dr SW, expressed her concerns at the increase of 10% and how she lives on a fixed income. She is confused as this was presented as an emergency that the plant needed to be replaced. This topic was brought up when she was in office and thought funding was set aside and a plan was in place to do a gradual increase of rates. She wanted to know if the funds were still available and what happened to all those plans? She wanted to know what grants or funding sources have been looked at. She feels there wasn't an explanation of how the 10% increase was decided. Ryan Nielsen, President of Wapsie Valley Creamery, said the Creamery is the largest single rate payor for the City. This increase directly impacts them. He did appreciate the transparency of conversations with City Manager Schmitz and Utilities Director Foley regarding environmental reasons for the necessary upgrades for the existing plant. He has done research on other municipalities and utility rates. He has found that Independence is on the high side for rates and as a businessperson this is something that needs to be considered when trying to attract new businesses. He asked if Independence has looked at neighboring cities and their rate history. He asked if alternative energy sources have been looked at to help reduce costs if possible. He wanted to know if the new plant would be more cost efficient than the current plant. Cassandra Hare, resident of the NE side of town, shared her concerns about the proposed increase rate schedule over the long term and those residents that are struggling with current expenses. She asked if all options have been looked at regarding this project and if that information will be made known to the public. She wanted to know if the increase could be smaller and over a longer period. Julie Klammer, 511 2nd Ave NE, spent yesterday looking at previous council meetings where this was first brought up. It surprised her that at the August 8, 2022, meeting that the engineer agreement was approved, but nothing was done at that time for rates. She hopes that for future projects for the City that things are better prepared for instead of doing things at the last minute. Mayor Bleichner closed the public hearing and stated City Clerk Lampe will note all comments in the record.

Council Member Hanna with a motion to table the first reading of an ordinance that amends provisions pertaining to Code Section 1.15 Fines and Fee Schedule, specifically the water and sewer fees until after the September 3, 2024, work session, second by Council Member Weber. Council Member Moore stated that two more readings need to be held and this topic has been talked about before now. The City has applied for grants, but some grants need to have more information before the application can be submitted. Council Member Hanna feels it needs to be tabled because of the unknown impacts from property taxes, the proposed EMS tax levy to be voted on, and upcoming City projects. The residents that came tonight have voiced their opinions and Council needs to take this into consideration before moving forward. Council Member O'Loughlin understands Council Member Hanna's concerns, but the plant is worn out and needs to be replaced. To qualify with the SRF application, utility rates need to ensure that future revenue will cover the debt payments. The roll being called the following Council Members voted: Ayes: Hanna and Weber. Nays: Moore, Prusator, O'Loughlin, and Jensen. Absent: Huston. City Manager Schmitz discussed the healthy fund balance the sewer fund has and spoke of maintaining some of that separate from this new plant project in the event something happens, and repairs are needed. A SRF loan was taken out in 2018 to help the plant limp along to get to where it is now. The proposed rate increases were reached by working with Speer Financial to calculate what is needed to maintain the proper debt to income ratio to cover regular operating and debt expenses. He had spent time earlier today looking at changing the increase percentages and using more of the fund balance to see what other options the City may have. The proposed rate increases are based on the actual usage of water and sewer. Property valuations do not have any impact on these proposed rate increases. A history of the plant with projects for maintenance was given. There are also guidelines from the State and the EPA that need to be met and the new plant will be able to do that. There will be some existing structures that will be reused as they are still in good condition. The funding options the City has looked into were discussed. Council Member Moore with a motion to approve the first reading of an ordinance that amends provisions pertaining to Code Section 1.15 Fines and Fee Schedule, specifically the water and sewer fees, second by Council Member Jensen. The roll being called the following Council Members voted: Ayes: Weber, Jensen, O'Loughlin, Hanna, Prusator, and Moore. Absent: Huston.

Council Member O'Loughlin with a motion to approve the first reading of an ordinance that amends provisions

pertaining to Sections 35.13 Fire Officials Authority and 35.14 Council Authority, second by Council Member Hanna. Mayor Bleichner explained this was passed at the last meeting, but it was noticed afterwards there was a numbering mistake in the amendment. This new amendment corrects the numbering in Chapter 35. The roll being called the following Council Members voted: Ayes: Moore, Prusator, O'Loughlin, Jensen, and Weber. Absent: Huston. Council Member Moore with a motion that the statutory rule requiring an ordinance to be considered and voted on for passage at two Council meetings prior to the meeting at which it is to be finally passed be suspended, second by Council Member Jensen. The roll being called the following Council Members voted: Ayes: Prusator, O'Loughlin, Jensen, Weber, Hanna, and Moore. Absent: Huston. Council Member Jensen with a motion to have this ordinance that amends provisions pertaining to Sections 35.13 Fire Officials Authority and 35.14 Council Authority be placed on its final passage for adoption pursuant to Iowa Code Section 380.3, second by Council Member Moore. The roll being called the following Council Members voted: Ayes: O'Loughlin, Jensen, Weber, Hanna, Moore, and Prusator. Absent: Huston.

Ordinance adopted and upon approval by Mayor assigned No. 2024-594 in the Official Book of Ordinances.

RESOLUTIONS

Council Member Prusator with a motion to approve and authorize the Mayor to sign the resolution to assess property owner(s) for Chapter 52, Mowing of Properties – Failure to Comply, second by Council Member Hanna. The roll being called the following Council Members voted: Ayes: Jensen, Weber, Hanna, Moore, Prusator, and O'Loughlin. Absent: Huston.

Resolution adopted and upon approval by Mayor assigned No. 2024-57 in the Official Book of Resolutions.

OTHER BUSINESS

Council Member Jensen with a motion to approve the private septic tank installation at 1511 1st Street East, second by Council Member O'Loughlin. The roll being called the following Council Members voted: Ayes: Weber, Hanna, Moore, Prusator, O'Loughlin, and Jensen. Absent: Huston.

REPORTS

The following comments were heard from Council and Staff: Hanna – At the September 3rd Work Session, she would like to discuss how the City should prioritize future projects. O'Loughlin – Drive carefully since school is back in session. Jensen – Used the inclusive park with her grandson. She heard lots of positive comments from the other people that were there at the same time. She heard comments from people about downtown parking issues. Areas of Highway 150 South were cleaned up, but there are still some areas that need to be cleaned from the overgrowth. Mayor – Mentioned his recent article about stats from different departments that was in last Saturday's Bulletin Journal. It is also posted on the Mayor's Facebook page. The City is working with Audrey Hill to create a memorial park for Bob Hill at the intersection of 3rd Ave SE and 1st St E in the greenspace corner. City Manager – George Lake is working on the accessible fishing pier at Triangle Park. The City's contribution for this is to do \$10,000 in-kind services. The slopes in the area are significant enough and the City has reached out to Crawford Engineering to help make sure the ramps meet ADA compliance. Officer Dilley has announced his resignation with the Independence Police Department. The replacement process has been started for advertising the position. Later this week, he will be out of the office to spend time with his family for Labor Day weekend. Utilities Department – Lead service line surveys are still being accepted. The EPA has mandated that this be done. It is anticipated that 30% of surveys have been turned in, and the City needs to be at 80% by October 16th. Comments were heard that people thought it was junk mail or related to the service line warranty insurance. At this time, it is unknown what the next steps will be after the inventory is completed.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Council Member O’Loughlin, second by Council Member Moore to adjourn. Ayes: All. Absent: Huston.
Whereupon Mayor Bleichner declared the meeting adjourned at 6:23 p.m.

Brad Bleichner, Mayor of the City of Independence, Iowa

ATTEST:

Susi Lampe, IaCMC, IaCFO,
Assistant City Manager/City Clerk/Treasurer of the City of Independence, Iowa

