

Minutes of the City Commission's October 8, 2025 Meeting

I. REGULAR SESSION

Commissioners Present: Mayor Scott Smith, Vice-Mayor Dean Hayse and Commissioner Tim Emert

City Staff Present: Kelly Passauer, City Manager; David Cowan, Assistant City Manager; Jeff Chubb, City Attorney; Kayla Schabel, Administrative Assistant to the City Manager; April Nutt, Director of Housing Authority; Scott Patton, Park and Zoo Director and Lacey Lies, Finance Director.

Visitors Present: Larry McHugh, Brea Sanford, Emily Lewis and Marci Roberts.

A. Call to Order

Mayor Smith called the meeting to order.

B. Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America

C. Adoption of Agenda

Motion:

On the motion of Dean Hayse, seconded by Tim Emert, the Commission adopted the agenda.

Aye: Tim Emert, Dean Hayse, Scott Smith

Nay: None

II. PRESENTATIONS

A. Live Healthy Montgomery County Presentation.

Marci Roberts has requested to present highlights of *Live Healthy Montgomery County*. She also previously submitted a funding request and indicated that the City of Coffeyville provided significant funding last year. We have been advised that this presentation is for informational purposes only and is not an action item requesting funding at this time.

We have also received requests from various local organizations for funding from the opioid settlement funds. A representative from Montgomery County

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also approached us about partnering to fund another organization based in Independence.

At this time, the City's priority for opioid settlement funding is the purchase of eligible equipment to support local response and prevention efforts. If funds remain after those purchases in future years, and if the other entities in the County agree, we suggest forming a committee with representatives from each government entity that has unallocated funds. This committee could establish a consistent annual application and evaluation process for funding requests.

Participation in such a collaborative process would be voluntary, and each entity could still manage its own allocation independently. However, since the County initiated discussion about jointly funding a local organization, we believe this approach could help ensure requests are reviewed fairly and systematically—rather than being addressed on a first-come, first-served basis.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion:

On the motion of Tim Emert, seconded by Dean Hayse, the Commission adopted the consent agenda.

Aye: Tim Emert, Dean Hayse, Scott Smith

Nay: None

- A. Consider approving the minutes of the September 23rd and 25th, 2025 meetings.**

Suggested Motion:

I move to approve the minutes of the September 23rd and 25th, 2025 Commission meetings.

- B. Consider signing agreements with Cox Communications, Inc. to terminate access, right-of-way and use of City property agreements.**

After collaborating three years ago, Cox Communications, Inc. has decided not to expand their services to Independence. As a result, we need to terminate the attached agreements.

Suggested Motion:

I move to authorize the termination agreements with Cox Communications, Inc. prepared by the City Attorney.

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- C. Consider a request from Neewollah, Inc. for an extended curfew on Tuesday, October 21, 2025, to accommodate the Neewollah Coronation Dance at the Independence Country Club.

On September 29, 2025, Denise Hines of Neewollah, Inc. submitted a letter requesting an extension of the curfew for the Neewollah Queen Candidates, Neelah Debs, escorts, and their dates in connection with the Neewollah Coronation Ball. The event will be held at the Independence Country Club on Tuesday, October 21, 2025, and is scheduled to conclude at 12:00 a.m.

The organizers noted that the ball's hours have been shortened from previous years, now ending at midnight rather than 1:00 a.m. To ensure attendees have sufficient time to depart, assist with cleanup, or briefly socialize before leaving, Neewollah, Inc. has requested that the curfew be extended to 1:00 a.m.

For safety and accountability, all participants are administered a breathalyzer test upon entering and leaving the dance.

Under Article II of the City Code, minors under 18 are prohibited from being in public after 12:30 a.m. unless accompanied by a parent or guardian or en route home from an authorized event. Section 70-29 authorizes the City Commission to suspend the curfew hours on specific occasions in response to written requests submitted at least 15 days in advance. This request meets those requirements.

Suggested Motion:

I move to approve the request from Neewollah, Inc. to suspend the curfew under Section 70-29 of the City Code until 1:00 a.m. on Wednesday, October 22, 2025, to allow Neewollah Queen Candidates, Neelah Debs, escorts, and their dates to return home, assist with cleanup, or remain briefly after the Coronation Ball concludes at midnight.

IV. ITEMS FOR COMMISSION ACTION

- A. Consider health insurance renewal with Blue Cross Blue Shied of Kansas and MetLife for Calendar Year 2026.

City staff and the team at IMA Consulting have worked with insurance providers to procure the best health insurance rates possible for the City of Independence. The team went to market for health, drug, dental, and vision

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plans. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas (BCBS) came back with the best rates to the City. However, those rates were still an estimated 25.9% increase. The teams worked with the providers to modify the plan design to best reduce the increase and still provide rich benefits to employees.

The presented design increases plan deductibles by \$500, removes the Co-insurance out of pocket, and increases copays. Changes can be seen in blue on the comparison chart. The changes decrease the cost of the plan and represent a 19.2% estimated increase in rates.

In addition, the City is recommending changing to BCBS for vision from MetLife. All other voluntary insurance providers will remain with MetLife.

Motion:

On the motion of Dean Hayse, seconded by Tim Emert, the Commission approved health, drug, dental, vision, and voluntary insurance renewals for 2026.

Aye: Tim Emert, Dean Hayse, Scott Smith

Nay: None

B. Consider approval of a contract extension with Resource Recovery, Inc.

The contract with Resource Recovery expired on October 1, 2025. This will extend that contract for six months, until March 31, 2026.

Motion:

On the motion of Tim Emert, seconded by Dean Hayse, the Commission approved the contract extension with Resource Recovery, Inc to March 31, 2026 and for the execution of any necessary documents.

Aye: Tim Emert, Dean Hayse, Scott Smith

Nay: None

C. Considering authorizing a contract with Government Frameworks for Chronicle Cemetery Management Software.

Since 1870, Mount Hope Cemetery has been the final resting place for Independence area residents. As with any facility that has existed for more than one hundred years, record keeping has been inconsistent, with many different sextons keeping records in their own manner over the past century. Currently, records are kept in multiple digital databases, as well as handwritten records kept in the original leather-bound book, which has been

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kept since 1870. The purpose of the Chronicle software is to digitize and reformat all existing records in a central database, verify those records for accuracy, and streamline the process for management of future records, plot sales, deeds, and service fees. As an added bonus, the Chronicle software also offers public-facing software which will allow visitors to find records and plot locations from their computer or cell phone. The Chronicle software also offers an aerial headstone survey, which provides a detailed aerial mapping of all burial sites. This option will not be included in the initial contract, but could be considered as an optional add-on in the future.

Motion:

On the motion of Dean Hayse, seconded by Tim Emert, the Commission authorized the contract with Government Frameworks to implement the Chronicle Cemetery Management Software at Mount Hope Cemetery.

Aye: Tim Emert, Dean Hayse, Scott Smith

Nay: None

V. REPORTS

A. City Board Minutes

B. Admin and Housing Goals

City Manager Passauer and Director of Housing Authority Nutt presented the reports.

VI. CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

City Manager Passauer reported that herself, John Garriss and April Nutt attended the KDOT Meeting in Pittsburg and reported what the highest priorities were for highway projects in the district. Upcoming events include Zoolloween, Neewollah, and Trunk or Treat. and upcoming City Commission meetings and City Hall will be closed on Monday for Columbus Day.

VII. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Mayor Smith recognized City staff for the tree planting at the daughters of the revolution on the 4th at the park.

VIII. PUBLIC CONCERNS

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None.

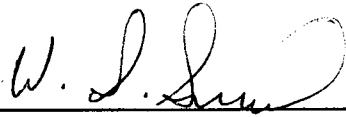
IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

On the motion of Tim Emert, seconded by Dean Hayse, the Commission adjourned the meeting.

Aye: None

Nay: None



W. Scott Smith, Mayor



Dean A. Hayse, Commissioner



Tim Emert, Commissioner

Attest:



City Clerk/Treasurer