Water & Sewer Commission Meeting Minutes
July 27, 2026

The Independence Water & Sewer Commission met on Monday, July 27, 2026, at City Hall, 23688 Adams Street. Chair Randy "Fritz" Conrad called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. Present were Craig Konter, Jason Ekern, Water Superintendent Joe Galewski and Deputy Clerk Abby Bautch. Also in attendance was Attorney Rick Schaumberg, Mayor Tom Kloss, City Clerk Dawn Smieja, Sheri Zilla and Mary Pronschinske. Missing was Richard Warner and Tom Jensen.

Public Comments: Mary Pronschinske addressed the Commission regarding her Water & Sewer bill, stating that she uses water for her flower garden and that her bill has increased. She requested consideration of a billing adjustment because the water used for outdoor watering does not enter the sewer system. Sheri Zilla also addressed the Commission regarding increased water and sewer costs related to watering flowers and noted that the water used for plants does not enter the sewer system. Both residents requested that the Commission consider a summer billing adjustment similar to what had been offered in prior years. The Commission will review their water usage and place the matter on next month's agenda for further discussion.

Proof of Giving Public Notice: Public notice was properly posted.

Approval of Agenda: Motion by Jason Ekern, seconded by Craig Konter, to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Approval of Minutes – June 29, 2026: Motion by Craig Konter, seconded by Jason Ekern, to approve the minutes of the June 29, 2026 meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Old Business:

A. **Water Service for 35214 Diagonal Street:** Water Superintendent Joe Galewski reported that the new meter has been installed at 35214 Diagonal Street.

B. **Facility Plan Review with Davy Engineering:** Mayor Tom Kloss reported that FEMA hired the Galt Group, a consulting firm, to review the facility plan. Kloss stated that the Galt Group has requested additional information beyond what is needed for approval, which has caused a delay in the approval process. Dan Cook of Davy Engineering and Tim Stockman are working to coordinate with the parties involved and move the plan toward approval.

C. **Water Pipe Survey:** Water Superintendent Joe Galewski reported there are still 133 Survey's left.

D. **Water & Sewer Truck:** Water Superintendent Joe Galewski reported that the new Water & Sewer truck is now in use and that the old Water & Sewer truck has been cleaned out and is ready to be sold at auction. Motion by Jason Ekern, seconded by Craig Konter, to sell the gray Water & Sewer truck at auction. Rol Call Vote: Ayes-3 Nays-0. Motion carried. City Clerk Dawn Smieja reported that the City received a check from the insurance company in the amount of $3,510.00 for hail damage to the old Water & Sewer truck. The Commission requested that the insurance proceeds be applied toward the loan for the new Water & Sewer truck.

E. **Sludge Transfer Pump:** Water Superintendent Joe Galewski reported that he contacted Core & Main regarding the sludge transfer pump the City had planned to purchase and requested confirmation that the pump would be guaranteed to work for the City's intended use. Core & Main was unable to provide that guarantee; therefore, Galewski did not proceed with the purchase that had been approved by the Commission at the previous meeting. Galewski will contact other municipalities to determine what equipment they use for sludge pumping. In the meantime, the City will continue to use Slaby Septic for sludge pumping services.

New Business:

A. **Water Shutoff Meters for Apartments:** Water Superintendent Joe Galewski reported that water service cannot be shut off to several apartments in the City due to limited access or because multiple apartments are connected to a single meter, which would result in water being shut off to more than one unit. Galewski requested that the Commission consider installing new water meters that can be shut off electronically. The Commission requested that apartment landlords attend the next Water & Sewer meeting before any decisions are made. The Clerk and Deputy Clerk will send letters to the landlords requesting their attendance at next month's meeting.

B. **Water Disconnect Fee:** Deputy Clerk Abby Bautch and Water Superintendent Joe Galewski discussed the $50 reconnection fee assessed when water service is disconnected for nonpayment of water & sewer utility bills. They noted that the fee is not directly added onto customers' bills. So, when customers are paying past-due balances online they do not include the reconnection fee in their payment. In addition,

customers in certain apartment buildings where service cannot be disconnected because access is unavailable or the entire building would be affected are not currently charged the fee. City Clerk Dawn Smieja will research options for adding the reconnection fee directly to customers' bills so that it is included in the amount due.

Superintendents Report:

A. **Disconnect Update:** Water Superintendent Joe Galewski reported that 79 disconnect notices were posted.
B. **WRWA Outdoor Expo:** Water Superintendent Joe Galewski reported that he and Kenny Olson requested approval to attend the WRWA Outdoor Expo in Plover on August 27, 2026. Galewski stated that each attendee would receive six water credits and six sewer credits for attending. Motion by Jason Ekern, seconded by Craig Konter, to approve Joe Galewski and Kenny Olson attending the WRWA Outdoor Expo in Plover on August 27, 2026. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.
C. **Eric's Testing Update:** Water Superintendent Joe Galewski reported that Street Supervisor Eric Theisen has passed one of his water certification tests and is awaiting results for the remaining two tests.

Commissioner Report: None

Items for Next Agenda

A. Facility Plan Review with Davy Engineering
B. Status update on Water Pipe Survey
C. Water & Sewer Truck
D. Disconnect Update
E. Sludge Transfer Pump
F. Water Shutoff Meters for Apartments
G. 35636 5th Street and 23937 Howard Street Water & Sewer Bill

Future Date for the next Meeting
The next meeting is scheduled for August 31, 2026, at 6:15 p.m.

Closed Session: Motion by Jason Ekern to go into closed session, seconded by Craig Konter. Roll Call Vote: Ayes-3 Nays-0, Motion Carried.

Motion by Jason Ekern to return into open session, seconded by Craig Konter. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Abby Bautch, Deputy City Clerk