

INDEPENDENCE CITY COMMISSION

SPECIAL SESSION AGENDA

January 21, 2026

9:00 AM

Commission Room City Hall

The Agenda shall be as follows:

- I. SPECIAL SESSION
 - A. Call to Order
- II. EXECUTIVE SESSION
 - A. Consultation with an attorney on matters that would be deemed privileged in an attorney-client relationship.
- III. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION
 - A. Discuss idle meter fee.
 - B. Discuss sanitation services.
- IV. ADJOURNMENT



**OTHER DISCUSSION
CITY OF INDEPENDENCE
January 21, 2026**

Department Admin

Prepared By Kelly Passauer

AGENDA ITEM Discuss idle meter fee.

BACKGROUND The purpose of this worksession is to provide the City Commission with an updated overview of staff's evaluation of an idle water meter fee, summarize prior Commission discussion and direction, and present financial and operational considerations to determine whether the Commission wishes to provide additional policy direction or take no further action at this time.

Since the Commission has reorganized and includes one new Commissioner who has not previously reviewed this information, this item is intended to ensure a common baseline understanding of the issue, prior discussion, and policy considerations.
No formal action is requested at this meeting.

As part of the City's Beautification – Assist Homes initiative, staff was directed to establish a process to evaluate data and policy options related to the potential implementation of an idle water meter fee. The concept has been explored as a mechanism to address system costs associated with inactive or vacant properties that remain connected to the municipal water system.

The item was added to the City's Goals and discussed by the City Commission at a Special Meeting on February 26, 2025. At that meeting, staff presented preliminary concepts related to inactive meters, potential fee structures, and related enforcement considerations. Following discussion, a majority of the Commission indicated they did not wish to move forward with an idle meter fee at that time but requested additional evaluation and a structured timeline before revisiting the issue.

Staff has provided the following timeline updates to the Commission as part of ongoing goal tracking:

- **March 27, 2025:** Item added to the City Goals and discussed at a Special Commission Meeting; staff prepared an evaluation timeline.
- **July 10, 2025:** Timeline established; potential fee modification concepts identified for future consideration.
- **October 8, 2025:** Timeline reaffirmed; fee modification concepts scheduled for fourth quarter discussion.
- **January 8, 2026:** Staff has begun evaluating data and policy options related to a potential idle meter fee. Alternative approaches and related sanitation service considerations are scheduled for discussion at the January 21, 2026 worksession.

At the February 26, 2025 Special Meeting, staff discussed:

- Definitions and criteria for identifying inactive or idle water meters;
- Circumstances under which meters may be pulled, including vacancy, nonpayment, or evidence of tampering;
- Potential fees associated with disconnection, reconnection, and long-term inactivity;
- Interaction with existing ordinances related to vacation holds, condemnation, and code enforcement; and
- Comparison data from peer and neighboring communities.

Following discussion, the majority of the Commission expressed concerns regarding fairness, enforcement complexity, and potential unintended impacts on property owners. As a result, no direction was given to draft an ordinance, and staff was asked to continue evaluating alternatives and return with additional information if appropriate.

At the January 21, 2026 worksession, the Finance Director will present information limited to the items outlined in her correspondence, including:

- Current utility rate structure and existing disconnection and reconnection fees;
- Administrative and system costs associated with maintaining the water system regardless of usage; and
- An overview of the Water System Standby or Availability Charge concept, including the attached sample ordinance.

The Finance Director's presentation materials and correspondence are included as attachments for the Commission's review.

If the Commission wishes to revisit the concept of an idle water meter fee, key policy questions include:

- Whether idle or inactive properties should contribute to fixed system costs;
- How inactivity is defined and verified;
- Equity impacts on residential versus commercial properties;
- Administrative feasibility and enforcement mechanisms; and
- Consistency with existing ordinances and long-term redevelopment goals.

Alternatively, the Commission may reaffirm its prior position and provide direction that no further staff work is desired on this item.

This item is presented for discussion only. Staff recommends the Commission:

- Review the updated information and financial context;
- Provide policy direction regarding whether further evaluation or ordinance development should occur; or
- Confirm that no additional action is desired at this time.

Item Attachment Files:

1. Finance Director email regarding utility rates and idle meter fees
2. Water System Standby or Availability Charge – Sample Ordinance

3. February 26, 2025 Special Commission Meeting agenda item: Idle Water Meters, including all supporting attachments (provided for historical reference)

Kelly,

The draft ordinance is not possible with our current metrics.

The suggestions that I've seen are instead a "standby fee" or "Availability Charge" placed on the property tax rolls annually. I would suggest a fee equal to the base water rate and I would suggest assessing it if active services are not established for at least 6 months of the year. I'd have to think through the logistics and how we'd actually track and maintain a list, but I think its possible if we did it once a year with predetermined look back dates, etc. I'd also ask if we should include something that basically says it doesn't matter if the property changes hands during that period or something like that.

1) Fees on parcels with a water meter pit but no meter installed / no active service

Across utilities, there are a few common patterns. The exact legal authority varies by state, but the fee types are very similar.

A. "Standby" / "Availability" charges on undeveloped or unconnected property

These are charged because *capacity* and infrastructure are available, even when the property is not connected and has no meter.

Common features:

- **What it's called**
 - *Standby fee* – a charge on undeveloped property for the availability of water/sewer/drainage facilities and services, not an impact or tap fee.
 - *Availability charge* – a periodic charge on owners of parcels to which a water or sewer line is "directly available" but which have elected not to connect.
- **When it applies**
 - Line or main is in place with capacity to serve the lot, but the owner hasn't connected.
 - Often imposed on *undeveloped* or *vacant* lots in a platted subdivision where the system was built to serve them.
- **How it's structured**
 - Annual or monthly fee per lot, often in the ~\$100–\$200/year range for small districts standby fee on vacant lots
 - Sometimes billed on the **property tax bill** rather than a utility bill.

Takeaway: A fairly standard approach is to treat a lot with a stubbed line or pit (even without a meter) as benefitting from "availability" and charge a standby/availability fee to cover capital and readiness costs.

1. Only parcels *without active service* are charged

In systems where standby/availability fees are placed on the **county property tax bill**, the fee is charged to parcels that meet both conditions:

1. **Infrastructure is available**
 - A water main is adjacent
 - A service stub/tap or meter pit is present
 - The system has capacity for the parcel

2. **The parcel does *not* have an active utility service account**

- No meter installed
- Meter installed but account closed
- Vacant lot with no house
- Undeveloped platted lots

This group is essentially defined as “**served by infrastructure but not connected.**”

Properties with **active service** already pay:

- Minimum monthly charge
- Ready-to-serve charge
- Base charge for meter size

Lacey Lies

Finance Director

o: 620-332-2505 | c: 316-312-6148

City of Independence

www.independenceks.gov

From: Kelly Passauer <kellyp@independenceks.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, December 2, 2025 5:30 PM

To: Lacey Lies <lacetyl@independenceks.gov>

Cc: David Cowan <davidc@independenceks.gov>; Kayla Schabel <kaylas@independenceks.gov>

Subject: Utility Rates and Idle Meter Fees

Lacey,

Attached is the discussion agenda item from February 26, which includes the draft ordinance I prepared on Idle Meter Fees. Please review it and let me know what changes you would recommend based on the assessment model versus the utility billing model.

SAMPLE ORDINANCE

City of Independence, Kansas

Ordinance No. _____

Establishing a Water System “Standby” or “Availability” Charge

Section 1. Purpose and Intent

The purpose of this Ordinance is to establish a **Standby (Availability) Charge** for parcels within the City of Independence that are **served by existing water system infrastructure** but **are not connected to active water service**. The fee is intended to:

1. Recover a fair portion of the **fixed costs** of the municipal water system attributable to providing system capacity to unconnected parcels;
2. Promote **equity** between connected and unconnected parcels;
3. Ensure that all properties that benefit from water system availability contribute proportionally to ongoing capital, maintenance, and administrative expenses; and
4. Provide a transparent and consistent method for the annual assessment and collection of such charges.

Section 2. Definitions

For purposes of this Ordinance:

(a) “Availability” or “Available for Service”

Means that a parcel is adjacent to, served by, or has reasonable access to a public water main and is capable of receiving water service without extension of a main.

(b) “Standby Parcel”

Means a parcel that meets one or more of the following conditions:

1. Has a **water service line or meter pit installed**, but **no water meter** is set;
2. Has a **water meter installed** but no **active utility account** or where service has been disconnected;
3. Is a **platted lot** within a subdivision where water infrastructure has been constructed to serve that lot; or
4. Receives the **benefit of water system capacity** even if not presently connected.

(c) “Active Service Parcel”

Means a parcel with an active municipal water account billed monthly for service, including payment of any minimum or base service charge.

(d) “Owner”

Means the person or entity recorded as owner in the Montgomery County Appraiser’s records.

Section 3. Applicability

A Standby Charge shall be assessed **only on Standby Parcels**.

Active Service Parcels shall not be assessed this charge.

Section 4. Standby (Availability) Charge

(a) Amount of Charge

Each Standby Parcel shall be assessed an annual Standby Charge in the amount of:

\$_____ per parcel per year.

(Alternative: “Per platted lot,” or “Per service line stub,” depending on desired structure.)

(b) Adjustment of Charge

The charge may be revised annually by resolution of the Governing Body based on:

- Fixed costs of water system operation,
- Capital improvement plan needs,
- Inflationary adjustments, and
- Administrative costs of collection.

Section 5. Method of Assessment and Collection

(a) Annual Parcel List Submission

The City Manager or designee shall prepare a list of parcels to be assessed the Standby Charge and submit it to the **Montgomery County Clerk** for placement on the property tax roll each year.

(b) Special Assessment on Property Tax Bill

The Standby Charge shall be collected via **special assessment** on the annual property tax statement issued by Montgomery County.

(c) Lien Status

Unpaid standby charges shall be **liened against the parcel** and collected in accordance with Kansas statutes governing special assessments.

(d) Proration

Standby Charges shall not be prorated except as required by law. Parcels that connect to active service after the assessment list is submitted shall remain on the assessment roll until the next year's cycle.

Section 6. Creation and Maintenance of Parcel Inventory

The City Manager or designee shall maintain an **inventory of all parcels with water availability**, including:

- Parcel Identification Number (PIN)
- Physical address
- Presence of meter pit or service line
- Active/inactive service status
- Date of meter installation (if applicable)
- Subdivision and lot number

This inventory shall be updated continuously based on construction records, permit data, subdivision approvals, and utility service changes.

Section 7. Notice to Owners

The City shall publish or mail an **annual notice** stating:

- The purpose of the charge
- The fee amount
- Dates of the assessment cycle
- Instructions for inquiries or correction requests

Section 8. Appeals and Corrections

Property owners may request correction if they believe:

- The parcel is misidentified,

- The parcel is already connected to active service, or
- Water is not actually available.

The City shall establish an administrative review process and render decisions prior to final submission of the assessment roll.

Section 9. Effective Date

This Ordinance shall take effect upon publication as required by law and shall first apply to the **tax year beginning** _____.



OTHER DISCUSSION
CITY OF INDEPENDENCE
February 26, 2025

Department Admin

Prepared By David Cowan

AGENDA ITEM Discussion of idle water meters and boarding up vacant structures.

BACKGROUND City staff will discuss a proposed idle meter fee with the Commission and an ordinance for boarding up vacant structures. City staff met with the City Attorney to discuss the ordinance since he cannot attend the Special Meeting. He wrote up a list of points regarding that discussion, which has been attached.

February 14, 2025

RE: Idle Water Meter Fee

Discussion on an Ordinance Related to Idle Water Meters in Occupied and Vacant Structures

1. Overview of the Ordinance

- The ordinance applies to all properties within the City of Independence that are connected to the municipal water system, regardless of water usage status.

2. Definition of an Inactive Water Meter

- An inactive water meter is a water meter that is currently not in use or has not registered any water consumption over a specified period (**days/months**).

3. Criteria for Identifying an Inactive Water Meter

- An occupied residential property without water service for 60 days.
- A vacant structure without an active water service.
- A vacant business property with no recorded water usage.

4. Definition of Service Deactivation

- **Deactivation of service** refers to the removal of the water meter, risers, and pit.

5. Conditions Under Which Service is Deactivated

- Theft of water.
- Condemnation of the property.
- Customer request for permanent removal of service.

6. Seasonal or Temporary Suspension of Service

- Customers may request a temporary suspension (vacation hold) on services.
- Specific conditions and procedures are outlined in the municipal code.

7. Billing and Collections Process

- If applicable, an affidavit is filed with the Register of Deeds to place a lien on the property for unpaid water-related fees.

8. Implementation of New Software and Electronic Meters

- Lacey will provide an overview of the new **Zenner Software** and how its proper setup will enable the City to monitor the water system efficiently.
- The software will support the implementation of an idle meter program by tracking usage and identifying inactive meters.

An Ordinance Addressing Vacant Structures and Boarding Up

Section 1. Vacant and Unsecured Structures

A. Unsecured Vacant Structures

- A **vacant or abandoned** property with **open doors or windows**, allowing **weather exposure and trespasser entry**, is considered **unsecured** and a public safety risk.

B. Boarded-Up Structures

- A structure **boarded up for more than 360 days** will be considered a **nuisance**.
- Code Enforcement and Building Inspection may **access the building** to assess its condition for public safety.
- Condemnation proceedings **may be initiated** if a structure has remained unoccupied for **90 consecutive days** without legal possession.

C. Requirement to Secure Vacant Structures

- **Property owners** must secure vacant structures to prevent unauthorized access, vandalism, and safety hazards.

D. Board-Up Requirement

- If a vacant structure is **unsecured or poses a public safety risk**, the municipality shall issue a **written notice** via **first-class mail or posted on the property**.
- The owner has **10 days** to secure the property.
- If corrective action is not taken, the city will **issue a citation** and board up the structure, securing doors and windows.

E. Cost Recovery

- **All costs** for securing a vacant structure, including materials, equipment, rental, and labor, shall be charged to the property owner.
- Unpaid charges may be assessed as a **lien on the property** or referred to **collections company**.

F. Ongoing Monitoring



Office of the Assistant City
Manager 120 North 6th Street
Independence, KS 67301

- The municipality reserves the right to conduct **periodic inspections** of vacant structures to ensure continued compliance and public safety.

Section 2. Penalty

- Violations of this ordinance are subject to **finest of up to \$500.00 per violation**.
- For violations of **subsections 18-422(e) or (f)**, fines may be **assessed per day** until the violation is corrected, up to **\$500.00 per day**.

Section 3. Effective Date

This ordinance shall take effect on **[Date]**, following its adoption and publication as required by law.

Passed and adopted by the **[City Council/Town Board]** of **[Municipality Name]** on **[Date]**.

[Mayor's Name], Mayor
[Clerk's Name], City Clerk

Attest: _____

Bullet Points – Inactive water meters

1. Currently the City records indicate 852 pulled water meters for various reasons. Discussion was had about what should trigger the City pulling a water meter. Would it be evidence of theft of tempering, or vacancy in the property for a defined period of time, or nonpayment of the bill.
2. When a meter is pulled, the discussion was about not only pulling the meter, but the pit, and the setter. This could possibly generate a disconnection fee. Discussion was that the disconnection fee should be \$100.00.
3. If a meter has been pulled along with the pit and setter, and if new residents move into the property and want to reconnect with water, the reconnection fee proposed would possibly be \$850.00.
4. Discussion was had about a minimal monthly fee of \$25.00 to be charged to a residence where there has been no water being consumed under various scenarios including voluntary temporary absence from the residence if the occupant notifies the City in advance, or if water service is disconnected at request of the occupant, or possibly other scenarios.
5. Discussion was had about idle meters where the water had been disconnected either voluntarily by the occupant or for nonpayment of the bill. Under our new ordinance, if the water is not connected for 60 days, notification can be given to the occupants, and they have to vacate the premises. If they don't vacate, the City can make them move out.
6. Discussion was had about tying in these new points with existing ordinances because the current ordinance has a vacation mode provision, and things like that.

Water Fee Comparison for Cities within 45 mile radius

City/Town	Inactive Fee	Disconnect/Reconnect Fee	Website
Independence, KS	No	\$20 for disconnected for nonpayment, additional \$25 after hours fee if requested afternoon or later and want reconnected the same day	Ordinance No. 3606 (\$20 fee)
Cherryvale, KS	No	\$30 if disconnected for nonpayment or \$20 all others	https://cherryvaleks.citycode.net/index.html#!chapterXvUtilities
Neodesha, KS	No	\$50 for reconnection fee	https://library.municode.com/ks/neodesha/ordinances/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=1342978
Coffeyville, KS	No	\$125 if after hours or \$25 all other	https://www.coffeyville.com/DocumentCenter/View/391/Fee-Schedule-Effective-010124?bidId=
Caney, KS	No	\$30 if disconnected for nonpayment or \$25 all others	https://caneyks.citycode.net/index.html#!articleWater
Fredonia, KS	No	\$25 for first nonpayment, \$50 for second nonpayment, \$100 for nonpayments after	https://library.municode.com/ks/fredonia/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICOOR_CH40UT_ARTIINGE_S40-5CIREPRSECOBI
Altamont, KS	No	Not able to find on website	https://www.altamontks.com/services/utilities.php
Parsons, KS	No	\$25 if disconnected for nonpayment	https://www.parsonskks.com/utility-rates
Sedan, KS	No	\$25 disconnect fee, \$25 reconnect fee (\$50 total)	https://cityofsedan.com/ordinances
Dewey, OK	No	\$25 if disconnected nonpayment plus additional \$12.50 if after 3pm and reconnection requested for same day	https://www.cityofdewey.com/sites/g/files/vyhlif7826/ff/uploads/ord_utilities.pdf
Oswego, KS	No	\$25 if disconnected for nonpayment plus \$25 call out fee for after hours	https://oswegokansas.com/index.php/services/water-shut-off-day-fees
Chanute, KS	No	\$10 delinquent pay reconnect or \$75 delinquent reconnect fee after hours	https://www.chanute.org/DocumentCenter/View/3280/Utility-Fees-Booklet?bidId=
Erie, KS	No	\$50 delinquent reconnect fee	https://erieks.com/utility-payments/
Howard, KS	No	\$25 delinquent reconnect fee	https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/howard/latest/howard_ks/0-0-0-3283#ID_15-102
Bartlesville, OK	No	\$25 delinquent reconnection fee or \$45 if after hours	https://library.municode.com/ok/bartlesville/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIIMUCO_CH20UT_ARTIIWA_DIV1GE_SS20-16--20-25RE
Nowata, OK	No	\$60 delinquent reconnection fee	https://nowataok.gov/utilities/water-trash-sewer/
Chetopa, KS	No	\$50 delinquent reconnection fee	http://www.chetopa.org/app/download/6946257/Utility+service+contract.pdf
Humboldt, KS	No	\$25 if shutoff for delinquent payment, otherwise \$10	https://www.humboldtks.com/utilities
Yates Center, KS	No	If turned off and on more than 2 times in a year then \$25 for each reconnection after that and \$35 to \$170 for delinquent payment shutoff depending on number of times delinquent	https://www.yatescenterks.citycode.net/index.html#!articleWater

Water Fee Comparison for Cities in Kansas with Comparable Population

City/Town	Inactive Fee	Disconnect/Reconnect Fee	Website
Independence, KS	No	\$20 for disconnected for nonpayment, additional \$25 after hours fee if requested afternoon or later and want reconnected the same day	Ordinance No. 3606 (\$20 fee)
Coffeyville	No	\$125 if after hours or \$25 all other	https://www.coffeyville.com/DocumentCenter/View/391/Fee-Schedule-Effective-010124?bidId=
Spring Hill	No	\$45 for turn on or connection fee or \$30 for delinquent payment fee	https://www.springhillks.gov/
Parsons	No	\$25 if disconnected for nonpayment	https://www.parsonskks.com/utility-rates
Augusta	No	\$20 disconnection on nonpayment; \$30 for reconnection after nonpayment (\$50 total)	https://www.augustaks.org/
Chanute	No	\$10 delinquent reconnect fee or \$75 after hours	https://www.chanute.org/DocumentCenter/View/3280/Utility-Fees-Booklet?bidId=
Arkansas City	No	\$35 if for nonpayment	https://www.arkcity.org/sites/default/files/fileattachments/city_clerk/page/3005/comp_fee_2025_-_jan_2025_final_1-21-2025.pdf#page8
Atchison	No	\$75 if for nonpayment	https://cityofatchison.com/residents/utility-service/#processing-payments
El Dorado	No	\$75 if for nonpayment	https://www.eldoks.gov/255/City-Utility-Services
McPherson	No	1/2 hr labor + 1 hr service truck	https://www.mcphersonpower.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/General-Terms-and-Conditions-January-2024.pdf
Wellington	No	None	https://www.cityofwellington.net/

OTHER CITY IDEAS

Could not find comparable municipal water ordinance or charges that were similar to those proposed. Found these cities that do charge some fee for "inactive" accounts:

Lawrence Vacant Water Charges- requires pay for base water and sewer charges if house is vacant. Upon customer request and for a fee of \$50, water can be shut off and solid waste (trash) charges suspended- but the base charges will continue so long as a water meter on the property.

Customer may request to have the meter pulled if demo or remodel, but if no active demo permit on file, then a service charge of \$50 will apply. After meter pulled, the base water and sewer charges will cease.

<https://lawrenceks.org/utility-billing/policy/>

Leavenworth Long Term Meter Fee - Charges a one-time \$100 meter long term maintenance fee for any meter inactive 3 or more years. The fee is charged to the current property owner, regardless of how long they have owned the property.

<https://www.lvnwater.com/customer-service/fees-and-rates/>

ORDINANCE NO. [XXXX]

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A MINIMUM MONTHLY CHARGE FOR PROPERTIES WITH A WATER METER BUT NO ACTIVE WATER SERVICE WITHIN THE CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, KANSAS, AMENDING CHAPTER [X] OF THE CITY CODE.

WHEREAS, the City of Independence provides water utility services to properties within city limits and maintains the municipal water system infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the presence of an installed water meter requires ongoing system maintenance and administrative costs, regardless of water consumption; and

WHEREAS, the City Commission finds it necessary to implement a minimum monthly charge for properties with an installed water meter, even in the absence of an active service account, to ensure fair distribution of system costs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, KANSAS:

SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this ordinance, the following definitions apply:

1. **Installed Water Meter** – A water meter that remains connected to the municipal water system, regardless of whether the property has an active water service account.
2. **Inactive Water Service** – A property where no water consumption has been recorded for a period of sixty (60) consecutive days, and where no active utility account is maintained by a resident or property owner.
3. **Minimum Monthly Charge** – A base fee assessed to properties with an installed water meter, irrespective of usage or service status.

SECTION 2. MINIMUM MONTHLY CHARGE FOR INACTIVE WATER **AND SEWER** SERVICE

1. All properties within the City of Independence with an installed water meter shall be subject to a minimum monthly charge equal to the water fee charged in Appendix D for the first 1,000 gallons or any part thereof **[Currently \$16.63 per month] and equal to the minimum sewer fee charged in Appendix D [Currently \$26.78 per month]**, regardless of whether water **and/or sewer** is actively used **[Currently a total of \$43.41 per month]**.
2. The charge shall be assessed to the property owner if no active water account exists.
3. The fee shall be included in the City's standard utility billing cycle and subject to the same collection procedures as active accounts.

SECTION 3. NON-PAYMENT & ENFORCEMENT

1. A late fee of **10%** shall be applied to any unpaid charges **10 days** after the billing due date.
2. If an account remains unpaid for **60 days**, the City may:

- a. Initiate a lien against the property for the unpaid balance in accordance with K.S.A. 12-808c.
- b. Refer the outstanding amount to a collections agency for further enforcement.
- c. Schedule the removal of the water meter.

SECTION 4. METER REMOVAL AND SUSPENSION OF MINIMUM MONTHLY CHARGE FOR INACTIVE WATER **AND SEWER SERVICE**

If the water meter is removed by the property owner's request or due to nonpayment; then a meter removal fee to be determined by the City Engineer to cover labor and administrative costs associated with removing the meter will be assessed to the property owner. Once the meter is removed, the minimum monthly water **and sewer** charges will cease.

SECTION 5. RECONNECTION AFTER METER REMOVAL

1. Any property where the meter has been removed must pay the new meter installation and tap fee in full before re-establishing service. The new meter and tap fee is based on the size, as outlined in Appendix D -- Fee Schedule.
2. If the meter is removed for 12 months or more, the property owner will also be assessed a new system development fee in addition to the meter tap fees.

SECTION 6. EXCEPTIONS & TEMPORARY SUSPENSIONS

1. Property owners may request a **temporary service suspension** (vacation hold) for a maximum period of **[X] months per calendar year**, provided they notify the City in writing prior to the suspension period.
2. Temporary suspensions shall be subject to the same minimum monthly charge as inactive meters.

SECTION 7. EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after January 1, 2026, following its adoption and publication as required by law.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Commission of the City of Independence, Kansas, this [XX] day of [Month], 2025.

W. Scott Smith, Mayor

ATTEST:

David Schwenker, City Clerk



**OTHER DISCUSSION
CITY OF INDEPENDENCE
January 21, 2026**

Department Admin

Prepared By John Garris

AGENDA ITEM Discuss sanitation services.

BACKGROUND See attached outline.

Desired End-State of Sanitation (Third Draft):

All goals in in priority order and all assume continued dedication to safe and lawful operation.

Priority 1: Ensure Adequate and Sustainable Revenue.

- This is an **essential** goal of the organizational change.
- This is a goal that implementing a software solution **may** impact.

Priority 2a: Create a solution where the rules are easy for staff consistently explain and apply.

Priority 2b: Create a solution where the rules are easy for customers to understand.

Priority 2c: Create easy to following billing for customers and staff.

- These are **essential** goals of the organizational change.
- These are goals that implementing a software solution **may** impact.
- Priority 2c was formerly Priority 3.

Priority 4: Create a fair distribution of system costs among customers.

- This is an **essential** goal of the organizational change.
- This is a goal that implementing a software solution **may** impact.
- This is an outcome of step 1.F.

Priority 5a: Create an operational organization that is optimized as far as costs and service.

Priority 5b: Increased supervisory time is available to pursue operational excellence throughout the City.

- These are **essential** goals of the organizational change.
- These are goals where implementation of a software solution is **likely essential**.
- 5.a. and 5.b. are guiding principles in developing the policy in step 2.D.

Priority 6: Have less trash on the streets of Independence.

- This is a **desirable** goal of the organizational change.

Priority 7a: Create improved customer satisfaction.

Priority 7b: Create improved employee satisfaction.

- These are desirable goals of the organizational change.
- These are goals that implementing a software solution **may** impact.

Priority 1 Implementation Steps:

- ~~A. Understand Sanitation Department Costs~~
 - ~~a. Planned Date: 1/14/2026~~
 - ~~b. Owner(s): John and Lacey~~
- ~~B. Define Minimum Services~~
 - ~~a. Planned Date: 12/17/2025~~
 - ~~b. Owner: Lacey~~
 - c. See page 4.
- C. Understand What Services Customers Should Pay “Extra” For
 - a. Planned Date: 1/21/2026
 - b. Owner: Lacey and John
 - c. Requires: Work Session
- ~~D. Define Services Customers Expect~~
 - ~~a. Planned Date: 12/17/2025~~
 - ~~b. Owner: Lacey~~
 - c. See page 4.
- E. Project Future Costs
 - a. Planned Date: Item C. completion plus 9 weeks
 - b. Owner: Lacey
- F. Determine Commercial and Residential Rates for Next Five Years
 - a. Planned Date: Item E. completion plus 2 weeks
 - b. Owner: Lacey
- G. Adopt New Rates by Ordinance
 - a. Planned Date Item F. completion plus 6 weeks
 - b. Owner(s): John and Lacey
- H. Implement New Rates in Billing Software
 - a. Planned Date: Item F completion plus 8 weeks
 - b. Owner: Lacey
 - c. This item is **High Risk** for schedule slip
- I. Implement New Rate Collection in Hauler Hero
 - a. Planned Date: Item G plus 5 weeks and Software Implementation (TBD)
 - b. Owner: John
 - c. Optional Item Depending on Outcome of C.
 - d. This item is at **Moderate Risk** for schedule slip.

Priority 2 (a., b. and c.) Implementation Steps:

- A. Meet w/Sanitation Crews to Understand Issues
 - a. Must do before step 1.C.
 - b. Owner(s): Lacey and David
- B. Sanitation Meeting Memo
 - a. Must do before step 1.C.
 - b. Owner: Lacey
- C. Discuss New Structure w/Staff
 - a. After 1.C., Before 1.G.
 - b. Owner(s): Lacey and David
- D. Draft Policy
 - a. After 2.C, Before 1.G.
 - b. Owner(s): Lacey and John
- E. Review Policy w/Staff
 - a. After 2.D., Before 1.G.
 - b. Owner(s): Lacey and John

1.B. Define Minimum or Standard Sanitation Services

Minimum (Standard) Sanitation Services are the baseline services provided to residential sanitation customers and included in the base monthly sanitation rate established by the City of Independence. These services are designed to meet basic household waste disposal needs and ensure safe, efficient, and equitable collection citywide.

Standard monthly sanitation service includes:

- Once-weekly curbside collection of household solid waste
- One City-issued 95-gallon polycart per residential unit
- Collection limited to bagged household waste that fits entirely within the polycart with the lid fully closed
- Service provided on the customer's assigned collection day, in accordance with City sanitation policies and schedules

Any services beyond this baseline—such as additional containers, oversized or excess waste, special pickups, or disposal of non-household materials—are considered non-standard services and may require additional fees or separate arrangements.

1.D. Define Services Customers Expect

Customer-Expected Services reflect common perceptions or assumptions held by some customers about sanitation services, which may extend beyond the City's defined standard service level and approved rate structure.

Customers may expect:

- The City to collect all trash placed at the curb, regardless of volume, container type, or method of disposal
- On-demand or unlimited pickup of excess, bulky, or improperly contained waste without additional cost
- Acceptance of all types of waste, including commercial, construction, or prohibited materials, as part of residential service
- The ability to dispose of any quantity of trash at City sanitation facilities at no charge or as part of the base monthly rate

These expectations often exceed the scope of standard residential sanitation services and may not align with operational capacity, safety regulations, cost recovery principles, or adopted City policies.