

Water & Sewer Commission Meeting December 29, 2025

The Independence Water & Sewer Commission met on Monday December 29, 2025, at the City Hall, 23688 Adams Street. The meeting was called to order at 6:15pm by Randy “Fritz” Conrad. In attendance, Richard Warner, Jason Ekern, Tom Jensen by phone, Water Superintendent Joe Galewski, Mayor Tom Kloss, City Attorney Rick Schaumberg, Deputy Clerk Abby Bautch and Lenice Pronschinske. Absent Craig Konter.

Proof of Giving Public Notice: Yes

Approval of Agenda: Motioned by Jason Ekern and Seconded by Richard Warner. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of acclamation to approve.

Approval of Minutes –November 24, 2025: Motion by Jason Ekern to approve the minutes from the November 24th, 2025, meeting as presented. Second by Randy Conrad. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of acclamation to approve.

Public Comments: None

Old Business:

- A. 36355 Rosewood Court Water & Sewer Utility Bill:** Mark Brave went over his water & sewer bill for 36355 Rosewood Court, during the summer months the system never calculated his sewer usage at the summer discount rate. Marks property is on a well, so they only have sewer with the city. Mark is requesting credit back for the difference and if there is a possibility of bypassing the sewer meter on his outside faucet, that way he won't be charged for the sewer usage when he fills and cleans his hot tub. Commission does not grant Mark his request.

- B. Facility Plan Review with Davy Engineering:** Joe submitted plan to DNR and is waiting to hear back.

- C. Water Pipe Survey:** Down to 148 surveys from the public.

- D. Water & Sewer Truck:** Joe goes over financing options from Osseo Ford, 60 months at 0%. The breakdown of the cost of the truck would be \$45,878.00 for a chassis and \$50,144.00 for the body. It would take around 360 days once chassis is delivered to install lift on truck. Commission goes over different financing options. Tom Kloss points out Agenda item J: Water & Sewer Payment to City, before commission makes a decision. Motion by Rich Warner to move to item J on Agenda, second by Jason Ekern. Motion carried unanimously by vote of acclamation to approve.

Commission needs more time to discuss the payment option for the truck. Motion by Fritz to table truck, second by Jason Ekern. Motion carried unanimously by vote of acclamation to approve.

- E. Weekday Schedule:** Joe presents his idea of getting an additional 8 hours of regular pay for being on call for weekdays. Those 8 hours could then be used for taking a day off. Commission wants more information like logged hours of how many times during the weekdays the water & sewer guys get called in after hours. Motion by Richard Warner to give the water & sewer guys an additional \$195 a week on rotating schedule for who is on call that week. Additional pay is only for the guy who is on call that week. No second to the Motion. Motion Failed.

Jason Motions for weekly plant checks they would offer 48 hours of straight pay and once those hours have been worked they would offer those 8 hours to be comped 1 for 1 that needs to be used within 3 weeks. And if they do not have the ability to use that day within the 3 weeks it will need to be added to City Councils Agenda to be addressed on how they can offer that day off. Second by Richard Warner. Roll Call Vote- Ayes-1 Nays-3. Motion not passed.

Commission will have a special closed meeting on January 8th, 2026 with the LEP Committee to further discuss.

Tom Jensen excuses himself from the meeting.

- F. Water & Sewer Rates:** Deputy clerk Abby goes over the new sewer rate that will go into effect January 1st, 2026. With the 10% sewer rate increase, it will go from \$1.781 to \$1.959. The commission would like the deputy clerk, with the help of Lenice Pronschinske and the auditors, to apply for the water rate increase with the PSC.

- G. G.B.T Pump:** Joe updates the commission that the installation was post-postponed until January 27th.

- H. Well 2 Furnace:** Schaffner's Plumbing & Heating installed the new furnace, and everything is operating.

- I. Water & Sewer Bank Accounts:** Lenice supplied bank account information for water & sewer. Lenice goes over what the accounts are meant for and the different loans the Commission hold. She also goes over the budget breakdown from 2025.

- J. Water & Sewer Payment to City:** Deputy clerk Abby along with Lenice Pronschinske go over the new findings from the auditors dealing with the pay back to the City. There was only one payment in the amount of \$9884.00 that has been paid back so far. Water & Sewer Commission still owes \$142,734.00. Commission would like a balance sheet and income statement from the auditors to better understand their financial situation.

Motion by Jason Ekern to have Tom Jensen prepare a summary for the auditors in a written email and then have Abby reach out to the auditors with the email from Tom, Second by Randy Conrad. Roll Call Vote-Ayes-4 Nays-0. Motion Approved.

- K. 35541 5th St. Water & Sewer Utility Bill:** Deputy clerk Abby goes over how the homeowners of 35541 5th street paid their utility bill late due to health issues and got a small fee. Was unable to reach out to homeowners to request their presents at the meeting. Commission cannot make any decisions at this time without hearing from the homeowners.

New Business:

- A. Water & Sewer Employee Wages:** Deputy clerk Abby supplies the proposal of the new wages for water & sewer employees. Jason goes over starting January 1st they get a 3.50% increase and then July 1st another 1% increase. Jason Ekern Motions to approve the wage increase as written out on the proposal for 2026 wages, second by Randy Conrad. Roll Call Vote-Ayes-3 Nays-0. Motion Passed.

Superintendents Report:

- A. Disconnect Update:** Joe Hung 72 disconnect notices.
- B. Pipe Leak on Adams Street:** Joe provides an updated on the leak found on Adams Street. The leak was located and the road was dug up then the pipe capped. It is believed that the leak was caused from the heavy trucks passing through.

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.** G.B.T Pump
- E.** Water and Sewer Truck
- F.** Plant Checks Week/Weekend
- G.** Water Rates
- H.** Water & Sewer Payment to City
- I.** Auditor's Report
- J.** Discussion on Delinquent Water Bills
- K.** Water & Sewer After Hours Incident Report
- L.** Water & Sewer Timecard
- M.** Machinery & Equipment Fund
- N.** Water Service for 35194 & 35214 Diagonal Street

Future Date for the next Meeting
January 26, 2026 @ 6:15pm

Closed Session: Motioned by Jason Ekern to go into closed session, second by Richard Warner.
Roll Call Vote- Ayes-3 Nays-0, Motioned carried.

Motioned by Jason Ekern to return into open session, second by Richard Warner. Motion carried
unanimously by a vote of acclamation to approve.

Adjournment at 9:14PM

Abby Bautch, Deputy City Clerk