



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 17, 2024

6:30 PM REGULAR MEETING

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.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Johnson led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Roll Call

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

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Chief Gary Kroells, City Administrator Mark Kaltsas and Assistant City Administrator Amber Simon

VISITORS:

4. ****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 August 28, 2024, City Council Workshop.
- b. Approval of City Council Minutes from the September 3, 2024, Regular City Council Meeting.
- c. Approval of Accounts Payable (Batch # 1; Checks Numbered 23087-23100, Batch # 2; Checks Numbered 23101-23115). (NOTE: *Checks Numbered 23082-23086 Voided Due to Printing Error*).

Motion by Grotting, second by McCoy to approve the Consent Agenda. Ayes: Johnson, Spencer, Betts, McCoy and Grotting. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain. None. MOTION DECLARED CARRIED 5-0.

5. Set Agenda – Anyone Not on the Agenda can be Placed Under Open/Misc.

6. Reports of Boards and Committees by Council and Staff.

Betts attended the following meetings:

- Hwy 12 Meeting

Spencer attended the following meetings:

- TAC Zoom meeting with Lake Independence Citizens Association, DNR Board of Water and Soil
- Maple Plain Fire Department – lawyer for Maple Plain, Julie and Mark about merging Maple Plain Fire Department and Loretto Fire Department. Next step is Maple Plain Fire District Commission will meet with Chief Leuer and see what this looks like.

Grotting attended the following meetings:

- Workshop
- Planning Commission

McCoy attended the following meetings:

- Police Commission

Mayor Johnson attended the following meetings:

- National League of Cities energy and enviro natural resources (2 Zoom meetings)
- Waffle breakfast Delano Fire Department and Delano Senior Center
- Regional Council of Mayors Meeting
- Police Commission
- Chamber of Commerce
- NW League
- Interviews for Police Sergeant position

Kaltsas attended the following meetings:

- Kaltsas – interviews with 4 of our own officers. High quality of officers, tough decision.

7. West Hennepin Public Safety Monthly Report for August 2024 - Chief Gary Kroells.

- August 2024 – YTD
- 3057 - 237 Independence, 109 Maple Plain

Johnson - Gary commented about since they re-stripped the roundabout there hasn't been any accidents or people going over the roundabout.

Kroells – line adjustment made a big impact. 1st time in 10 years reporting only 1 crash in 2 months where usually there are many more.

8. Consider Approval of the 2025 Preliminary Budget and Tax Levy:

- a. **RESOLUTION NO. 24-0917-01** – Establishing the General and Debt Service Preliminary Tax Levy and Setting a Date for the 2024 Truth in Taxation Meeting for December 3, 2024, at 6:00 PM.
- b. **RESOLUTION NO. 24-0917-02** – Establishing the Pioneer Sarah Creek Watershed Management Commission Preliminary Tax Levy.

Kaltsas – preliminary budget slideshow to show the public. Series of workshops for preliminary budget for 2025. Needs to be done by 9/30/24 for 2025 fiscal year. It establishes a ceiling for budget but can reduce it moving forward but cannot raise it. For 8 years council has recommended not increasing tax rate for residents of the city. We have been efficient in providing services to our residents and increase market valuations. Maintain flat tax rate. That means if your house stays at a flat valuation (\$500k) and stayed at that value, the amount of taxes paid to city would not change year over year. City only makes up 30% of taxes, city does not control county taxes or school taxes. We can only control the city or 30%. This year we have been able to bring a budget of 6.73% year over year for operating levy. \$258k in total year over year spending on \$4m budget. Pioneer Sarah Creek Watershed District at a flat rate – capital improvement plan. Independence has no multi-family developments, and we have a fairly modest commercial tax base. We are comprised of residential and AG as biggest tax capacity. When we first talked about flat tax rate – we have decreased our tax rate by about 10% over last 10 years. 31.21%. How we compare to Greenfield. We are almost equal in size, population, makeup of city, and Greenfield does not provide community policing to residents and policing makes up over half of our budget. Levy summary has been stable year over year. Responsible budgeting, no big swings. Consistent increase. We have been able to weather the inflation storm. General fund revenue 2025 projected comes from property taxes. 88% of our revenue. We do have license and permits, intergovernmental, fines and forfeitures, interest and investments. Out of the \$103,550 intergovernmental line item is new transportation Small Cities Road Fund. It's the first year we are budgeting revenue in that account for 2025.

Johnson – it was only approved a year at a time here and there.

Kaltsas – between Fire and Police, that makes up 50% of the total expenditures for the city.

Streets are the next biggest piece and financial administration.

Johnson – what's the transfer out

Kaltsas – anything we do for capital planning. key changes – rate year over year went down – Police project an increase. Significant insurance increases for emergency services, fire stayed flat, streets increased by 30% - we have a placeholder going into streets for gravel road project. We are looking at spending a bit more money on that and residents will see a fairly significant project in 2025 and annually rolled out year after year. Necessary maintenance work, stormwater, culverts and surfacing. This budget would adopt 5-year road plan. We need funding to reinvest. Almost the entire increase is going to our gravel roads/Public Works. We have opportunity to go down by December, but not up. We can keep talking about it and get it to where we want it to be.

Johnson – good explanation. We have been doing this for the last 6 months, but we have to vote on initial levy tonight and PH in December.

Motion by Betts, second by McCoy to approve Resolution 24-0917-01. Ayes: Johnson, Spencer, Betts, McCoy and Grotting. Nays: None. Absent: Abstain. None. MOTION DECLARED CARRIED. 5-0

Watershed district resolution

Johnson – we established this levy. Pioneer Sarah Creek Watershed serves a portion of the city residents. It looks at insuring water quality complies with regulation – Lake Independence and Lake Sarah and other smaller ones. Improve water quality from run off into lakes. This levy is one that we levy against the residents that are in that district. If you are in Minnehaha then you would be on their district, not this one.

Motion by Spencer, second by Grotting to approve Resolution 24-0917-02. Ayes: Johnson, Spencer, Betts, McCoy and Grotting Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain. None. MOTION DECLARED CARRIED. 5-0

9. Discuss City Council Meeting Schedule Change Due to General Election Date Conflict.
Kaltsas – we do have Planning Commission items from October 15 meeting, we have an extra Tuesday in October 29th meeting, cancel November 5 and keep the next one.

Motion by Spencer – cancel November 5th, reschedule for October 29th at 6:30pm, seconded by McCoy. **Ayes: Johnson, Spencer, Betts, McCoy and Grotting Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain. None. MOTION DECLARED CARRIED. 5-0**

Kaltsas – set canvassing meeting, 7th or 8th morning meeting at the next meeting.

10. Open/Misc.

11. Adjourn

Motion by Spencer, second by Betts to adjourn at 7:11pm. Ayes: Johnson, Spencer, Betts, McCoy and Grotting. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain. None. MOTION DECLARED CARRIED 5-0

Respectfully Submitted,
Carrie Solien/Recording Secretary