

MINUTES OF A WORK SESSION OF THE
INDEPENDENCE CITY COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2026 – 7:00 AM.
(WHPS Conference Room)

1. CALL TO ORDER.

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a work session of the Independence City Council was called to order by Mayor Spencer at 7:04 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mayor Spencer, Councilors Betts, Fisher, McCoy, Grotting (virtual)

ABSENT: None

STAFF: City Administrator Kaltsas, Administrative Services Director Simon, Public Works Supervisor, Lehman, City Engineers Petros Paulos and Michael Kirsch

VISITORS: Chief DuRose

3. General Administration

a. Water Feasibility Study

Michael Kirsch and Petros Paulos from Kimberly Horn presented findings from the water feasibility study examining options for providing water service to potential development areas, primarily the Hilltop Farms property. The study analyzed two main scenarios: 1) connecting to Maple Plain's existing water system with upgrades, or 2) building an independent water system for Independence.

Key findings included:

- The projected development would require significant water storage capacity (500,000 gallons for independent system vs. 200,000 gallons if connected to Maple Plain)
- Cost estimates for the short-term Maple Plain connection option were approximately \$5.2 million
- An independent system would cost more initially (\$7-8 million) but could be more cost-effective long-term
- Treatment requirements would depend on water quality tests, particularly for radium which affects Maple Plain's water

The Council expressed a preference for exploring an independent water system rather than a joint powers agreement with Maple Plain, with concerns about Maple Plain's aging infrastructure and potential long-term complications of shared systems.

b. Miscellaneous Administration Updates

- Quiet Zone – Town Line Road Update

Staff reported that the estimated cost for implementing the Town Line Road quiet zone has increased to approximately \$900,000, significantly higher than the \$450,000 in bond funding secured for the project. The increased cost is due to additional road improvements required by the railroad, particularly related to the proximity of Sunset Lane to the crossing.

The Council agreed to explore additional funding opportunities through the legislature and possibly approaching the railroad about participating in the cost, as they had previously planned improvements to the crossing.

- Lake Independence No Wake Ordinance – Update Following Medina Council Meeting

Mayor Spencer reported that Medina is pushing for a dual-trigger no-wake system: the current trigger with 600-foot offset, plus a second trigger at 8 inches higher water level that would implement a whole-lake no-wake restriction. The Council agreed to maintain its position supporting only a single trigger with 600-foot offset, based on scientific evidence showing wake mitigation at 500 feet and concerns about administrative complexity of a dual-trigger system.

- Hennepin County Park Grant – Pioneer Creek Park Update
 - Discussion with Orono Softball/Baseball

Staff reported that the city's application for a Hennepin County Park Grant was not approved. Council discussed options for proceeding with modest improvements to Pioneer Creek Park, including building a paved access road, grading the front area, and creating a multi-purpose grass field that could serve for both baseball/softball and soccer. This approach would allow some immediate progress while maintaining flexibility for future development.

- Public Works GIS – Discussion on Establishing GIS System.

Mark and Ben presented a proposal to implement a Geographic Information System (GIS) for documenting the city's infrastructure at a cost of \$34,000. The system would help meet upcoming state requirements for digital documentation of underground utilities. The council supported moving forward with the project in the current year by reallocating funds within the existing budget.

- City Council Meetings 2026 – Overview of potential meeting conflicts and adjustments

(i.e., election).

The Council agreed to adjust the November meeting schedule to accommodate Election Day by consolidating to one meeting on November 10, 2026. Other scheduling conflicts were noted, including a potential March meeting conflict with spring break and an October 6th absence.

3. Adjourn

Motioned to adjourn at 9:00 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amber Simon/ Recording Secretary