

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE
INDEPENDENCE CITY COUNCIL
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2021 –6:30 P.M.
(Virtual Meeting/ All Attendees)

1. CALL TO ORDER.

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a regular meeting of the Independence City Council was called to order by Mayor Johnson at 6:30 p.m.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

Mayor Johnson led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. ROLL CALL (Note: all noted present were “virtually” present

PRESENT: Mayor Johnson, Councilors Spencer, Betts, McCoy and Grotting

ABSENT: None

STAFF: City Administrator Kaltsas, Assistant to Administrator Horner, City Attorney Vose

VISITORS: Kevin Anderson

3. ****Consent Agenda****

All items listed under Consent Agenda are considered to be routine by Council and will be acted on by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items. If discussion is desired, that item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and will be considered separately.

- a. Approval of City Council Minutes from the January 19, 2021 Regular City Council Meeting.
- b. Approval of Accounts Payable; (Batch #1 Checks Numbered 20236-20240, Batch #2 Check Numbered 20241, Batch #3 Checks Numbered 20242-20270).
- c. Approval of Pay Request #2 From Rochon for the City Hall Renovation Project.

Motion by Spencer, second by McCoy to approve the Consent Agenda. Ayes: Johnson, Spencer, McCoy, Grotting and Betts. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain. None. MOTION DECLARED CARRIED.

4. SET AGENDA – ANYONE NOT ON THE AGENDA CAN BE PLACED UNDER OPEN/MISC.

5. REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES BY COUNCIL AND STAFF

Spencer attended the following meetings:

- None

Grotting attended the following meetings:

- None

McCoy attended the following meetings: (Virtual)

- Fire Commission Meeting

Betts attended the following meetings: (Virtual)

- Police Commission Meeting
- Fire Commission Meeting
- League of Minnesota Cities Training Session

Johnson attended the following meetings: (Virtual)

- Fire Commission Meeting
- Orono School Board Meeting
- Police Commission Meeting
- Sensible Land Use Committee Meeting
- Senior Community Services Meeting (Monticello Group)
- Local Board of Appeals Training Meeting
- Leroy Haglund Funeral and Visitation
- League of Minnesota Cities Training Session
- Met with person looking at building in the area

Horner attended the following meetings:

- BKV Architect Meeting

Kaltsas attended the following meetings:

- Bi-weekly meeting on County Road 92 and Highway 12 projects

6. Introduction and Conversation with Hennepin County Commissioner Kevin Anderson.

Anderson said he looks forward to diving in and has been made Chair of the Public Works Committees. He said he is looking forward to that role and also expanding the broadband opportunities. Johnson asked about Anderson's background. Anderson said he was in IT for 20 years most recently as a System Architect. McCoy noted there are big issues in Independence with broadband. Anderson said he would like to work on solutions such as putting fiber in as road work is being done so they may be tapped into easily by utilities. He hopes to improve access to a lot of communities by building up the infrastructure. Grotting asked if he had contacted the state about running fiber along some of the current projects. Anderson said he is talking to people and trying to get this vision cultivated. Grotting said it would be great if broadband could be made a priority.

7. General Administration

a. Planning Commission Alternates

Kaltsas said Council discussed the possibility of expanding the planning commission by adding Planning Commission Alternates as a way to provide experience for citizens interested in serving the City and also as a way to ensure a quorum for all meetings. Staff reviewed possible ways to achieve alternates on the planning commission and has drafted potential language that could be added to the ordinance to accommodate an alternate Commission organization. The City did post the opening for the alternate Planning Commission positions and received two applications. Staff would like to further discuss this concept with Council and is seeking direction relating to the potential change in structure. Based on Council direction, staff would anticipate bringing back a formal action item at the next Council Meeting. This item would consider amendment to the ordinance as well as appointment of the alternate commissioners.

305.01. - Planning commission established and continued.

1. The planning commission consisting of five members, each of whom shall be a resident of the city is hereby established and continued. The city council may appoint two alternate members of the planning commission as provided below and may appoint one councilmember to serve as a liaison to the planning commission. The liaison shall be nonvoting members of the planning commission. Planning commissioners shall be appointed by majority vote of the city council and serve for a term of three years and until a successor has been appointed and qualified. A planning commissioner may be removed by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of all of the members of the city council.

2. The city council may appoint up to two alternate members of the planning commission. In the event two alternates are appointed, the longer serving alternate may vote at any planning commission meeting where one regular member is absent. The second alternate may vote at a meeting if two or more regular members are absent, or if one or more regular members are absent and the other alternate is also absent.

3. Alternate members of the planning commission shall be subject to the same qualifications and removal requirements as regular members. Alternate members shall attend planning commission meetings but shall not participate or vote as a member except as provided herein.

Johnson said he liked the options presented. Betts said she thought it would give them a chance to see if they liked it. Vose said a Council member liaison is fine but should not be voting members of the Planning Commission. He said it is not illegal, but a Planning Commission should be truly advisory. Johnson agreed they should be non-voting and Kaltsas noted he clarified that in the draft language. Betts said she has no problem for those that are renewing. She said the ones that are new should be interviewed. Grotting agreed with Betts comments on the reappointments. Spencer said Council should move to appoint the members that are renewing and then interview and appoint the new ones after the language for alternates is approved. McCoy agreed with the comments on reappointment and interviewing the new candidates.

Motion by Spencer, second by Grotting to approve the two reappointments to the Planning Commission for another three-year term and approve an Ordinance Amendment for alternate candidates to be interviewed before further appointments which may be done at any point in the year. Ayes: Johnson, Spencer, McCoy, Grotting and Betts. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain. None. MOTION DECLARED CARRIED.

b. Medina Fire District Meeting

The City has previously discussed the ongoing meetings being organized by the City of Medina relating to the possibility of creating a regional joint powers or fire services district with the communities of Independence, Medina, Maple Plain, Loretto, Long Lake and Orono. Staff has attended several of the joint meetings where this topic has been further discussed. Medina most recently sent out an invitation to attend another joint meeting on February 11, 2021 (see attached letter). In addition to City Administrators and Fire Chiefs, it was discussed that each community would have the opportunity to also have one elected official in attendance. Staff would like to discuss this meeting in more detail with the Council and determine if Independence would like staff and a Council Member to attend the meeting.

Johnson said we are in a different position than Medina as we own part of the equipment with Maple Plain. McCoy said that we own 50% of the Maple Plain Fire Equipment so the two cities need to decide together what direction to move or go our separate ways. McCoy said some more questions need to be answered before this moves forward. Betts asked who was pushing this. McCoy said Medina ordered the study to be done

which came up with several different scenarios. Service levels were determined to be excellent and there were no issues around that. McCoy noted Medina has about 235 calls per year. Full-time personnel would be very expensive for them. It was determined Johnson, McCoy and Cory Schultz would attend the meeting.

8. OPEN/MISC.

9. ADJOURN.

Motion by Betts, second by Spencer to adjourn at 7:28 p.m. Ayes: Johnson, Grotting, McCoy, Betts, and Spencer. Nays: None. Absent: None. None. Abstain. None. MOTION DECLARED CARRIED.

Respectfully Submitted,
Trish Gronstal/ Recording Secretary