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MEETINGS

CITY COUNCIL

1st & 3rd Tuesdays 6:30pm

PLANNING COMMISSION

3rd Tuesday 7:30pm

City Officials

Mayor Brad Spencer

City Council

Lynn Betts

Brad Fisher

Ray McCoy

Steve Grotting

Planning Commissioners

Robert Gardner, Chair

Anita Volkenant

Leith Dumas

Hal Tearse

Steve Thompson

Jon-Paul Story, Alternate

Timothy Usset, Alternate

2026 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Keeping Taxes Steady—Again

For the ninth year in a row, the City Council has adopted a preliminary budget that reduces or holds flat the municipal tax rate, continuing our commitment to efficient and value driven government. With stable property valuations from Hennepin County, the City's share of your tax bill remains steady year to year.

Where Do Your Property Taxes Go?

Only one third of your total property tax bill supports City services.

The rest is divided between:

- Hennepin County
- Your local school district

Strong Finances, Strong Community

Since 2017, Independence has maintained or lowered the local tax rate while continuing to invest in high quality services, responsible budgeting, and long term planning. Major capital equipment purchases are paid with cash, not debt, ensuring long term financial stability.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



City of
Independence

School
District

Hennepin
County



MAYORS MESSAGE

Winter of Our Discontent-

What a winter—it seems the weather has worked hard to make everyone equally unhappy! Early snow gave hope to snowmobilers, snowshoers, and skiers, only to disappear by January. Early ice-over had our ice anglers feeling optimistic, but

warming temps kept conditions unreliable well into late January. Freezing rain turned our gravel roads into skating rinks, much to the frustration of our Public Works team. We had just enough sub-zero weather to disrupt school bus schedules. And, of course, many of us have felt the impact of unrest in nearby metropolitan areas.

By now, all homeowners and property owners should have received their 2026 property valuation notices. Please review them carefully. If you have questions or concerns, contact the Assessor or plan to meet with the City Council during the Annual Board of Appeals on April 7. This is an important part of home and property ownership—and your only opportunity to challenge your property valuation for the upcoming tax year.

Phase II of our gravel road recapping project will continue this summer. Watch for more details on which roads will be included in this year's work.

Spring Cleanup Day will be held on Saturday, May 2. Details are included elsewhere in this newsletter.

On Memorial Day (May 27), the Paul Stinson Post 512 will once again lead a ceremony at Lewis Cemetery, continuing a meaningful community tradition.

Finally, Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow this year, predicting an extended winter. Let's hope he's mistaken!

With Gratitude - Brad Spencer, Mayor

BUDGET CONTINUED

New for 2026: Expanded Street Improvements

We've increased funding and updated our long range street improvement plan. This year's work includes upgrades to a majority of the city's gravel roads, including:

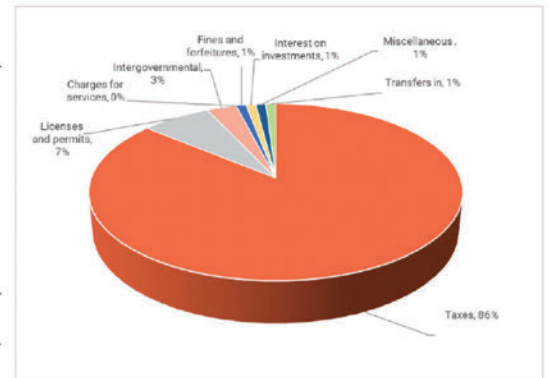
- 3–6 inches of fresh gravel
- Improved drainage systems
- Culvert replacements
- Additional targeted safety and durability improvements

These investments help keep Independence's roads safe, reliable, and built for the future.

2026 Projected General Fund Revenue

Revenues

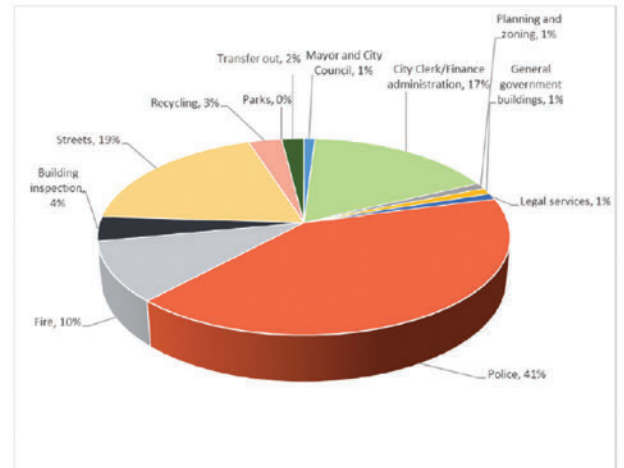
	2026
Taxes	\$ 4,019,763
Licenses and permits	299,100
Intergovernmental	129,315
Charges for services	6,100
Fines and forfeitures	25,000
Interest on investments	30,000
Miscellaneous	55,563
Transfers in	30,000
Total Revenues	\$ 4,594,841



2026 Projected General Fund Expenditures

Expenditures

	2026
Mayor and City Council	\$ 23,800
City clerk/Finance administration	760,099
Election	9,100
Planning and zoning	55,800
Water resource	5,000
General government buildings	62,453
Legal services	43,500
Police	1,879,918
Fire	451,000
Building inspection	204,386
Streets	866,250
Street lighting	3,500
Recycling	122,435
Parks	17,600
Capital outlay - general government	15,000
Capital outlay - public safety	-
Capital outlay - public works	-
Transfer out	75,000
Total Expenditures	4,594,841





A HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON!

The West Hennepin Santa Parade was a huge success this year. Thank you to all of its volunteers and helpers!



PUBLIC WORKS NEW TRUCK

The City of Independence finally received its brand-new Plow / Work Truck just in time for last of winter season and for our upcoming spring, summer work projects.



BAT HOUSES - REDUCING MOSQUITOS BEFORE SUMMER

Have you ever considered building a bat house to better control mosquitoes on your property? If not, you might enjoy Hennepin County's Bat House Brochure and perhaps adding this to your Spring project list to be able to enjoy your summer more! Nicole Witzel, Hennepin County Environment and Energy Wildlife Biologist shared that bats typically become active at the same time as the insects, so its usually around April-ish when they start coming out from hibernation. It's a great time to have bat houses out and ready for them to find. The brochure lists where & where not to place the bat house for greater success! Learn more about protecting natural resources at home and in your community by going to hennepin.us/en/residents/conservation/protecting-natural-resources

cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0841/7709/2913/files/34-406-08-22_BatHouse_Brochure_web.pdf?v=1703695420



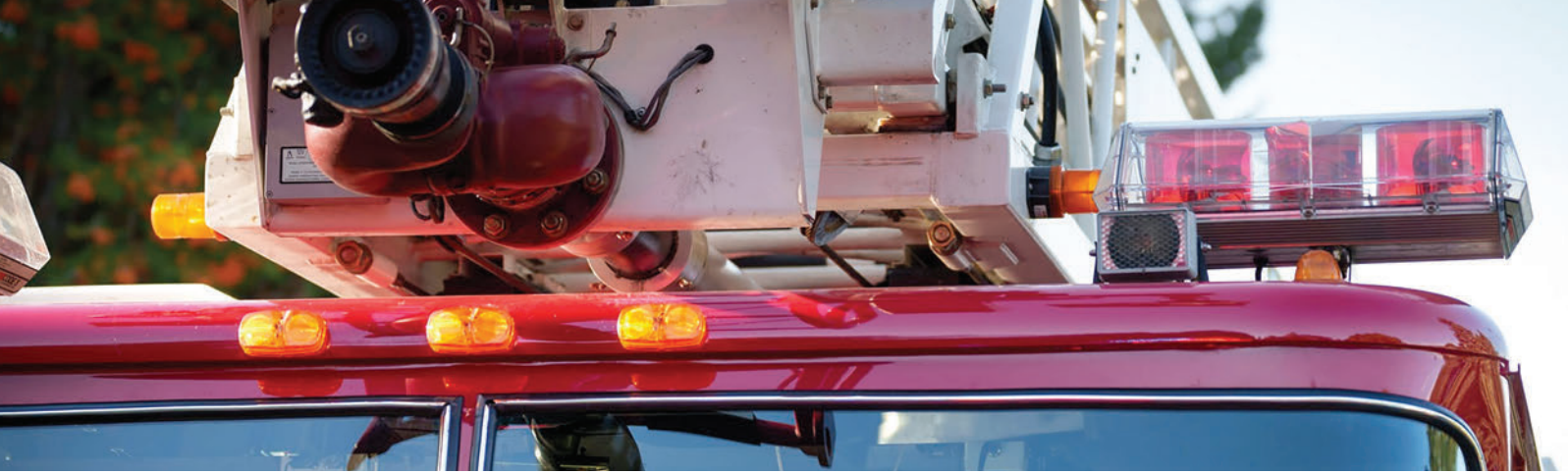
INDEPENDENCE SPRING ROAD RESTRICTIONS

Before scheduling any large deliveries, call Public Works at **763-479-0530** or check the website City's Spring Road Restrictions.

4 - Ton Per Axle Limit on Gravel Roads

5 - Ton Per Axle limit on Asphalt Roads

GARBAGE AND SEPTIC TRUCKS ALLOWED



WEST SUBURBAN FIRE DISTRICT EXPANDS SERVICE AREA WITH MAPLE PLAIN FIRE DEPARTMENT INTEGRATION EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1

West Suburban Fire District announced today that, effective January 1, the Maple Plain Fire Department will officially join the West Suburban Fire District, marking the culmination of a year-and-a-half-long planning and transition process focused on strengthening fire protection and emergency services for the region.

The Maple Plain Fire Department has a long and proud history of faithfully serving its community. This integration honors that legacy while positioning the department for long-term sustainability, enhanced training opportunities, and expanded operational support.

West Suburban Fire District was established on July 1, 2023, following the successful merger of the Loretto Volunteer Fire Department and the Hamel Volunteer Fire Department—two respected departments with deep roots in their communities. Since its formation, West Suburban Fire District has been led by experienced fire service professionals from both departments, with a continued commitment to high-quality emergency response and community safety.

Today, West Suburban Fire District is a combination department, led by Full-Time Fire Chief Jeff Leuer, and supported by a team of paid-on-call firefighters. All training and department events are compensated, and members are eligible for a retirement pension based on years of service.

With the integration of Maple Plain Fire Department, West Suburban Fire District will serve approximately 80 square miles, covering the communities of Independence, Maple Plain, Hamel, Loretto, Medina, and portions of Greenfield and Corcoran. The district will operate with approximately 70 firefighters and three strategically located stations in Loretto, Hamel, and Maple Plain, ensuring continued excellence in response times and service delivery.

Residents and businesses can expect uninterrupted and continued excellence in:

- Fire suppression
- Emergency medical services
- Hazardous materials response
- Fire prevention and safety education

West Suburban Fire District remains committed to transparent communication throughout this transition and will continue to provide updates as the integration progresses.

For more information, visit westsuburbanfire.org.

Media Contact: Kylie McCoy | 763-228-4130 | kylie@north-found.com





RECOGNITION CEREMONY RECAP

West Hennepin Public Safety hosted a department Recognition Ceremony on Monday, February 2. During the event, Sergeant Shawn Ebeling and Officers Micah Vorderbruggen, Dan Lueth, and Avery Freeman took their formal oath of office. While all members had previously been sworn in when hired or promoted, this was an opportunity for them to formalize their commitment to serving Maple Plain and Independence in a professional and compassionate manner.

We are honored to have them on our team!



POLAR PLUNGE

The Cool WHPS squad took the plunge into Lake Minnetonka to benefit Special Olympics Minnesota on Saturday, January 31. This may have been the first time WHPS has been represented in the plunge, but it definitely won't be the last! The team, made up of WHPS staff and supporters, raised over \$1900 for the event.



SAFETY MESSAGING

As the days grow longer and the weather begins to warm, we are reminded why spring is such a special time in our community. We want to wish everyone a safe, active, and enjoyable season.

Spring brings more people outdoors—walking, biking, jogging, and gathering in our parks and neighborhoods. With that increased activity, please stay mindful of safety. Please slow down in residential areas, watch for children at play, and share the road responsibly with cyclists and pedestrians. If you're planning home improvement projects or spring travel, remember to secure your property, lock vehicles, and report any suspicious activity promptly.

Public safety is a shared responsibility. Stay safe, and enjoy the season ahead.



Spring Clean Up Day

Independence City Hall: 1920 County Rd.



8:30-11:30 am, Saturday, May 2nd, 2026

INDEPENDENCE RESIDENTS ONLY! *You must be in line by 11:30 am.*

VOLUNTEERS ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED. PLEASE CALL 763-479-0527 IF YOU CAN HELP OUT!

***UPDATES:** Absolutely no commercial business drop-offs will be accepted. Fees will be collected for items stated below. Only 1 free load per household will be taken; No extra loads will be accepted. Have your ID out when you pull up as they will be checked.

***PLEASE BRING EXACT CHANGE. CASH OR CHECKS PAYABLE TO "THE CITY OF INDEPENDENCE" ACCEPTED.**

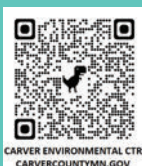
ACCEPTED Materials:

- **Air Conditioners**
- **Appliances** Dehumidifiers, heat pumps, water heaters, microwaves, washers, dryers, refrigerators, etc.
- **Batteries** Auto and Household
- **Bicycles**
- **Bulbs/Fluorescent Tubes, Ballasts, Light Fixtures** In original packaging or surrounded by cardboard. **DO NOT** tape together. Must be disassembled and ballasts disconnected from housing unit.
- **Carpet (Rolled)**
- **Construction Material/Debris/Junk** Doors, lumber, fences, tile, sheetrock
- **Electronics**
- **Glass (only if in containers)**
- **Mattresses, Box Springs, Upholstered Furniture** ***\$25.00 each**
- **Propane Tanks**
- **Scrap Iron/Metal** ALL plastic removed; Tanks/Barrels must be cut in half.
- **Tires** ***\$5.00 each (8 max)** or see MMCD
- **Wheelchairs** Donated to Joni & Friends

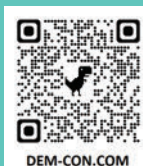
NOT ALLOWED:

- **BARBWIRE**
- **COMMERCIAL BUSINESS DROP-OFFS**
- **CONCRETE**
- **CURSIDE RECYCLABLES**
See Republic Recycling below.
- **GLASS**, loose or not in containers
- **HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE**
Paints, cleaning chemicals, solvents, etc. (*Delano True Value will take liquid paint only- 5 gallons max./customer.) Put empty, dried latex paint cans in garbage.
- **YARD WASTE** Scan The Mulch Store QR code below to see their hours and fees. Randy's-Republic doesn't take Yard Waste from Hennepin County residents.
- Hennepin County won't be on site, so thank you for following this list closely.

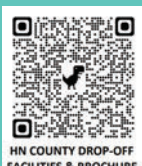
→ Throughout the year, please utilize [Carver County Environmental Center](#), [Dem-Con](#), HN Cty events, or Brooklyn Park and Bloomington Drop-off Facilities. (Scanning QR codes below takes you to their site and to download brochure to with details by category.)



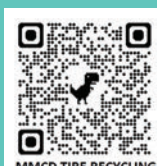
CARVER ENVIRONMENTAL CTR
CARVERCOUNTYMN.GOV



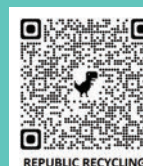
DEM-CON.COM



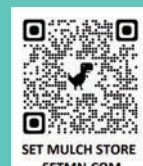
HN COUNTY DROP-OFF
FACILITIES & BROCHURE



MMCD TIRE RECYCLING



REPUBLIC RECYCLING



SET MULCH STORE
SETMN.COM

Independence

RECYCLING COLLECTION CALENDAR



■ Holiday - Service is delayed one day
 ■ North of Highway 12 but west of County Road 90
■ South of Highway 12/North of Highway 12 and east of County Road 90

JANUARY						
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NOVEMBER						
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DECEMBER						
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27	28	29	30	31		

Do Not Bag Recyclables



952.941.5174
RepublicServices.com

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We Recycle!



Plastic Cups & Containers

Yogurt cups, pudding and fruit cups, clear disposable cups (no straws), margarine/whipped cream tubs, cottage cheese and similar containers, clear produce, deli and take-out containers (empty and rinse; lids on)



Boxes (flattened)

Cardboard, cereal, cracker, pasta and tissue boxes, shoe, gift and electronics boxes, toothpaste and other toiletry boxes



Paper

Mail, office and school papers, magazines and catalogs, newspapers and inserts, phone books (clean; staples OK)



Metal

Food and beverage cans (empty and rinse; labels OK)



Glass

Brown, green and clear bottles and jars (empty and rinse; no lids)



Plastic Bottles & Jugs

Water, soda and juice bottles, dish soap bottles, shampoo bottles, soap and lotion bottles, and detergent jugs (empty and clean/rinse, and dry; caps on)



Cartons

Milk cartons, juice cartons, juice boxes and soup and broth cartons (empty and clean/rinse, and dry; caps on)



1920 County Road 90
 Independence, MN 55359
 Ph: 763-479-0527
 Fax: 763-479-0528
csolien@ci.independence.mn.us
asimon@ci.independence.mn.us

PRSR STD
 U.S. Postage
PAID
 Permit #32324
 Twin Cities, MN

City Staff

Administrator, City Planner	Mark Kaltsas
Admin. Services Dir.	Amber Simon
Public Works Supervisor	Ben Lehman
Building Official	Bruce Satek
Permit and Utility Analyst	Carrie Solien
Receptionist	Katie Powell

LYNDALE LUTHERAN CHURCH

NEW Pie Bake-Off!



Chili

COOK-OFF & FEED

SATURDAY, MARCH 21ST 11:00 - 2:00

EAT \$10 Chili Lunch kids 5 & under eat free	COMPETE Entry Fee: \$5 (chili or pie)	JUDGE Want to judge? \$5 (no entry required)
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Come hungry, bring a friend, and enjoy a day of food, fun, and fellowship — whether you're cooking, judging, or just eating, **there's a place for you at the table.**

More Information
 (763) 479-1719
 8012 County Rd 6, Independence MN
LyndaleLutheran.com



The West Suburban Fire District (formerly the Loretto and Hamel Fire Departments and now including Maple Plain) is made up of members who proudly serve the communities of Loretto, Hamel, Maple Plain, Medina, Independence, Corcoran, and Greenfield.

We are a paid on-call department with all training and events paid along with a retirement pension.

Join us at: westsuburbanfire.org/join