



AGENDA
TOWN COUNCIL/PLANNING COMMISSION
TUESDAY DECEMBER 12, 2023
INDEPENDENCE, VIRGINIA
6:00 PM
INDEPENDENCE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT
329 DAVIS STREET, INDEPENDENCE, VA 24346

- Public Hearings
 - Town Code
- Call to Order
 - Welcome/Decorum
 - Approval of Agenda, Consent Agenda, Meeting Minutes
- Reports, Presentations or Requests
 - Grayson Land Care – Michelle Pridgen
 - Food Independence – Tom Simpson
 - Ferrel Cat Spay/Neuter Event – Amelia Bland Waller
- Old Business
 - Town Code Adoption Ordinance Approval – Attorney Brooks
 - Town Council Committee Responsibilities – Town Manager Ratcliffe
 - Virginia Outdoor Foundation Grant – Councilwomen Marshall and Collins
- New Business
 - Capital Improvements – Roof Repairs – Town Manager Ratcliffe
 - Public Works Building
 - Police Department
- Town Staff Report
 - Town Clerk/Treasurer
 - Bills & Payroll
 - Police Report
 - Utility Directors Report
 - OSHA Training
 - Special Events Report
- Town Manager’s Report
 - Programs, Projects and Updates
- Mayor’s Report
- Town Attorney’s Report
- Committee Updates
 - Town Park Special Committee – Councilwoman Collins

- Personnel Committee – Councilman Cassell
- Finance Committee – Councilman Meier
- Sewer Committee – Councilman Halsey
- Water Committee - Councilman Halsey
- Beautification Committee – Councilwoman Collins
- Traffic & Safety Committee – Councilwoman Collins
- Streets, Sidewalks, and Lights Committee – Councilman Miller
- Solid Waste Committee – Councilman Miller
- Broadband Special Committee – Councilman Halsey
- Informational Items
- Community Matters – Registered Speakers and Public Comment
- Closed Session
 - Personnel
- Adjourn

-Meeting Decorum-

All official meetings are to be observed by the following decorum:

- Behavior during all official meetings shall be consistent with the behavior exercised in any court or legislative room found within the Commonwealth of Virginia; and,
- There shall be no outbursts, heckling or other forms of disrespectful behavior by any individuals present within these chambers; and,
- Persons wishing to speak shall do so respectfully and in accordance with the applicable Rules of Procedures and/or at the specific direction of the presiding official; and,
- Out of respect for the official business being conducted, for those conducting the official business and for those present for same purpose, there shall be no private conversations taking place in the audience or other forms of distractive behavior or nuisance; and
- Please turn off cell phones and other such devices before entering the meeting room.



**TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE
TOWN COUNCIL**

**Public Hearing to take public comments on proposed bond issuance
NOVEMBER 14, 2023
6:00pm
Independence Volunteer Fire Department
329 Davis Street, Independence, VA 24348**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Ronald Sexton, Vice Mayor, Jim Meier, Jason Cassell, Buddy Halsey, Mark Miller, Joan Collins, and Kit Marshall.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

TOWN STAFF PRESENT: Laura Ratcliffe, Town Manager, Roger Brooks, Town Attorney, Kim Farmer, Town Clerk, Matthew Adams, Police Chief, and Mary Ann Halsey, Special Events Coordinator.

CITIZENS & GUESTS: Steve Marshall, Jennifer Snow, Scott Wagoner, Michelle Pridgen, Terry Dunledy, and Amelia Bland Waller.

Mayor Sexton opened the public hearing to order this 14th day of November 2023. Mayor Sexton stated the public hearing was to take public comments on a bond issuance for a sewer upgrades.

Town Manager Laura Ratcliffe stated the bond is for working on the sewer lines on 21 North and manholes. The estimated cost is \$1 million dollars with a \$750,000 grant from VRA and \$250,000 bond payable at 0% interest.

With no public comments, Mayor Sexton closed the Public Hearing.



**TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE
REGULAR SCHEDULED COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY NOVEMBER 14, 2023
INDEPENDENCE, VIRGINIA
6:00 PM
INDEPENDENCE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT
329 DAVIS STREET, INDEPENDENCE, VA 24348**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Ronald Sexton, Vice Mayor Jim Meier, Jason Cassell, Buddy Halsey, Mark Miller, Joan Collins, and Kit Marshall.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

TOWN STAFF PRESENT: Laura Ratcliffe, Town Manager, Roger Brooks, Town Attorney, Matthew Adams, Police Chief, Kim Farmer, Town Clerk, and Mary Ann Halsey, Special Events Coordinator.

CITIZENS & GUESTS: Michelle Pridgen, Independence Farmer's Market, Steve Marshall, Scott Wagoner, Terry Dunledy, Amelia Bland Waller, Jennifer Snow, Anne Beamer, Tiffany Adams, and Cooper Adams.

- Public Hearings
 - Public Hearing for bond issuance for sewer project. (minutes attached)
- Call to Order
 - Welcome/Decorum-Mayor Sexton called the meeting to order this 14th day of November 2023, and declared a quorum present.
 - Approval of Agenda, Consent Agenda, Meeting Minutes-Mayor Sexton asked for approval as presented. **COUNCILMAN JASON CASSELL made a motion to approve the agenda, consent agenda and meeting minutes as presented. VICE MAYOR JIM MEIER seconded; motion carried with all ayes.**
- Reports, Presentations or Requests
 - Amelia Waller Bland commended council for their work. Ms. Waller Bland stated that she is part of the Community Works program. Ms. Waller Bland explained the purpose of the group is still evolving but they are focused on bridging the gap between different groups within the county and creating positive outreach programs. Ms. Waller Bland stated that if anyone is interested in helping out or being part of the program to contact her.
 - Cooper Adams, Making Grayson Glow, personally thanked council for following through with previous town councilman Jeff Millers outlook for Making Grayson Glow. Cooper stated that the committee has had many fund raisers and will be publishing a cookbook. The recipes are from Jeff's own collection. The committee is having a ceramic tree painting and a Christmas Bazar to be held on December 2nd. The committee has raised over \$5,000 this year to replace lights and light bulbs.
- Old Business
 - 2024 Town Beautification Plan:
 - Councilwoman Joan Collins stated that the beautification committee enclosed a copy of the proposed expenditure report in council packets. The committee wants to get larger cement pots instead of the barrels. They would start placing the new containers at Courthouse Square then

move throughout Town as much as they can. This project will be starting in the Spring. Councilwoman Kit Marshall has spoken with a nursery which stated it would be late March before plants would be ready. **COUNCILMAN JASON CASSELL made a motion to approve the proposed beautification expenditure of \$4,295 as presented. COUNCILMAN MARK MILLER seconded; motion carried with all ayes.**

- VRA Bond Issuance:
 - Town Manager Ratcliffe stated the public hearing was held prior to the council meeting and recommended approval of resolution for the bond issuance. Mayor Ronald Sexton asked for a motion. **COUNCILMAN BUDDDY HALSEY made a motion to approve the resolution for the bond issuance, COUNCILMAN JASON CASSELL seconded.** Mayor Ronald Sexton asked council for a roll call vote:
 - **Vice Mayor Jim, aye, Councilman Jason Cassell, aye, Councilman Buddy Halsey, aye, Councilman Mark Miller, aye, Councilwoman Joan Collins, aye, Councilwoman Kit Marshall, aye.**

- New Business

- New Resolution Supporting the New River Criminal Justice Training Academy in Dublin, Virginia as the Criminal Justice Training Academy for our law enforcement personnel.
 - **VICE MAYOR JIM MEIER made a motion to approve the resolution as presented. COUNCILMAN MARK MILLER seconded; motion carried with all ayes.**

- Town Code Adoption

- New Town Code books are available with minor changes at the Town Office. There will need to be a public hearing at December's meeting before approval of the new code. If accepted there will be a digital copy on the Town's website.
- Purchase Decisions for Committees
 - Mayor Sexton stated that the finance committee met this past Thursday. The committee discussed the timber for the stage at the Town Park. The timbers are currently stored at McAllister's building. Town Manager Ratcliffe was notified 2 hours ago that the Town has to have the lumber moved out by the end of next week. There are no plans for the material at this time to be used. Town Manager Ratcliffe discussed the option for the Town to sell the timber as a stage kit so the Town could recoup some money to go back into the Town Park. **COUNCILMAN JASON CASSELL made a motion to make the timbers for the stage as surplus. VICE MAYOR RONALD SEXTON asked for a roll call vote:**
 - **Vice Mayor Jim Meier, aye, Councilman Jason Cassell, aye, Councilman Buddy Halsey, nay, Councilman Mark Miller, aye, Councilwoman Joan Collins, aye, Councilwoman Kit Marshall, aye. Motion carried.**

- Town Staff Report

- Town Clerk/Treasurer (Kim Farmer)
 - Town Clerk, Kim Farmer, gave a report on the 2023 taxes, read an invitation to Town officials and staff inviting them to a soft open at the new Fries Dam Steak House on November 18th.
- Police Report (Chief Matthew Adams)
 - Chief Adams stated that the police department had a busy month. The new equipment for unlocking vehicles has already been used a few times. The police department will be using the handheld radar at the intersection of 58/21. The new police car is finally getting finished up so it can be put in service after purchasing in June. The old guns that were surpluses are sold. The new vest is to be delivered tomorrow. Chief Adams reported that the funds are down for the Toy/Coat drive this year.
- Utility Directors Report- (Terry Osborne)
 - Town Manager Ratcliffe reported for Utility Director Osborne. Town Manager Ratcliffe stated that the report was in packets. There was a water leak on 21 North. The roof at the WWTP has

been replaced. The unaccountability rate is higher this month. So far there has not been a leak identified. Utility Director Osborne thinks that the Town's state line meter might be going bad.

- Special Events Report- (Mary Ann Halsey)
 - The Christmas parade is on December 2nd. It will start at Food City. Santa asked that kids not sit on his lap due to him being elderly and COVID back on the rise. Safe Halloween was a good event. The Chamber gave out 300 hotdogs. Mary Ann thanked Councilman Jason Cassell for his help at the Privy race. Mary Ann stated there was a pretty good turn out for the event even though there were no pies entered for the pie contest. Councilman Cassell, Town Manager Ratcliffe, and Mary Ann had a debriefing after the event. They discussed the future of the event. After general discussion of council, a decision was made to hold a public hearing at January's meeting to discuss the possibility of doing away with this event due to low participation and higher cost and to put more into the 4th of July and Safe Halloween.
- Town Manager's Report
 - Programs, Projects, and Updates
 - Town Park bids came in over the budgeted amount of \$225,000. The lowest bid received was almost \$900,000. Fundraising for the project is not going well.
 - LGIP funds were transferred. On November 1st we moved \$770,000 into accounts that earn 5% interest rate at this time.
 - The Community Meeting held for feedback on what people would like to see happen in the Town went very well.
 - Billy Cornett is retiring on December 31st. He has been with the Town for 28 years. We will celebrate his retirement on December 14th. Lee Williams will be replacing him at the WWTP. Mr. Williams is a licensed operator.
 - Town Manager Ratcliffe got access to the County's communication system which is to be implemented by March 1st.
 - The council packets are online.
- Mayor's Report
 - Mayor Sexton stated that several council members toured at the WWTP. Mayor Sexton invited council members to tour the water towers, Town shop, wells, and bridge at Reeves property on Thursday.
 - Mayor Sexton appointed new committees effective January 1st.
 - Finance/General Administration: Chair Jim Meier, Buddy Halsey, Joan Collins, Kit Marshall, and Kim Farmer. Adhoc-Town Manager and Mayor
 - Personnel: Chair Jason Cassell, Mark Miller, and Ronald Sexton. Adhoc-Town Manager
 - Infrastructure: Chair Jason Cassell, Buddy Halsey, Jim Meier, and Terry Osborne. Adhoc Town Manager and Mayor.
 - Community Development: Chair Kit Marshall, Joan Collins, Mark Miller, Mary Ann Halsey, and Chief Adams. Adhoc Town Manager and Mayor.
 - Mayor Sexton stated that all of the council is encouraged to attend the budget process.
- Town Attorney's Report:
 - Town Attorney Roger Brooks nothing for open session.
- Committee Updates
 - Town Park Special Committee – Councilwoman Collins-Town Manager Ratcliffe discussed.
 - Personnel Committee – Councilman Cassell stated that he is very pleased with the Town's staff. Councilman Cassell commended public works for getting the shop organized.
 - Finance Committee – Vice Mayor Meier- stated they met Thursday and are getting ready for the upcoming budget.
 - Sewer Committee – Councilman Halsey-Nothing to report.
 - Water Committee - Councilman Halsey-Nothing to report.
 - Beautification Committee – Councilwoman Collins already reported.

- Traffic and Safety Committee-Councilwoman Collins and Town Manager Ratcliffe met with VDOT. The gentleman almost got hit while looking at the problem with people crossing 21/58 intersection. There are some options to help. The traffic light can be adjusted to help with timing. A crosswalk might be able to be put in. There will need to be a traffic study done. The Blue Light program was more involved than what was initially thought. The Town will not be a participant.
- Streets, Sidewalks, and Lights Committee – Councilman Miller nothing to report on.
- Broadband Special Committee – Councilman Halsey-stated he had contacted Mitch Smith at the Lingo which had maps of the project. There will be a meeting in January regarding the possibility of a grant opportunity.
- Community Matters – Registered Speakers and Public Comment-
 - Michelle Pridgen, Independence Farmer’s Market, stated that there was good feedback at the meeting regarding the 5-year plan for Independence. There are two Christmas markets left for the season. The - Friday before Thanksgiving and one on December 2nd.
- Closed Session
 - Personnel
 - Litigation
 - Contract Negotiation
 - Economic Development

COUNCILMAN JASON CASSELL made a motion for Council to go into closed session citing VAFOIA Section 2.2-3711, to discuss personnel and contract negotiation asking the Town Attorney Roger Brooks and Town Manager Laura Ratcliffe to stay. COUNCILMAN MARK MILLER seconded; motion carried with all ayes.

Councilman Jason Cassell made a motion for Council to go into open session citing VAFOIA Section 2.2-3712 that only matters in closed session were convened for and permitted under was discussed. Mayor Sexton asked for a roll call vote:

**Jim Meier-I So Certify
Buddy Halsey-I So Certify
Mark Miller -I So Certify**

**Jason Cassell-I So Certify
Joan Collins-I So Certify
Kit Marshall-I So Certify**

Councilman Jason made a motion to approve the Personnel Handbook and supporting policies (Handbook, Travel, Grievance, Credit Card, Uniform, Financial Approval) as presented by Town Manager Ratcliffe. Councilman Buddy Halsey seconded. All voted yes, no dissenting votes.

No other business, Mayor Sexton adjourned the meeting.

-Meeting Decorum-

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- Persons wishing to speak shall do so respectfully and in accordance with the applicable Rules of Procedures and/or at the specific direction of the presiding official; and,
- Out of respect for the official business being conducted, for those conducting the official business and for those present for same purpose, there shall be no private conversations taking place in the audience or other forms of distractive behavior or nuisance; and
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**2024 Independence Town Council Committees
And
Proposed Committee Responsibilities**

Finance/General Administration

Chair – Jim Meier

Members – Buddy Halsey
Joan Collins
Kit Marshall
Kim Farmer

Adhoc – Town Manager, Mayor

Committee Responsibility – Budget and financial oversight, Investments, Project financing, financial analysis, oversees all RFPs for any service provider not covered by another committee, makes recommendations for all town activities not covered by another committee, Town Code related to General Provisions, Administration of Government, Court, Elections, Taxation.

Personnel

Chair – Jason Cassell

Members Mark Miller
Ronald Sexton, Mayor

Adhoc – Town Manager

Committee Responsibility – Hiring/termination decisions for appointed positions, Recommendations for annual salary increase to Finance before budget cycle, Recommendations for personnel handbook changes, Performs Town Manager annual review, participates in grievance/dispute resolution/complaint process, Reviews annual benefit renewal, subject to budget, Responsible for employee safety compliance, oversees all RFPs for all employee-based service contracts

Infrastructure

Chair – Jason Cassell

Members Buddy Hasley
Jim Meier
Terry Osborne

Adhoc – Town Manager, Mayor

Committee Responsibility – Includes water, sewer, broadband, solid waste, streets, sidewalks, lights, town grounds, town buildings and equipment (machinery, computers, etc.), Responsible for infrastructure safety, Makes recommendation to Finance for annual water/sewer rates, Chair is member of VCWA board, prioritizes infrastructure projects, makes recommendations for infrastructure grants, performs rfp's for various infrastructure service providers, Town Code related to Sewer, Solid Waste, Streets/Sidewalks, Wastewater Treatment, Water, Nuclear Waste, Fiber Optics Franchise

Community Development

Chair – Kit Marshall

Members Joan Collins
 Mark Miller
 MaryAnn Halsey
 Chief Adams

Adhoc – Town Manager, Mayor

Committee Responsibility – Strategic Plan, business district revitalization, businessowners association, special events, programs benefiting residents such as housing/food grants, EDA, Zoning, beautification, Town Code related to Fire Department, Police, EDA/IDA, Planning Commission, Alcoholic Beverages & Drugs, Amusements, Animals, Building Construction, Buildings (Numbering of), Curfew, Fire Prevention, Nuisances, Peace & Good Order, Subdivision of Land, Trees, Vehicles & Traffic, Vehicles, Recreational, Zoning.

Laura Ratcliffe

From: Logan Sawyers <logan@sawyersroofings.com>
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 4:17 PM
To: Laura Ratcliffe
Subject: Estimates and status for roofs

Good evening, please see attached.

Police station- replacement cost \$33,000.

Removing replace existing roof roll, EPDM, up the sides of the wall, terminate and cap. Current issue is that it doesn't extend up and over the wall.

Well house "A"- removing replace existing roof (doubled layered). Fix small fascia issues, reroof, architectural shingles.
\$1800

Well house "B"- currently sitting behind Proclad. Remove existing roof, re-deck in rotten areas. Redo, fascia. Reroof and flash around well opening.
\$3200

Mechanical building- (Terry's)

REPAIR- Removing and replace all existing screws. This will stop the leak. 6 inch gutters on front and back of building. 6 inch downspouts. Snow guards, new and spaced out every 9 inches, 160 snow guards repair small building on site, new roof is not necessary fix missing shingles. Total: 17,200

Total of projects on current material costs: \$55,200

Thank you for the opportunity quote. If you need anything else, let me know

SAV

—RC

336-345-00

516 W. Main

Pilot Mts. N

Budget vs Actual (Summary)

Period Ending 11/30/2023

10 GENERAL	Description	Budget	MTD	QTD	YTD	Variance	Percent
	Revenues						
		1,624,266	81,253.10	150,093.46	420,684.68	(1,203,581.32)	26%
	Revenues Totals:	1,624,266	81,253.10	150,093.46	420,684.68	(1,203,581.32)	26%
	Expenses						
	GENERAL ADMINISTRATION	389,225	31,668.75	59,675.00	204,129.20	185,095.80	52%
	POLICE	444,387	42,153.26	67,789.91	247,721.25	196,665.75	56%
	PUBLIC WORKS	481,429	56,493.28	107,696.80	231,398.98	250,030.02	48%
	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	309,225	7,051.73	16,749.13	73,604.03	235,620.97	24%
	Expenses Totals:	1,624,266	137,367.02	251,910.84	756,853.46	867,412.54	47%
10 GENERAL	Revenues Over/(Under) Expenses:		(56,113.92)	(101,817.38)	(336,168.78)		

Budget vs Actual (Summary)

Period Ending 11/30/2023

30 WATER	Description	Budget	MTD	QTD	YTD	Variance	Percent
	Revenues						
		747,525	60,978.44	110,826.95	263,981.04	(483,543.96)	35%
	Revenues Totals:	747,525	60,978.44	110,826.95	263,981.04	(483,543.96)	35%
	Expenses						
	WATER/SEWER	747,525	294,670.48	345,577.23	676,195.42	71,329.58	90%
	Expenses Totals:	747,525	294,670.48	345,577.23	676,195.42	71,329.58	90%
	30 WATER Revenues Over/(Under) Expenses:		(233,692.04)	(234,750.28)	(412,214.38)		

Budget vs Actual (Summary)

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Period Ending 11/30/2023

40 SEWER	Description	Budget	MTD	QTD	YTD	Variance	Percent
	Revenues						
		932,451	61,986.92	124,985.19	302,413.33	(630,037.67)	32%
	Revenues Totals:	932,451	61,986.92	124,985.19	302,413.33	(630,037.67)	32%
	Expenses						
	WATER/SEWER	932,451	58,672.02	108,686.44	304,520.49	627,930.51	33%
	Expenses Totals:	932,451	58,672.02	108,686.44	304,520.49	627,930.51	33%
	40 SEWER Revenues Over/(Under) Expenses:		3,314.90	16,298.75	(2,107.16)		

**INDEPENDENCE POLICE DEPARTMENT
MONTHLY PATROL SHIFT STAT SHEET**

DATE: November 1 2023_ TO: November 30 2023__

ARREST	TOTAL	INVESTIGATION	TOTAL	ROUTINE	TOTAL	SPECIAL DUTY	TOTAL
DOMESTIC		MISDEMEANOR	7	B & E FOUND		WORK OTHER	
DRUNK IN PUBLIC		FELONY	1	OPEN BUILDING FOUND		PRISONER TRANS.	
DRUG		TRAFFIC ACCIDENT	5	FUNERALS	6	COURT ON DUTY	4
GAME		FOLLOW UP	19	PRISONER		COURT OFF DUTY	
LARCENY	1	CLOSED	2	DMV NOTICE		INSTRUCTION	
B & E		PROPERTY RECOVERED		OPEN BUSINESS CHECK	224	TRAINING	1
SHOP LIFTING		INFO ONLY	22	CLOSED BUSINESS CHECK	206	ECO/TDO TRANSPORT	
DEST/VAND		REC STOLEN VEHICLE		CHURCH CHECK	34	SPECIAL EVENTS	1
WEAPONS CHARGE		JUV INVESTIGATED	2	PAPER SERVICE		COUNCIL MEETING	1
OTHER ARREST		INVESTIGATION @ SCHOOL	1	HOUSE CHECK	7	COMMUNITY SERVICE	
ASSAULT				DIRECTIVE PATROL	190	SAFETY TALKS	
POSS ALCOHOL				ASSIST OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT	10	STREET LIGHTS	4
DUI				B / A TEST		ROAD SIGNS	1
DUID				OPEN BANK CHECK	32	TOWN CODE	1
REFUSAL				MOTORIST ASSIST	4	ASSIST PUBLIC WORKS	8
RECKLESS DRIVING				WARRANT SERVICE	3	ASSIST IVRS/IVFD	8
DRIVE SUSPENDED		SHIFTS		CALLS FOR SERVICE	90	SCHOOL TRAFFIC	28
ELUDING POLICE				SUBSTANCE SEIZURE			
ASSAULT ON POLICE		Adams	14	ECO/LE ECO		Called Out	1
JUVENILE ARREST		Mullins	12	TDO			
OTHER ARREST	2	Holderfield	16	EPO			
TRAFFIC SUMMONS	7	Shaffner	2	VEHICLE/SEARCH			
MILES DRIVEN	3214	Watson	2	TRANSPORT ORDER	2		
		Miller	1	CHILD SEAT INSTALLED			
				PBT/FIELD SOB TEST COND			
				TRAILER INSPECTION			
				Unlock vehicle	4		

**Monthly Utility Manager Report
Council Reporting
November 08, 2023 December 7, 2023**

1. Number of monthly work orders filled:

a. 101

2. Number of cutoff's:

a. 12

3. Number of waterline leaks/repairs:

a. 0

4. Number of sewer line repairs:

a. 3

5. Special projects started this month:

- a. Work on new communication Pioneer lane
- b. Put up Christmas Decorations
- c. Work on parts room at the shop
- d. Work On shop ground
- e. New Sewer Service

6. Special projects completed this month:

- a. Communications Pioneer Lane
- b. Take down Halloween
- c. New Sewer Service

7. Vehicle, Tool & Equipment problems / inventory:

- a. Big Compressor new Battery
- b. Service Jetter

- c. Service Shop Garage Doors
- d. Bucket Truck in the shop

8. Well house and WWTP problems, repairs, special projects:

- a. Digesters operational now
- b. Roofs WWTP
- c. Well House Roof Done
- d. Insulate Pipe at Black Rock Tank

9. New service connection and/or reconnects (water/sewer):

- a. 0 new service, 9 reconnects

10. Re-reads:

- a. 14 re-reads

11. Meter replacement (Bad or suspected):

- a. Reprogram Meter

12. Water or Sewer Problems for Customers:

- a. 20 (ASSISTED RESIDENTS WITH DIFFERENT PROBLEMS)

13. Waste water effluent flow for the month:

- a. 8,794,000 gallons

14. Water System gallons billed for the month:

- a. 4,339,442 gallons

15. Water system gallons pumped for the month;

- a. 659,776 gallons – Wells
- b. 6,169,000 gallons – VA/NC Plant
- c. 16,979,000 gallons – Total VA WTP

16. Gallons not accounted for:

- a. 2,489,334 gallons

17. Unaccountability percentage:

- a. 36 %
- b. last month 34 %

18. Transaction Corrections:

- a. 2

19. Work Planned For Next Month:

- a. Meter installation
- b. Clean Brick At Town Park
- c. Exercise Valves
- d. Find and paint valves
- e. Flow Hydrants and Exercise
- f. Work at the shop



Town of Independence, VA

To: Mayor Sexton and Town Council

From: Laura Ratcliffe, Town Manager

Date: December 5, 2023

RE: Manager's Report

Following is a summary of the status of various projects and other activities since the last update in November 2023:

1) Personnel

- a. **Handbook** – All employees have the new handbook. Meetings are scheduled on December 6th and 8th to review the content and answer questions.
- b. **Employee Safety** – Safety equipment approved at the November Town Council meeting has been ordered. Additionally, updated safety rules are drafted, along with a quarterly safety inspection checklist. These will be implemented in January.
- c. **Annual Evaluation Forms** – The form is completed and will be reviewed with employees during the upcoming employee meetings ahead of the planned annual review process in late January/early February
- d. **Personnel Action Items** – There are no open action items related to personnel management at this time. Since March, I have updated job descriptions, performed a salary market analysis and made adjustments, updated the personnel handbook and updated the annual evaluation forms.

2) Finance/General Administration

- a. **Grants** – no new grants were applied for or received during November.
- b. **LGIP** –A second transfer will occur in December.
- c. **FOIA** – The Town has received three requests in the last thirty days. All were completed within the required 5 days.
- d. **Real & Personal Property Tax Billing Dates** – Tax bills were mailed December 5th and will be due January 5th. This is communicated on our Town website, through Facebook and on the December utility bills.
- e. **Utility Billing Surveys** – We are still collecting survey information. We will end the survey on December 31st and create an implementation plan based on survey results.

3) Infrastructure

- a. **Penn Court** – Closeout is still pending.
- b. **Sewer I & I** – Project will bid in January after the bond closing. Bond closing is expected to occur by mid-January 2024.
- c. **Lead & Copper Assessment** – No updates since the last report. We are awaiting a project manager to be assigned to our project by the State.
- d. **Roof Projects** – The planned sewer plant roof replacement is completed. Additionally, we've replaced the Cassell Well Roof which was collapsing. This was an unbudgeted capital expense. I requested assessments for the remaining roofs (Police Department, Public Works, Reeves Well House, Hasley Well House). All are in need of various repairs for a total cost of \$55,000. I've included the quote and details with this report and have placed this on the agenda for a new business discussion.
- e. **AEP Peach Bottom Line Project** – AEP contacted me regarding the status of this project and their application for height variance. They are in the process of finalizing engineering and easement acquisition for the new 69kV transmission lines into the new Point Lookout Substation which will be located off Commerce Street. The project funding has been reallocated this year which means the project will not start until 2025 unless new funding is identified by AEP.

4) Community Development

- a. **Town Park** –As directed at the November Finance Committee meeting, I requested a variance from VDOT for the entrance at the Town Park. This has been approved with the condition that the site is not used for public parking and will stay gated. The only vehicular traffic allowed will be Farmer's Market vendors, Special Event Vendors and Town employees for maintenance. As discussed at the same meeting, now that we have the VDOT approval, I have spoken with our engineer at Hurt & Proffit to determine a grading plan for the site. After discussing the options, my recommendation is to have a grading plan with limited drainage utilizing the current sediment trap and driveway developed by Hurt and Proffit. This will involve limited site survey work as none of our designed plans use the current driveway. I should have a statement of work and associated cost estimate for the design work within two weeks. Council will need to decide if they wish to try to gain approval from Rural Development for this final site work which will mean a complete re-bid of the project or release the Rural Development grant and finish funding the project from Town resources. This decision does not need to be made at this time.
- b. **Holiday Decorations** – The Town employees have been very involved in getting us into the holiday spirit through decorations. I want to thank everyone, especially the Public Works and Town Office employees - Wesley Weaver, Jayson Harmon, Kyler Lewis, Kim Farmer, Trenda Kinzer, Kim Phipps, and Jacqueline Smith – and Councilwoman Marshall, for their hard work to make this happen the week after Thanksgiving.
- c. **Economic Development Authority** – The EDA did not meet in November. Chairman Marshall is meeting with the VTC regarding the Tourism Zone on December 13th. The EDA will meet on December 18th to finalize a new grant program.
- d. **Mass Communication** – To date, 55 accounts have provided information. I am working with the county to create our account with a goal to implement in March 2024.

access/training yet but will be working on this over the next three months. As a reminder, this system will be used to notify residents and businesses of significant issues such as water and sewer interruptions.

- e. **VA250 Committee** – The State of Virginia has created the Virginia 250 Commission which has been formed to oversee and develop activities to celebrate our nation's 250th anniversary. The plan is for events that will go through 2031 or 2032. I have been asked by Grayson County Tourism to participate on a committee focused to events in Grayson County. The group has not met yet but more to come.
- f. **Hugh Chatham Health Family Health, Independence Office Status** – I've spoken with the Hugh Chatham Director of Primary Care Practice Operations regarding the future of this location. The location will permanently cease operations on December 29th, 2023. The phone lines will remain open for 90 days so patients may obtain their medical records. Alleghany Health owns the building and she was not aware of their future plans. I am contacting that organization to understand if they plan to open a practice in Independence or if they plan to sell the location.

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

- 1. EDA Meeting – December 18th @ 6pm
- 2. Town Council Meeting – January 9th @ 6pm
- 3. Businessowners Meeting – January 11th @4pm
- 4. VCWA Board Meeting – January 11th @10 am

Upcoming Town Closures:

- 1. Friday, December 22nd (at Noon), Monday & Tuesday, December 25th & 26th - Christmas
- 2. Monday & Tuesday, January 1st & 2nd – New Year's
- 3. Monday, January 15th – Martin Luther King Day

