

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF
THE INDEPENDENCE CITY COUNCIL
THURSDAY, AUGUST 21, 2021 – 6:30 P.M.
(Independence Council Chambers)

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 Spencer at 6:30 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL

PRESENT:	Mayor Spencer and Maas-Kuskke, Independence Councilmembers Betts, Mccoy, Grotting, Fisher, Maple Plain Councilmembers DeLuca, Francis, Burak and Arvizo
ABSENT:	None
STAFF:	Independence City Administrator Kaltsas and Maple Plain City Administrator Kolander, Independence Administrative Services Director Simon
VISITORS:	See Sign-in Sheet

4. Discussion and Consideration to Move Forward with the Consolidation of the Maple Plain and West Suburban Fire Departments.

- a. **Independence RESOLUTION No. 25-0821-01** – Considering approval of the city's intent to proceed with the consolidation of the Maple Plain Fire Department and the West Suburban Fire District.
- b. **Maple Plain RESOLUTION NO. 2025-0821-01**- Considering approval of the city's intent to proceed with the consolidation of the Maple Plain Fire Department and the West Suburban Fire District.

Administrator Kaltsas explained that a projected budget had been provided by West Suburban, and the cost split was based on the current formula used by Maple Plain and Independence. He also outlined additional steps that would need to be taken if the consolidation moved forward, including working with legal counsel to prepare necessary contracts and documents.

Councilmember McCoy raised a question about what would happen after the initial 5-year period. Administrator Kaltsas and Mayor Spencer explained that this was still to be determined but emphasized that the goal was to become one unified entity after the transition period.

Chief Jeff Leuer provided clarification on the 5-year timeframe, explaining that after this period, the funding formula used for all five cities in the West Suburban Fire District would apply to Maple Plain and Independence as well.

Mayor Maas-Kusske expressed gratitude for the long process and emphasized the importance of listening to firefighters throughout the consolidation discussions. She highlighted the benefits for firefighters, including pension and pay increases, and emphasized that the primary goal was to ensure continued excellent fire service for residents.

Both cities then proceeded to consider their respective resolutions.

Mayor Spencer called for a motion on Independence Resolution 25-0821-01. Councilmember Betts moved to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilmember Grotting. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Maas-Kusske called for a motion on Maple Plain Resolution 2025-0821-01. Councilmember Francis moved to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilmember Burek. The motion passed 5-0.

Following the passage of both resolutions, Councilmember McCoy suggested creating a timeline for the consolidation process and proposed having monthly joint meetings to ensure transparency. He also recommended that Chief Leuer be charged with driving the operational aspects of the consolidation.

Mayor Spencer and Administrator Kaltsas assured that much of the groundwork had already been laid, including the selection of attorneys and the use of existing merger documents as templates. They mentioned that the next fire commission meeting on September 9th would address timeline and communication processes.

Mayor Spencer suggested allowing the departments to begin operating as if they were merged to identify any potential issues before the official consolidation. Chief Leuer agreed that this would be helpful in identifying any challenges before the official merger date.

5. OPEN/MISC.

No additional items were discussed under this agenda item.

6. ADJOURN.

Mayor Maas-Kusske called for a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Francis moved to adjourn, seconded by Mayor Spencer. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:56 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amber Simon/ Recording Secretary