

# Water & Sewer Commission Meeting

## November 24, 2025

The Independence Water & Sewer Commission met on Monday November 24, 2025, at the City Hall, 23688 Adams Street. The meeting was called to order at 6:15pm by Randy “Fritz” Conrad. In attendance, Tom Jensen, Jason Ekern, water superintendent Joe Galewski, City Attorney Rick Schaumberg, and Deputy Clerk Abby Bautch.

**Proof of Giving Public Notice:** Yes

**Approval of Agenda:** Motioned by Jason Ekern and Seconded by Tom Jensen. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of acclamation to approve.

**Approval of Minutes –October 27, 2025:** Motion by Tom Jensen to approve the minutes from the October 27th, 2025, meeting as presented. Second by Jason Ekern. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of acclamation to approve.

**Public Comments:** None

### Old Business:

- A. Facility Plan Review with Davy Engineering:** Joe went over the email he received from Dan Cooke with Davy Engineering on the flood plain. They said that the existing wastewater structures which include digester and sludge storage tank are actually not in the floodway. They will be submitting their results to DNR for review next week. When they know more, they will let Joe know.
- B. Water Pipe Survey:** Down to 160 surveys from the public. Abby sent out the waterpipe survey letters 2 weeks ago. Joe let the DNR know the progress.
- C. Influent Pump:** Pump is done and is being stored in the garage ready as a backup.
- D. Water & Sewer Truck:** Joe provided more bids and the benefits of having a crane mounted on the bed of the truck. Commission goes over funds for purchasing new truck and different options such as loans or financing over time. It could take 18 months or longer to get the new truck and have it ready.
- E. Weekday Schedule:** Jason goes over how the City of Blair Water & Sewer guys have their weekday schedules set up for pay compensation from being on call during weekdays and weekends. Joe then discussed the way Blair, Whitehall and Arcadia compensate their Water & Sewer employees for being on call during weekdays and weekends. Joe is looking for some kind of pay compensation for being on call not just on weekends but for weekdays. Commission will bring this back to the next meeting and once a decision is made they will take it to Personal Committee to have them add it to employee handbook.
- F. Water & Sewer Rates:** Jason supplied a chart showing different percentages for raising the Sewer rate based off a person’s average Water and Sewer Utility bill. It’s been almost 20 years since the last time the sewer rates have been increased. Motion by Randy Conrad to increase the sewer rate by 10%, seconded by Tom Jensen. Motion was rescinded. New Motion by Randy Conrad to increase Sewer rates by 5% in the first year and then by another 5% the seconded year, seconded by Tom Jensen. Roll Call Vote- Ayes-0 Nays-3. Motion Not Carried. Another Motion by Randy Conrad to

increase the sewer rates by 10% for the first year, seconded by Tom Jensen. Roll Call Vote- Ayes-3 Nays-0. Motioned Carried.

- G. G.B.T Pump:** Joe updates the commission that on December 8<sup>th</sup> the pump will be installed. While the pump has been out of service Slaby Septic has been hauling the sludge to Whitehall.
- H. Well 2 Furnace:** Joe reached out to Schaffner's Plumbing & Heating to get a quote on radiant heat and forced air heat for the well house, they quoted \$7500 to do radiant heat and \$3700 to do force air. Joe also reached out to Sampson plumbing and heating to get their quote, they came back with a quote of \$44,325 to do radiant heat and \$4575 to do forced air. Motion by Randy Conrad to have Schaffner Plumbing and Heating put in a new hanging unit for forced air at the quoted price of \$3700, seconded by Jason Ekern. Roll Call Vote- Ayes-3 Nays-0. Motioned Carried.

#### **New Business:**

- A. Water & Sewer Bank Accounts:** Abby supplies copies of all bank accounts associated with Water and Sewer along with the budget breakdown. Commission has asked if Abby can get together with Lenice, the past Clerk for the City, to go over all the accounts to understand more about what each account is meant for.
- B. Deputy Clerk Pay:** Abby goes over how 32 hours of her pay per period comes out of Water and Sewer funds, broken down is 20% out of Water, 20% out of Sewer and 60% out of City general funds. Looking to changing the percentage that comes out of Water and Sewer to be higher percentage due to the fact that on average over half of her working day the deputy clerk is spent on Water and Sewer things. Motioned by Jason Ekern to change the percentage of the deputy clerks pay to be 30% out of Water, 30% out of Sewer and 40% out of City general funds, seconded by Tom Jensen. Roll Call Vote- Ayes-3 Nays-0. Motioned Carried.
- C. Plant Checks Week/Weekend:** Same as what was talked about under old business for the weekday schedule.
- D. Water & Sewer Payment to City:** Abby and Jason go over that back in October of 2023 the Water and Sewer Commission set up a reimbursement plan to pay back the City in the amount of \$152,618.00. The first payment of \$62,618.00 was made but \$9000.00 per year for the next 10 years has not been made after that. Going to look into it more and will bring it back to next month's meeting.
- E. 35541 5<sup>th</sup> St. Water & Sewer Utility Bill:** Abby went over the water and Sewer bill from 35541 5<sup>th</sup> street; they had \$2.15 in penalties for being late to pay their bill due to health reasons. It was brought to another council members' attention to be brought up to water and Sewer commission. Without having the owners of 35541 5<sup>th</sup> street here at the meeting to ask questions, commission cannot make any decisions.
- F. 36355 Rosewood Court Water & Sewer Utility Bill:** Abby went over the Water and Sewer Bill from 36355 Rosewood Court, they cleaned out their hot tub back in September and the system never calculated at the summer discount rate, so they got charged at the regular rate. Commission request that they come to the next Water and Sewer meeting to ask more questions before they can make a decision.

**Superintendents Report:**

- A. Disconnect Update:** Joe Hung 87 disconnect notices.

**Commissioner Report:** Nothing to report

**Items for Next Agenda**

- A.** Facility Plan Review with Davy Engineering
- B.** Status update on Water Pipe Survey
- C.** Disconnect Update
- D.** Water and Sewer Truck
- E.** Plant Checks Week/Weekend
- F.** Water & Sewer Rates
- G.** G.B.T Pump
- H.** Well 2 Furnace
- I.** Water & Sewer Accounts
- J.** 35541 5<sup>th</sup> Street Water/Sewer Utility Bill
- K.** 36355 Rosewood Court Water/Sewer Utility Bill
- L.** Water & Sewer Payment to City
- M.** Water & Sewer Employee Wages

**Future Date for the next Meeting**

**December 29, 2025 @ 6:15pm**

**Closed Session:** Motioned by Jason Ekern to go into closed session, seconded by Tom Jensen. Roll Call Vote-Ayes-3 Nays-0, Motioned carried.

Motioned by Jason Ekern to return into open session, seconded by Tom Jensen. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of acclamation to approve.

**Adjournment** at 8:13PM

Abby Bautch, Deputy City Clerk