

The Independence City Council met in regular session in the council chambers at 5:30 p.m., on Monday, February 9, 2026.

#### OPENING/ROLL CALL

Mayor Bleichner opened the meeting by calling the meeting to order with Council Members Weber, Moore, Prusator, Mayner, O'Loughlin, and Appleby in attendance. Council Member Hanna attended via phone.

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 O'Loughlin, second by Council Member Weber to approve the agenda as presented for the regular meeting held February 9, 2026. Ayes: All.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Donald Kolar, 718 5<sup>th</sup> Street NE, shared he received the City's letter in response to the petition he submitted against the 2026 Street Rehabilitation Project.

#### CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Council Member Weber, second by Council Member Mayner to accept and approve the consent agenda that approves the following: a) The minutes of the January 26, 2026, Regular Meeting. b) The minutes of the February 2, 2026, work session/special meeting. c) Gedney Bakery & Coffeehouse Class C retail alcohol license renewal with outdoor service with a tentative effective date of February 15, 2026. d) Kwik Star #717 Class B retail alcohol license renewal with a tentative effective date of April 1, 2026. Ayes: All.

#### FINANCIALS

Motion by Council Member Moore, second by Council Member Mayner to approve the following bills for payment. Ayes: All.

ADP	PAYROLL SVCS	\$108,609.53
AIR SERVICES INC	BLDG MAINT-CH	\$725.00
ALEX SATTIZAHN	VOLUNTEER-F	\$70.06
AMAZON CAPITAL SERVICES	SUPPLIES-B,CH,PD,F	\$1,143.75
ANDREW ROMAN	VOLUNTEER-F	\$864.12
ANGELA KILER	PHONE ALLOW	\$50.00
ANTHONY SCHULER	VOLUNTEER-F	\$58.39
ASSURITY LIFE INSURANCE CO	ASSUR CRIT ILL	\$586.64
AVIVE SOLUTIONS, INC	EQUIP-F	\$997.52
BANNER FIRE EQUIPMENT	VEH REPAIR-F	\$528.30
BLAKE HAYWARD	MISC EXP-F	\$257.35
BLEICHNER, BRAD	PHONE ALLOW	\$100.00
BRAD ESCH	PHONE ALLOW	\$50.00
BRENT RECK	PHONE ALLOW	\$50.00
BRIAN LAU	PHONE ALLOW	\$50.00
BRODY TILL	VOLUNTEER-F	\$105.10
BUCHANAN COUNTY FIREMAN'S ASSO	DUES-F	\$30.00
CARD SERVICES-VISA	MISC EXP-CH,W	\$4,687.05
CHRISTIAN BLAD	VOLUNTEER-F	\$747.35
CHRISTENSEN, GABE	SAFE-T REFUND-CH	\$1.76
CLERK OF DISTRICT COURT	FEES-PD	\$95.00
COLE'S ACE HARDWARE	SUPPLIES-F,W,ST,A,PR	\$1,142.00
CRAWFORD ENGINEERING & SURVEYI	SERVICES-PR,ST	\$4,500.00
CY & CHARLEY'S FIRESTONE INC	VEH MAINT-W	\$62.93
DELL MARKETING, LP	DUES-ALL	\$20,527.51
DON'S TRUCK SALES INC	VEH REPAIR-F	\$285.66
DREW REICKS	VOLUNTEER-F	\$280.25
ELECTRIC PUMP INC	EQUIP-W	\$1,291.59

EMPLOYEE BENEFIT SYSTEMS	SAFE-T FUND	\$9,971.26
ESCHEN'S CLOTHING	UNIFORM-W	\$179.85
EUROFINS ENVIRONMENT TESTING	LAB ANALYSIS-W	\$1,963.94
FELD FIRE	VEH REPAIR-F	\$4,879.57
FLETCHER-REINHARDT CO	EQUIP-PR	\$222.91
FRONTLINE WARNING SYSTEMS	SERVICES-F	\$1,400.00
FUTURE LINE LLC	VEH REPAIR-A,ST	\$1,350.59
GENERAL TRAFFIC CONTROLS	EQUIP REPAIR-ST	\$2,142.00
GORDY FENNER	VOLUNTEER-F	\$186.84
HAGER, LANDEN	VOLUNTEER-F	\$105.10
IA INSURANCE COMMISSIONER	DUES-CH	\$101.59
IA PRISON INDUSTRIES	SUPPLIES-CH	\$29.00
IA SOCIETY OF FIRE SERVICE INS	TRAINING-F	\$140.00
IMFOA	DUES-CH	\$100.00
INDEPENDENCE LIGHT & POWER	EQUIP REPAIR-CH	\$2,394.44
INDEPENDENCE NAPA	SUPPLIES-F,W,ST,A,PR	\$1,169.74
INDEPENDENCE PLUMBING, HEATING	REPAIR-W	\$347.95
JACOB KURT	VOLUNTEER-F	\$81.74
JACOBS, MORGAN	VOLUNTEER-F	\$256.90
JACOB WOLF	VOLUNTEER-F	\$35.03
JANET BULS	INSTRUCTOR-PR	\$407.25
JASON DECKER	VOLUNTEER-F	\$233.55
JENNIFER SIMMONS	VOLUNTEER-F	\$315.29
J.F. AHERN	SERVICES-PR	\$1,443.36
JOHN BUTLER	PHONE ALLOW	\$50.00
JORDON WULFEKUHLE	VOLUNTEER-F	\$105.10
KLUESNER SANITATION, LLC	GARBAGE-G	\$47,469.16
KQ SPORTS	TOURNEY FEES-PR	\$10,520.00
KRIVACHECK JANITORIAL SUPPLY	SAFETY EQUIP-W	\$88.00
LIFE TIME FENCE COMPANY	EQUIP-PR	\$2,369.80
LYNN PEAVY COMPANY	SUPPLIES-PD	\$126.85
MATTHEW SCHMITZ	PHONE ALLOW	\$100.00
MCCURDY-SAVAGO, COOPER	VOLUNTEER-F	\$175.16
MICROBAC LABORATORIES, INC	LAB ANALYSIS-W	\$353.75
MIKE ZIMMERLY	VOLUNTEER-F	\$58.39
MSA PROFESSIONAL SERVICES INC	SERVICES-W	\$6,750.00
NATHAN BEENBLOSSOM	VOLUNTEER-F	\$326.96
NEJDL, MICHELLE	PHONE ALLOW	\$50.00
NUTRI-JECT SYSTEMS, INC.	SERVICES-W	\$704.44
OELWEIN PUBLISHING COMPANY	PUBLICAT-CH,PR	\$742.06
OFFICE TOWNE INC.	SUPPLIES-CH,PR,W	\$745.87
PEPSI-COLA GEN. BOT. INC	SUPPLIES-PR	\$419.70
PITNEY BOWES GLOBAL FINANCIAL	EQUIP LEASE-PR	\$177.90
PRINT EXPRESS	BROCHURES-PR	\$2,165.00
RAY O'HERRON CO.	UNIFORM-PD	\$81.94
RITLAND KUIPER LANDSCAPE ARCHI	SERVICES-ST	\$4,543.28
ROBERT BEATTY	PHONE ALLOW	\$50.00
RYAN EXTERMINATING INC.	BLDG MAINT-PR,CH	\$162.72
SIGNS & MORE LLC	SIGNAGE-PR	\$1,385.57
S&K COLLECTIBLES	SHIPPING-W	\$281.26
SOUKUP, BRETT	PHONE ALLOW	\$50.00
SPAHN & ROSE LUMBER COMPANY	SUPPLIES-ST,F	\$2,062.99
STATE STREET BANK & TRUST CO	RETIRE BENEFIT	\$8,752.03
SUPERB CLEANING SERVICES	BLDG MAINT-PR	\$2,407.50
TANNER ERICKSON-DALE	VOLUNTEER-F	\$198.51
TASC	FLEX/DEP CARE	\$1,497.28
TAYLOR SIMMONS	VOLUNTEER-F	\$291.83
TIMOTHY MAIN	INSTRUCTOR-PR	\$555.00

T-MOBILE	PHONE-B,F,CH,PR,PD,W	\$1,042.44
TONY DELGADO-CONNOR	VOLUNTEER-F	\$338.64
TRAVIS FOLEY	MISC EXP-CH,W	\$61.97
TRENTON CABELL	PHONE ALLOW	\$50.00
TY FANGMAN	VOLUNTEER-F	\$326.96
ULINE	EQUIP-ST	\$516.27
VERIZON WIRELESS	PHONE-PD,F	\$45.50
VOLTMER, INC.	RUNWAY REPAIR-A	\$962.38
WAHLERT SOFTBALL	TOURNEY FEE-PR	\$275.00
WES HOOKEM	VOLUNTEER-F	\$338.64
WEX BANK	FUEL-A,F,PD,PR,W	\$3,411.23
WINTER WONDERLAND, INC	VEH REPAIR-ST	\$1,684.16

**CLAIMS TOTAL \$282,226.00;** General Fund \$174,731.52; Library \$10,612.82; Streets Dept-Road Use \$20,225.58; Employee Benefits \$7,062.97; Cap Project-Street Improvements \$1,962.49; Cap Project-Visioning \$2,580.00; Cap Outlay Savings/LOST \$8,556.97; Cap Project-1<sup>st</sup> St W Recon \$4,543.28; Water Fund \$18,031.88; Sewer Utility Fund \$23,947.23; Self Insurance \$9,890.36; Self Insurance-Enterprise \$80.90.

**REVENUES MONTH TO DATE TOTAL \$188,060.97;** General Fund \$11,129.04; Library \$47,284.33; Water Fund \$40,407.38; Sewer Utility \$73,437.87; Storm Water \$5,831.09; Self Insurance \$9,890.36; Self Insurance-Enterprise \$80.90.

The January 2026 bank reconciliation and the revenues and expenses by department to date were available for council review and discussion.

#### HEARINGS & ORDINANCES

Council Member Prusator with a motion to set March 23, 2026, at 4:45 pm as a public hearing on the proposed property tax levy for Fiscal Year 2027, second by Council Member Moore. The roll being called the following Council Members voted: Ayes: Hanna, Moore, Prusator, Mayner, O'Loughlin, Appleby, and Weber.

#### 2026 STREET REHABILITATION PROJECT

Mayor Bleichner stated, pursuant to the agenda, he will now convene a public hearing on the proposed plans, specifications, form of contract, and estimate of cost for the 2026 Street Rehabilitation Project. City Clerk/Treasurer Lampe stated no comments were received. Mayor Bleichner closed the public hearing and stated City Clerk Lampe will note all comments in the record.

Council Member O'Loughlin with a motion to approve and authorize the Mayor to sign the resolution to finally approve and confirm the plans, specifications, form of contract, and estimate of cost for the 2026 Street Rehabilitation Project, second by Council Member Prusator. Council Member Appleby wanted to discuss if Council should continue the project based upon the public outcry against the project. Mayor Bleichner said this is a procedural step to approve the plans, specifications, and contract for the project. Council Member Appleby stated that if the contract isn't approved, then the project isn't going forward, and the City is not pledging to fund it. The roll being called the following Council Members voted: Ayes: Moore, Prusator, Mayner, O'Loughlin, Weber, and Hanna. Nays: Appleby.

**Resolution adopted and upon approval by Mayor assigned No. 2026-11 in the Official Book of Resolutions.**

Mayor Bleichner stated bids were received on February 4, 2026, until 11:00 a.m., on that same day and time, such bids were opened and read and now is the time for the bids to be considered. Crawford Engineering prepared the plans and reviewed the bids received to make sure they are within the project's scope. The bids ranged from \$677,326.90 to \$783,949.50.

Council Member O'Loughlin with a motion to approve and authorize the Mayor to sign the resolution awarding the contract for the 2026 Street Rehabilitation Project to Tschiggfrie Excavating Company of Dubuque, IA, in the amount of \$677,326.90, second by Council Member Mayner. The roll being called the following Council Members voted: Ayes: Prusator, Mayner, O'Loughlin, Weber, Hanna, and Moore. Nays: Appleby.

**Resolution adopted and upon approval by Mayor assigned No. 2026-12 in the Official Book of Resolutions.**

#### RESOLUTIONS

Council Member O'Loughlin with a motion to approve and authorize the Mayor to sign the resolution to endorse

the 1<sup>st</sup> Street West – Rebuilding a Major Corridor Project for grant funding, second by Council Member Appleby. Council Member Mayner stated he had concerns about the space concerns along First Street West for the proposed sidewalks/trails being proposed. City Manager Schmitz stated the plans are just conceptual at this point. More formal plans will be drafted upon receipt of the grant. Council Member Appleby wanted clarification on the other aspects this project would include. City Manager Schmitz stated it is a full reconstruction of the street and that includes infrastructure being updated. Council Member Moore asked if specific plans are not needed at this point, and the City decides to change something in the project, could some of the grant funds be taken away? City Manager Schmitz replied he cannot answer that question at this time. Council Member Appleby asked if other improvements could be done on the west side for bicycles? City Manager Schmitz stated that would be a different project for a future date. Discussion was held on the grant and its scoring requirements and where Council could read more about the grant. The roll being called the following Council Members voted: Ayes: Mayner, O’Loughlin, Appleby, Weber, Hanna, Moore, and Prusator.

**Resolution adopted and upon approval by Mayor assigned No. 2026-13 in the Official Book of Resolutions.**

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Council Member O’Loughlin with a motion to approve Amendment #1 to the agreement with Ritland + Kuiper Landscape Architects for the 1<sup>st</sup> Street West Corridor Improvements project, and to authorize the City Manager to sign the agreement, second by Council Member Moore. The roll being called the following Council Members voted: Ayes: O’Loughlin, Appleby, Weber, Hanna, Moore, Prusator, and Mayner.

Council Member Mayner with a motion to approve SRE Equipment Task Order No. 11 with Bolton & Menk for engineering services and acceptance of the associated cost analysis, finding the proposed fees to be fair and reasonable, second by Council Member Weber. This project is being funded with an FAA grant, and as part of the grant, an engineer must be used even when buying equipment. Airport Director Soukup explained more of the grant requirements necessary and the cost analysis process for snow removal equipment. Council Member Appleby asked if a company could be hired to do snow removal at the airport instead of the City purchasing new equipment? City Manager Schmitz and Airport Director Soukup explained that proceeding with the FAA grant is more cost effective for the City as opposed to trying to hire a contractor for snow removal services. The roll being called the following Council Members voted: Ayes: Appleby, Weber, Hanna, Moore, Prusator, Mayner, and O’Loughlin.

Council Member Appleby with a motion to record and broadcast City Council Work Sessions via video. The motion died for lack of a second.

#### **REPORTS**

The following comments were heard from Council and Staff: PD Monthly Report – Council Member O’Loughlin asked if the department was getting more medical assists than previously? Police Chief Lau answered that it depends on the type of call and if the officer feels he/she can be of assistance. FD Monthly Reports – Fire Chief Hayward stated the formatting is different because of a nationwide change within the reporting system. He is open to changing how the information is presented if Council would want to see something different. Building Department Monthly Reports – Council Member Mayner asked if the right-of-way issued to City Hall was a test? City Manager Schmitz replied he received an email from Building Inspector Chesmore that it was a test. Prusator – He has received phone calls asking about the plans for 1<sup>st</sup> Street West. He has said that more about the project will be released as the project moves forward. Appleby – She has reached out to Heartland Acres and the Independence Chamber regarding their funding requests. She is waiting to hear back from them. She also reached out to Library Director Blaker about the different funding the Independence Library uses and talked about potential places within their FY2027 budget to reduce. City Manager – Reminded Council of the special meeting to be held tomorrow at 5:30 pm to approve a final plat. He stated that there are over 2,500 addresses within Independence, but only 98 letters were sent out about the right-of-way encroachments. 15 residents have filled out the required paperwork, and there are others in the works. There have been some residents unhappy with this, but most have been understanding of the process. The City received a \$500,000 Wastewater and Drinking Water Treatment Financial Assistance Program grant to be used towards the Wastewater Treatment Plant Project. He was notified this morning that President Trump signed the infrastructure bill that would also provide \$2 million to be used for the same project. Mayor – A resident approached the City with complaints about mailboxes. The City reached out to the City Attorney’s office on how to proceed with the complaint. The two options presented were to require those mailboxes to be taken down or for the resident to sign an indemnification agreement. He spoke about recent meetings he attended with Buchanan County Economic Development, the Buchanan County Assessor, AMR, and the Iowa Mayors Association. Moore – Thanked the City Manager for looking at other potential funding sources for projects the City is wanting to go forward with.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Council Member Moore, second by Council Member Mayner to adjourn. Ayes: All.

Whereupon Mayor Bleichner declared the meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

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Brad Bleichner, Mayor of the City of Independence, Iowa

ATTEST:

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

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