

INDEPENDENCE CITY COMMISSION

SPECIAL SESSION AGENDA

June 15, 2022

9:00 AM

Civic Center Memorial Hall

To participate by conference call:
1 785-289-4727 Conference ID: 995 148 903#

The Independence City Commission will meet in a Special Session on **Wednesday, June 15, 2022, in the Civic Center Memorial Hall.**

The Agenda shall be as follows:

- I. SPECIAL SESSION
 - A. Call to Order
- II. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION
 - A. Budget Worksession.
- III. ADJOURNMENT

Budget Timeline

The below timeline outlines major milestones in the City's budget process.



Revenue Neutral Rate - Senate Bill 13

- In March 2021, the Kansas Legislature passed Senate Bill (SB) 13 to establish limitations on ad valorem property tax levies by taxing subdivisions without an additional notice and hearing prior to budget adoption. Subsequently, Senate Substitute for House Bill 2104 was passed to amend the timelines in SB 13. SB 13 is retroactively effective January 1, 2021.
- The bill repeals the tax lid law and computed tax limits imposed by KSA 79-2925b and KSA 79-2925c. Alternatively, the bill introduces the use of a “revenue neutral rate”, defined as the amount of ad valorem tax revenue levied in the prior year over the current year's assessed valuation estimates, expressed as a mill. County clerks are responsible for computing and providing the rates for taxing subdivisions with the budget information estimates by June 15th.
- Taxing subdivisions cannot levy above the revenue neutral rate (RNR) without holding a Revenue Neutral Rate Hearing for taxpayers to attend and provide feedback. At the end of the RNR hearing, the governing body of the taxing subdivision will publicly vote to pass a resolution to exceed the RNR for the upcoming budget year.
- If the taxing subdivision adopts a budget that does not exceed the RNR, the subdivision should contact the county clerk to prepare for valuation decreases from the June 15th property valuation estimates to the November 1st property valuations certified by the county clerk. If property valuations decrease from June 15th to November 1st, the taxing subdivision would realize fewer dollars than budgeted.

STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION 2022

Intention Statements and Creative Pathways



JANUARY 19, 2022
CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, KANSAS

Intention Statement One: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Establish an environment where businesses succeed while also growing the community.

Creative Pathways

- Collaborative business recruitment
 - Collaborate with BEST, Main Street, MCAC, Chamber, Independence Action Partnership, and Independence Industries
 - Collaborate with the State
- Create an environment for development
 - Maximize incentives
 - Neighborhood Revitalization
 - Land Acquisition
 - Demolition Grant
 - Downtown Building Grant
 - Building Codes
 - Review current building codes
 - Review other successful communities
 - Review development process
 - Better data through building permits
 - Streamlined process
 - Clearly communication a timeline and expectations to the public
- Improve housing and housing opportunities
 - Maximize incentives
 - RHID
 - Downtown Building Grant
 - Upper Story Housing Grant
 - Neighborhood Exterior Grant
 - Neighborhood Revitalization
 - Land Acquisition
 - Demolition Grant
 - Rehabilitation
 - Apply for a CDBG rehabilitation grant
 - New Construction
 - Partner with Building Trade Program
- Comprehensive Plan
 - Select a firm
 - Work with the Planning Commission to develop the plan
 - Present to the Commission for adoption (2023)

Guiding Principles

- Coordinate with Economic Development Advisory Board
- Collaboration with stakeholders (Independence Housing Authority to develop housing)
- Leverage ARPA funding where possible to minimize budgetary impact

Measures of Success/Deliverables

- Businesses
 - Retain and expand existing business
 - Recruit new businesses
- Housing
 - New housing construction has begun the process
 - Rehabilitated existing housing
 - Receive a CDBG Grant
- Comprehensive Plan
 - Planning process is started

Intention Statement Two: RETAIN AND RECRUIT EMPLOYEES

Recruit and retain a strong workforce.

Creative Pathways

- Evaluate Possible Policy changes
 - Expand insurance access for new hires
 - Career advancement
 - Create additional job classifications for public works and utilities
 - Adjust daily/weekly work schedules for select positions
 - Accrued vacation adjustments
- Compensation and incentives
 - Internal market and pay gap review
 - Provide uniforms and equipment
 - Evaluate cost-benefit of overtime verses increased pay
 - Consider longevity pay
 - Consider opportunities for daycare
- Enhance current benefits
 - Teach and help increase the leveraging of current Health Insurance Perks
 - Training
 - Communication to staff through department heads and HR
- Refine recruitment
 - Highlight educational and advancement opportunities in recruiting
 - Better communicate incentives and benefits to potential hires
 - New recruitment material and messaging highlighting:
 - Highlight schools, parks, quality of life to work and live here
 - Stable employment for the City of Independence

Guiding Principles

- Each person is different.
- Help employees save money.

Measures of Success/Deliverables

- Reduced turnover
- Improved Employee satisfaction

Intention Statement Three: INFRASTRUCTURE

Maintain City investment for reliable infrastructure at the lowest total cost to our citizens.

Creative Pathways

- Create maintenance model for Streets
 - Use PCI model to plan maintenance/repair/replace planning
 - Understand cost, budget issues
 - Build model for street maintenance using best practices from other communities
- Other maintenance model for Other Streetside (Curb, Gutter, Stormwater, Traffic Lights)
 - Understand installed infrastructure (i.e., review current status of curb, gutter, sidewalks and map)
 - Get electronic data on stormwater system
 - Benchmark plans from other cities
- Prioritize metrics for quality, reliability, cost, timing for public structures and grounds (Zoo, Cemetery, Park, Memorial Hall, City Hall, Fire/EMS)
 - Assess Zoo needs via master planning process
 - Assess Park power needs
 - Understand long term maintenance of City-owned facilities
- Create maintenance model for Water and Sewer systems
 - Follow through on Water Treatment Plant Master Plan
 - Understand system maintenance needs: plant, towers, lines
 - Understand line repair history
 - Understand lift station repair needs

Guiding Principles

- Engineering standards, regulations, records, history, quality metrics
- Projects should be prioritized based on perceived public needs
- Budget
- Revenue

Measures of Success/Deliverables

- Maintenance Model and Multi-Year Plan for Streets is drafted
- Electronic information on storm sewer, sanitary sewer, and water lines is entered into GIS
- An evaluation of what other cities do is completed
- Collection of data on existing infrastructure has commenced

Strategic Planning Session 2022



- Zoo Master Plan is completed
- Building D energy savings is completed
- Planned Water Treatment, Water Distribution and Sanitary Sewer projects are completed

Strategic Directive 1

Economic Development



“I want to live in a community where there are well-paying employment opportunities that allow me to provide for my family.”

Independence has faced significant changes in economic development over the years. As a city once built on the oil industry, Independence has learned to adapt and shift its focus. These changes have contributed to a gradual decline in population in the region, which has remained constant over the past two decades. In spite of these changes, Independence is home to an array of successful businesses and a talented workforce. It is imperative that we foster economic development and bring more jobs to Independence. These efforts have a ripple effect, as a higher number of available jobs will bring an increase in population, more shopping and dining options to meet that increased population, and other aspects of financial prosperity associated with a growing city.

Key Initiatives:

- Review economic development plan for retention and growth of existing businesses, and new businesses recruitment
- Continue partnerships with Montgomery County and neighboring cities in business recruitment efforts
- Support expansion of medical services in Independence
- Address tax incentives for different and new types of businesses
- Make beautification improvements to downtown area
- Recruit a “recreational business” (bowling alley, skating rink, etc.)
- Enforce vacant building inspection and registry
- Evaluate revenue sources that can be used toward Economic Development Fund

What Does Success Look Like?

- Increase in population of Independence
- Increase in sales tax revenue for the City due to more purchases and economic activity
- Decrease in the unemployment rate in Independence
- Decrease in the number of vacant buildings in downtown area
- Increase in gas tax revenue and other tax revenues from increased economic activity
- Increase in the number of doctors and/or medical services provided in Independence
- Increase in Guest Tax revenue for city due to increased number of visitors to Independence

Strategic Directive 2

Infrastructure



“I want to live in a community where I can safely travel across town, with working roads and well-maintained public structures.”

Municipal infrastructure across the country has faced steady decline in recent years. In Independence, this translates to needed improvements to roads, sidewalks, and city buildings. The City will focus resources on making these needed improvements. From increasing budgetary allocation to fixing streets, to making decisions on the use of publicly owned buildings, this directive reflects a commitment from the City to show citizens and potential business-owners alike, the pride we have for Independence and its maintenance.

Key Initiatives:

- Increase budget allocation for road and sidewalk improvements
- Develop and implement Utility Maintenance Plan and Capital Plan
- Complete implementation of automated water meters throughout the City
- Perform long-term capital planning
- Perform annual review of street conditions and planned improvements
- Review and update 5-year Rate Study at 2.5-year midterm
- Maintain commitment to ADA compliance
- Make decision on City Hall and Public Safety facilities to address the long-term facilities needs of the City

What Does Success Look Like?

- Completed milestones on capital plans
- Increased budget to road improvements
- Improvement in Pavement Condition Index
- Efficiently operating Geographic Information System (GIS)

Strategic Directive 3

Beautification



“I want to live in a place that is clean and well-kept, where I am proud to bring family and friends to visit.”

Along with aging infrastructure, the physical appearance of Independence has declined in recent years. This includes multiple abandoned houses, the upkeep of numerous homes and yards, and litter and debris on sidewalks and streets. The City will focus resources towards addressing these issues. City beautification will help enhance our reputation with visitors as we seek to attract potential residents and businesses. In addition, a beautiful community will provide a solid support for economic growth and foster the special sense of community that has developed in our city over many years.

Key Initiatives:

- Increase budget and timeline on removing abandoned houses
- Re-configure city trash to once a week trash pickup to free up resources for increase in other pickup services
- Expand recycling pickup services
- Focus on neighborhood beautification through strict code enforcement in residential areas
- Expand partnership with Love Independence and other organizations in beautification efforts

What Does Success Look Like?

- Reduction in the number of abandoned houses
- Decrease in trash and other items found in streets and in front of homes
- Increase in neighborhood property values
- Realize more efficient operation of trash pickup
- Increase in participation rate in recycling program

Strategic Directive 4

Parks & Recreation



“I want to live in a city where my family can enjoy outdoor recreation, and where my kids have options of fun things to do.”

Independence is home to what is arguably the crown jewel of Southeast Kansas: Riverside Park and Zoo. Residents of both Independence and the surrounding region enjoy the public facilities available here, and this has become a point of pride for the community. Over the next 5 years, it is important that we do not lose sight of what this town does exceptionally well, and that we leverage this valuable asset in our overall plan. Maintaining a high-quality park and improving facilities and offerings across town will build the City’s reputation and provide recreational opportunities to residents.

Key Initiatives:

- Address branding and tourism position and analyze additional marketing opportunities to attract visitors
- Review plan of smaller parks and optimize and/or consolidate amenities
- Expand summer and educational camps for kids
- Develop and implement Zoo enhancement and maintenance plan
- Partner with neighboring cities’ senior centers to expand activities for senior citizens
- Increase partnership to promote Neewollah and other community events beyond SE Kansas

What Does Success Look Like?

- Increased number of visitors to park and zoo facilities
- Increased attendance of Neewollah and other community events
- Pass ADA accreditation for Zoo facilities

Strategic Directive 5

Community Spirit & Unity



“I want to live in a community that feels like an extension of my family. One where we can trust the City’s decisions, one where we see the best in one another, and that no matter your background, you feel like you belong.”

In order for this plan to be successfully implemented, public trust in the City government and civility amongst its citizens is critical. Building trust with the public starts with a transparent culture where the public feels informed about City decisions. Citizens should feel like their voices are being heard, and that kindness and respect permeate public dialogue. Every citizen and visitor of Independence should feel included in the Independence family.

Key Initiatives:

- Consider modifications to governing body and size of City Commission
- Partner with the Chamber of Commerce to create direct channel of communication between the Diversity Taskforce and City Leadership
- Increase communication through live streaming and media facilities from the City regarding announcements and budgetary decisions
- Conduct annual survey for citizen satisfaction

What Does Success Look Like?

- Reduced number of negative and/or critical publications in local newspapers and online sites
- Positive citizen survey responses on the positivity, friendliness, and inclusiveness of the City
- Increased feeling of inclusion from all Independence residents (as measured by survey)
- Increased number of social media updates and announcements from the City
- Increased voter turnout in City elections