Water & Sewer Commission Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2026

The Independence Water & Sewer Commission met on Wednesday, September 9, 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, Richard Warner, Jason Ekern, Water Superintendent Joe Galewski and Deputy Clerk Abby Bautch. Also in attendance was Linda Middleton, Mary Nussbaum and Phillip Judkins by zoom, and Dan Cooke by phone. Missing was Tom Jensen.

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

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

Approval of Minutes – July 27, 2026: Motion by Craig Konter, seconded by Jason Ekern, to approve the minutes of the July 27, 2026 meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Public Comments: Deputy Clerk Abby Bautch spoke on behalf of Tammy Roberts regarding her Water & Sewer bill. Roberts stated that she used City water to fill her pool after contacting milk haulers and the fire station, both of which were unable to provide water. As a result, her Water & Sewer bill totaled $758.65. Roberts requested that the Commission consider a billing adjustment because the water used to fill the pool did not enter the sewer system. She also asked the Commission to consider a summer billing adjustment similar to adjustments offered in prior years. The Commission will review her bill and place the matter on the next agenda for further discussion.

Old Business:

A. **Water Wells Solutions Update:** Phillip Judkins from Water Wells Solutions gave an overview of the findings on the core sample that was taken from the filter media. In the lab findings they recommend in the next year or 2 that the city replace the filter media. The media filter takes out manganese and iron out of the pretreated water.

Motion by Jason Ekern to move to New Business A:23664 Adams Street Water & Sewer Bill, Seconded by Richard Warner. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

New Business:

A. **23664 Adams Street Water & Sewer Bill:** Mary Nussbaum explained that a faucet had been left on, resulting in higher-than-normal Water & Sewer bills for the months of June and July. Nussbaum requested a one-time forgiveness adjustment and credit to her

account. The Commission explained that the one-time forgiveness adjustment could not be applied to the water portion of the bill but could be applied to the sewer portion. Motion by Richard Warner, seconded by Jason Ekern, to credit the sewer portion of the bill in the amount of $856.09 for the months of June and July. Roll call vote: Ayes-4, Nays-0. Motion carried.

B. **35636 5th Street and 23937 Howard Street Water & Sewer Bill:** Deputy Clerk Abby Bautch updated the Commission that letters were sent requesting attendance at the meeting. Bautch also stated that the Clerk contacted both Mary Pronschinske and Sheri Zilla to ensure they were aware that the Water & Sewer meeting date had changed. Neither Pronschinske nor Zilla attended the meeting. The Commission determined that, due to their absence, the matter would not be pursued further at this time.

C. **23425 Cherrywood Street Water Shutoff Valve:** Linda Middleton addressed the Commission regarding the water shutoff valve located in her driveway. Middleton stated that the valve is not capped and protrudes from the driveway, creating concern that it could be struck and broken, resulting in a water leak, and that animals may attempt to nest in the opening. Middleton requested that the City cap the water shutoff valve. Water Superintendent Joe Galewski stated that he previously attempted to have the issue corrected while the property was under construction; however, the matter was not resolved at that time. Galewski explained that correcting the issue now would not be simple and would likely require cutting out a portion of the driveway and completing related repairs. The Commission informed Middleton that the matter is not a City issue and advised her to contact the company that originally completed the work to request that the issue be corrected.

D. **36054 Ash Street Water & Sewer Services:** Deputy Clerk Abby Bautch informed the Commission that water service to the property has been shut off for couple years; however, a balance of $202.04 remains due on the account. Bautch stated that the Clerk has sent notices and letters requesting payment of the past-due balance and advising that water service should be restored if the property is occupied, but no response has been received. The Commission directed that the past-due amount be placed on the tax roll and that the property owner, Brian Bautch, be contacted regarding the situation.

Old Business:

B. **Facility Plan Review with Davy Engineering:** Water Superintendent Joe Galewski provided the Commission with an email from Dan Cooke of Davy Engineering regarding an update to the floodplain map. Davy Engineering requested authorization to complete

an updated wetland screening and submit the report to the DNR at an estimated cost of $2,000.00. The assessment will determine whether wetland delineation is necessary. The Commission had questions regarding the request, and Galewski contacted Cooke by phone to provide additional information. Motion by Jason Ekern, seconded by Craig Konter, to approve the wetland screening assessment at a cost not to exceed $2,000.00. Roll call vote: Ayes-4, Nays-0. Motion carried.

C. **Water Pipe Survey:** Water Superintendent Joe Galewski reported there are still 130 Survey's left.

D. **Water & Sewer Truck:** Water Superintendent Joe Galewski reported that the former Water & Sewer truck was sold at auction for $9,150.00. Chair Randy Conrad requested that the Deputy Clerk ensure the proceeds from the auction sale, along with the insurance payment received for hail damage to the former truck, are applied toward the loan for the new truck.

E. **Sludge Transfer Pump:** Water Superintendent Joe Galewski reported that, while attending the WRWA conference, he spoke with several vendors regarding possible pump options for the sludge tank. Galewski stated that no suitable options were identified at that time. Commissioner Jason Ekern stated that he would contact Neil Schanks to inquire about available options.

F. **Water Disconnect Fee:** Deputy Clerk Abby Bautch reported that the City Clerk is working with Caselle to determine whether the $50.00 disconnect fee can be added directly to customers' water and sewer utility bills. The Commission discussed the current process, which requires customers to pay the disconnect fee before water service is restored after the past-due balance has been paid.

G. **Water Shutoff Meters for Apartments:** Deputy Clerk Abby Bautch reported that letters had not yet been sent to landlords due to the Water & Sewer meeting being rescheduled. Deputy Clerk Bautch asked the Commission whether letters should be sent this month requesting landlord attendance at the next Water & Sewer meeting. The Commission directed that the letters provide landlords with multiple meeting date options to allow additional flexibility and planning time. Deputy Clerk Bautch and the City Clerk Smieja will prepare and send letters to the landlords with available meeting dates to choose from.

Superintendents Report:

A. **Disconnect Update:** No update was provided at this time.
B. **Eric's Testing Update:** Water Superintendent Joe Galewski reported that Street Supervisor Eric Theisen passed two additional certification tests, bringing his total number of completed tests to three.
C. **Leak in Sludge Tank Pipe:** Water Superintendent Galewski reported that a leak was discovered in a pipe leading to the sludge tank. WRWA is lending the City a pump to empty the tank so the issue can be inspected further and the necessary repairs can be determined.
D. **4th Street Leak:** Water Superintendent Galewski reported that a leak was discovered on 4th Street near the curb stop.

Commissioner Report: None

Items for Next Agenda

A. Facility Plan Review with Davy Engineering
B. Status update on Water Pipe Survey
C. Disconnect Update
D. Sludge Transfer Pump
E. Water Shutoff Meters for Apartments
F. 35884 Osseo Road Water & Sewer Utility Bill

Future Date for the next Meeting
The next meeting is scheduled for September 28, 2026, at 6:15 p.m.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Abby Bautch, Deputy City Clerk