



AGENDA
TOWN COUNCIL/PLANNING COMMISSION
TUESDAY MARCH 12, 2024
INDEPENDENCE, VIRGINIA
6:00 PM
INDEPENDENCE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT
329 DAVIS STREET, INDEPENDENCE, VA 24346

- Call to Order
 - Welcome/Decorum
 - Approval of Agenda, Consent Agenda, Meeting Minutes
- Reports, Presentations or Requests
 - Wythe Grayson Library – Mary Thomas, Regional Director
 - Family Resource Center – Robbie Patton & Mary Meier
- Old Business
 - Motion to Approve 2023 Audit as presented at February 2024 Council Meeting
 - Prior years Utility Uncollectible Payments and Penalties Write Off – Recommendation from Infrastructure Committee: Motion to approve writing off all uncollectible amounts incurred by the Town from January 2015 to December 2022 for customers in balance or inactive status. See Town Manager Report for Details – Councilman Jason Cassell
- New Business
 - Surplus Public Works Equipment – Public Works Director Osborne
 - Motion to Declare Boring Machine as surplus equipment and authorize sale of equipment
 - 2024 4th of July Fireworks location Recommendation – Councilwoman Marshall
 - Motion to approve location for 2024 4th of July Fireworks
 - Main Street America membership – Councilwoman Marshall
 - Motion to approve resolution supporting Town’s involvement in the Main Street program.
 - HOPE Grant – Councilwoman Marshall
 - Motion to approve applying for grant
 - Food Truck Rally – Town Manager Ratcliffe
 - Motion to approve exploring hosting Food Truck Rally in Town on a weekly basis.
 - Making Grayson Glow Light Storage – Town Manager Ratcliffe
 - Motion to approve covering future storage costs
 - Infrastructure Code change Recommendations Councilman Cassell
 - Water Code
 - Community Development Code Change Recommendations – Councilwoman Marshall

- Nuisance
 - House Numbers
- Town Staff Report
 - Town Clerk/Treasurer
 - Police Report
 - Utility Directors Report
 - Special Events Report
- Town Manager's Report
 - Town Park Update
 - Lead & Copper
 - Zoning Request
 - Upcoming Events in Town
- Mayor's Report
- Town Attorney's Report
- Committee Updates
 - Personnel Committee – Councilman Cassell
 - Finance Committee – Councilman Meier
 - Infrastructure – Councilman Cassell
 - Community Development Committee - Councilwoman Marshall
- Informational Items
- Community Matters – Registered Speakers and Public Comment
- Closed Session
 - Personnel
 - Litigation
 - Contract Negotiation
 - Town Park
 - Economic Development
- 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
REGULAR SCHEDULED COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY FEBRUARY 13, 2024
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: Roger Brooks, Town Attorney, Matthew Adams, Police Chief, Kim Farmer, Town Clerk, Terry Osborne, Public Works Director, and Mary Ann Halsey, Special Events Coordinator.

CITIZENS & GUESTS: Shaina Stockton, The Declaration, Michelle Pridgen, Jennifer Snow, Gwynn Cornett, Larissa Baker, Lori Ward, Sudandra Ratnasamy, Steve Marshall, Crystal Cureton, and Scott Wickham.

- Public Hearings
 - None
- Call to Order
 - Welcome/Decorum-Mayor Sexton called the meeting to order this 13th day of February 2024, and declared a quorum present.
 - Approval of Agenda, Consent Agenda, Meeting Minutes-Mayor Sexton asked for approval as presented. **VICE MAYOR JIM MEIER made a motion to approve the agenda, consent agenda, and minutes as presented. COUNCILWOMAN KIT MARSHALL seconded; motion carried with all ayes.**
- Reports, Presentations or Requests
 - Sudandra Ratnasamy, Twin County Regional Hospital, thanked the Mayor and Town Council for allowing her to speak on behalf of the hospital. Ms. Ratnasamy stated that Twin County Regional Hospital Celebrated 50 years last year. The Hospital expanded services to include GI, heart, and orthopedic.
 - Lori Ward, Twin County Regional Hospital, gave council an update regarding the clinic located at 217 South Independence Avenue. Ms. Ward stated that Julie Sprinkle, NP, retired December 23rd. Jamie Warren, NP, will be working three days a week during March and be full time beginning in April.
 - Scott Wickham, Robinson Farmer Cox Associates, presented the audit for 2023. Mr. Wickham stated that his firm gave the Town a clean opinion for the audit. The Town was required to have a single audit due to ARPA funding received.
 - Mayor Ronald Sexton spoke on behalf of the Independence Volunteer Rescue Squad stating that in 2023 they ran 1,142 calls which was down from previous years. Mayor Sexton thanked council for their continued support for the IVRS.

- Steve Marshall, Town of Independence, EDA chairman, stated that at January's EDA meeting the board approved a new competitive grant opportunity for Town of Independence businesses. The forms are available at the Town office.
- Old Business
 - Town Events Special Committee Update & Recommendation: (Joan Collins)
 - Councilwoman Joan Collins stated that the only volunteers that had spoken up were Jennifer Snow and Crystal Cureton. Grayson County Parks & Recreation is willing to help be a part of Town events. Crystal Cureton asked if volunteers were needed just for the Mountain Fall Foliage or all of the Town's events? After general discussion council wanted to wait until Town Manager Laura Ratcliffe was available to discuss further.
 - Virginia Outdoor Foundation Grant: (Kit Marshall)
 - **COUNCILWOMAN KIT MARSHALL made a motion to authorize Town Manager, Laura Ratcliffe to execute the required documents for the grant. COUNCILWOMAN JOAN COLLINS seconded. MAYOR SEXTON asked for a roll call vote. KIT MARSHALL, AYE, JOAN COLLINS, AYE, MARK MILLER, AYE, JIM MEIER, NO, JASON CASSELL, AYE, BUDDY HALSEY, NO. Motion passed with the majority.**
 - VRA Bond/Rural Development Parity Agreement: (Jim Meier)
 - **VICE MAYOR JIM MEIER made a motion to approve parity for Sewer I & I project funding and to authorize Mayor Ronald Sexton, Vice Mayor Jim Meier, or Town Manager Laura Ratcliffe to execute agreement. COUNCILMAN JASON CASSELL seconded; motion carried with all ayes.**
- New Business
 - 2024 Rural Development Grant for New Police Vehicle: (Police Chief Matthew Adams)
 - Council needs to approve a resolution for RD to accept the grant. **COUNCILMAN JASON CASSELL made a motion to approve the resolution to accept grant funding from Rural Development and to authorize Town Manager, Laura Ratcliffe, to execute all necessary documents for the funding. COUNCILWOMAN JOAN COLLINS seconded; motion carried with all ayes.**
 - Town Council Meeting Remote Attendance: (Mayor Ronald Sexton)
 - Mayor Sexton asked council's opinion regarding remote attendance. Mayor Sexton stated that rules and regulations would be in place. After general discussion council asked Town Attorney Roger Brooks to draft a policy.
 - Code of Ethics: (Mayor Ronald Sexton)
 - Mayor Sexton stated he would like to have a code of ethics in place for the Independence Town Council and the appointed boards for the Town. The council agreed.
 - Prior years Utility Uncollectible Payments and Penalties Write Off: (Jason Cassell)
 - Councilman Jason Cassell stated that the recommendation from the Infrastructure Committee was to write off all uncollectible amounts incurred from 2014 and before for customers in a balance or inactive status. **COUNCILMAN BUDDY HALSEY made a motion approve the recommendation as presented. COUNCILMAN JASON CASSELL seconded; motion carried with all ayes.**
 - Lead Service Line Survey Questionnaire to Customers: (Jason Cassell)
 - Councilman Jason Cassell stated that the Infrastructure Committee recommended giving Town customers an incentive of a \$25 credit to their account to complete the survey. **COUNCILWOMAN KIT MARSHALL made a motion to give a \$25 credit to customers completing the lead survey. COUNCILMAN JASON CASSELL seconded; motion carried with all ayes.**

Town Staff Report

- Town Manager: (Laura Ratcliffe absent)
- Town Clerk/Treasurer: (Kim Farmer)

- Town Clerk, Kim Farmer, stated that Catherine Alderman from Skyline National Bank which handles the Town's credit card machines came and did a presentation showing what all is available to the Town for payments, etc. The Town is in the process of gathering information from customers to see what their preferences are regarding billing on-line, email, text, direct deposit, etc.
 - Police Report (Chief Matthew Adams)
 - Chief Adams stated that his report was included in the financial graphics this month. Chief Adams stated he was speaking at Crossroads Institute on August 24th. Police Office Joe Holderfield was attending an breathalyzers class in Richmond on March 8th to get certified. The department had 3 court ordered transports. The roof at the Police Department/Public Works Building had a major water leak.
 - Project Manager/Utility Directors Report- (Terry Osborne)
 - Project Manager Terry Osborne stated that there were 2 water leaks. Public works found a water leak while looking for a valve. With the colder weather 5 meters were frozen and busted. Wells were used to supplement water leaks from the Town of Sparta.
 - Special Events Report- (Mary Ann Halsey):
 - Mary Ann did not have anything to report on.
- Town Manager's Report- (Laura Ratcliffe):
 - Programs, Projects, and Updates
 - Town Manager Laura Ratcliffe had her written report in the council packets.
- Mayor's Report
 - Mayor Sexton stated he would have orientation done by October and asked council if anyone had something to add to let him know. Mayor Sexton stated that he will be going to the different offices asking for input regarding needs/wants/concerns and asked council to participate with him.
- Town Attorney's Report:
 - Town Attorney Roger Brooks did not have anything to report on in open session.
- Committee Updates
 - Personnel Committee – Councilman Cassell thanked Town Clerk Kim Farmer for bookkeeping and Finance Chairman Vice Mayor Jim Meier for the budget process this past year.
 - Finance Committee – Vice Mayor Meier stated he would get with Town Manager Laura Ratcliffe to schedule a budget meeting for the middle of March.
 - Infrastructure- Councilman Cassell stated the last meeting had to be postponed the next meeting will be next Tuesday, February 20th, 6:00pm, at 136 East Main Street.
 - Community Development-Councilwoman Marshall stated that the committee is looking for grant opportunities for businesses and the Town. Restrictions come with every grant available. Councilwoman Kit Marshall and Town Manager Laura Ratcliffe met with Brian Reid with MRPDC regarding a housing grant option for Hilltop. Barrells to be moved in Town have an x marked on them. The new containers will be arriving this Spring. February 20th, 2:00pm, IVFD, is the next meeting to discuss the budget for 2024-2025.
- Community Matters – Registered Speakers and Public Comment-
 - Michelle Pridgen, Independence Farmer's Market, spoke with Laura regarding the structure at Town Park. The hope is to have the structure usable by opening day of the Farmer's Market or soon after. There will be an issue with crossing 58/21 without having parking on the lot. Councilman Buddy Halsey made a suggestion to see if using the Grayson County's sign would be an option.
- 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 Steve Marshall to stay. VICE MAYOR JIM MEIER 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**

- 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.



**RESOLUTION FOR APPLICATION TO THE EXPLORING MAIN STREET
PROGRAM FOR THE
TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE, VIRGINIA**

WHEREAS, The Town of Independence has identified Downtown Revitalization and Economic Development as a priority in its ongoing redevelopment plans; and

WHEREAS, the Exploring Main Street Program is open to all communities, including incorporated and unincorporated municipalities and urban neighborhood commercial districts, who are exploring the Main Street Approach for downtown commercial and neighborhood revitalization; and

WHEREAS, The Town of Independence is interested in exploring further the Main Street Approach for its Downtown Revitalization efforts,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOVLVED, that the Town of Independence Town Council is fully supportive of the application to the Exploring Main Street Program and authorizes the Independence Town Manager to submit the application and other documents as required to secure membership for the Town.

Adopted the 12th day of March, 2024

By: _____
Ronald Sexton, Mayor

Attest

By: _____
Kim Farmer, Clerk



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Partners for Better Communities



Exploring Main Street Program Application

The Exploring Main Street option is for communities that are exploring downtown revitalization, that are preparing for designation or that may not be eligible for Advancing Virginia Main Street designation. It provides access to all Virginia Main Street training and limited on-site assistance, as resources permit. The applicant may be the local government, or a partnership of local government and a private sector organization. Please see the [Virginia Main Street Program Guidelines](#) for more information.

Submission Instructions

Applications for Exploring Main Street status may be submitted at any time, and should be submitted on the forms provided by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). All questions must be answered in the space provided.

Applications should be typed and transmitted in electronic format (i.e. pdf, doc)

Attachments, such as maps, should fit within the 8 1/2" x 11" application.

If you have questions, please contact:

Virginia Main Street Program
Virginia Department of Housing & Community Development
600 East Main Street, Suite 300
Richmond, VA 23219
mainstreet@dhcd.virginia.gov
(804) 371-7171

Applications Should Be submitted via email to*:

mainstreet@dhcd.virginia.gov

*In the subject line of the transmittal email, please include your community name and affiliate application.

Applicant Information

Community:

Population:

Private Sector Organization (if applicable):

Designated Contact Person:

(include Name, Title/Affiliation, Address, Phone, Fax and E-mail)

Date:

Commitment Statement

_____ agrees to meet the requirements of an Exploring Main Street community as outlined in the **VMS Program Guidelines** and will be eligible to receive Exploring Main Street services from DHCD as long as the requirements are met. *(Attach a resolution adopted by the local government – and by the private sector partner organization, if applicable – authorizing this application)*

Signature of Authorizing Agent from Local Government (please print name and title)

Signature of Authorizing Agent from Private Sector Organization, if applicable (please print name and title)

Community Information

1. **Briefly describe the economic and physical characteristics of your downtown or commercial district** (attach an 8½" X 11" map with building footprints showing district boundaries; include an aerial photo, if available).
2. **Briefly describe the structure of your organization** (attach list(s) of Board or committee members)
3. **Briefly outline the efforts made to improve the downtown or commercial district over the past five years.**
4. **Briefly describe what you hope to achieve by participating in Exploring Main Street.**

**Infrastructure Committee
Town of Independence
February 20, 2024
Draft Minutes**

Committee Members in Attendance: Jason Cassell, Chairman, Jim Meier, Buddy Halsey, Terry Osborne

Adhoc Attendees: Ronald Sexton, Laura Ratcliffe

Chairman Cassell convened the meeting at 6pm. It was determined all members were present. The agenda focused on reviewing various sections of Town Code for updates. The group decided to begin with Chapter 51. Water.

The group reviewed sections 51.01 through 51.14 F. Following are the recommendations for change to the code. Additions are in **BOLD**/Deletions are in *(Italics)*. In some situations, the committee requests Attorney Brooks to recommend language as indicated below.

51.01 Connection Required.

All residents **and businesses** of the town shall be required to be connected to a public water system approved and licensed by the State Department of Health, **unless the owner meets the requirements listed in 51.03.**

51.02 Application for Connection; Construction of Service Pipe

No Changes recommended

51.03 Use of Private Water Systems

*Committee requested information on customers on Morton Drive and Oak Ridge that are not on town water and the agreement that was in place when those areas were annexed. They asked for Attorney Brooks to provide feedback on updated language as they would like to require when the house transfers ownership, the new owners would be required to hook to and use Town water as their primary water source.

Further research has shown there is 1 house on Morton Drive that has not connected and 3 homes on Oak Ridge that have not connected. Additionally, there is one home on Oak Ridge that has water but only uses for yard hydrant. I have been unable to locate a written agreement with the homeowners regarding the exception.

51.04 Size of Connections

No Changes recommended

51.05 Wrongful Connection

No Changes recommended

51.06 Right of Inspection

Every person occupying any property into which water is conveyed under this chapter shall permit any authorized agent of the town to enter such property, at reasonable hours, to inspect works therein or to see if provisions of this subchapter have been violated. **It is the obligation of the property owner to provide free and clear access to the meter.**

51.07 Unauthorized Persons Turning on and Off Water

No Changes Recommended

51.08 Tampering with Waterworks

No Changes Recommended

51.09 Steam Boilers

No Changes Recommended

51.10 Disconnection for Late Payment

A) 2 – That if any bill is not paid by or before that date, a second bill will be mailed containing a cutoff notice that if the bill is not paid within ten days of the ~~mailing-billing~~....

51.11 Damages to Property Due to Water Pressure

No Changes recommended

51.12 Water Rates

Language changed and approved at the January 2024 Town Council Meeting

51.13 Maintenance of **Private** Pipe Lines; Inspection and Approval

*Committee requests Attorney Brooks to recommend simplified language for this section. Their goal is to require third party developers to turn over lines to the town for ownership and maintenance.

51.14 Guidelines for Service

Unless otherwise specified, it shall be assumed these guidelines apply to three quarter inch or smaller connections. Any connections over three quarter inch will require ~~negotiations with~~ **approval by** the Council

Sections A, C, D, E – no recommended changes

B) If a property changes ownership at a time when there is a delinquent account against the original owner, the proper legal procedures are to be taken to collect the amount due.

*Need guidance from Attorney Brooks on what are the proper legal procedures. The committee recommends language in the code that a lien should be placed on all properties associated with an account with amounts due more than 90 days.

F) If the service is available to a unit serviced by the town system, the customer will be required to pay the monthly **minimum** fee. The only exceptions to this rule are:

In the case of illness lasting 30 days or more in which case the customer would be in a hospital, rest home, nursing home or other such facility and the unit to which the service is provided would be unoccupied for the entire period. In such case, the meter bill will still be read at the regular time and the customer will be billed if the meter shows any usage.

In case of customer death or property vacancy, if the property owner or estate does not want services at the unit, they may request the services be disconnected and the meter removed. In such cases, the property owner/estate will be required to pay a fee set by Council from time to time to help offset the overhead costs of maintaining the Town's water system.

Note: Committee recommendation is for this fee to be \$15 per month.

The committee also asked that Attorney Brooks draft proposed language for large bulk water purchases.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Cassell at 7:30pm

Respectfully submitted

Laura Ratcliffe, Town Manager

**Infrastructure Committee
Town of Independence
February 20, 2024
Draft Minutes**

Committee Members in Attendance: Jason Cassell, Chairman, Jim Meier, Buddy Halsey, Terry Osborne

Adhoc Attendees: Ronald Sexton, Laura Ratcliffe

Chairman Cassell convened the meeting at 6pm. It was determined all members were present. The agenda focused on reviewing various sections of Town Code for updates. The group decided to begin with Chapter 51. Water.

The group reviewed sections 51.01 through 51.14 F. Following are the recommendations for change to the code. Additions are in BOLD/Deletions are in (*italics*). In some situations, the committee requests Attorney Brooks to recommend language as indicated below.

51.01 Connection Required.

All residents **and businesses** of the town shall be required to be connected to a public water system approved and licensed by the State Department of Health, **unless the owner meets the requirements listed in 51.03.**

51.02 Application for Connection; Construction of Service Pipe

No Changes recommended

51.03 Use of Private Water Systems

*Committee requested information on customers on Morton Drive and Oak Ridge that are not on town water and the agreement that was in place when those areas were annexed. They asked for Attorney Brooks to provide feedback on updated language as they would like to require when the house transfers ownership, the new owners would be required to hook to and use Town water as their primary water source.

Further research has shown there is 1 house on Morton Drive that has not connected and 3 homes on Oak Ridge that have not connected. Additionally, there is one home on Oak Ridge that has water but only uses for yard hydrant. I have been unable to locate a written agreement with the homeowners regarding the exception.

51.04 Size of Connections

No Changes recommended

51.05 Wrongful Connection

No Changes recommended

51.06 Right of Inspection

Every person occupying any property into which water is conveyed under this chapter shall permit any authorized agent of the town to enter such property, at reasonable hours, to inspect works therein or to see if provisions of this subchapter have been violated. **It is the obligation of the property owner to provide free and clear access to the meter.**

51.07 Unauthorized Persons Turning on and Off Water

No Changes Recommended

51.08 Tampering with Waterworks

No Changes Recommended

51.09 Steam Boilers

No Changes Recommended

51.10 Disconnection for Late Payment

A) 2 – That if any bill is not paid by or before that date, a second bill will be mailed containing a cutoff notice that if the bill is not paid within ten days of the ~~mailing~~ **billing**....

51.11 Damages to Property Due to Water Pressure

No Changes recommended

51.12 Water Rates

Language changed and approved at the January 2024 Town Council Meeting

51.13 Maintenance of **Private** Pipe Lines; Inspection and Approval

*Committee requests Attorney Brooks to recommend simplified language for this section. Their goal is to require third party developers to turn over lines to the town for ownership and maintenance.

51.14 Guidelines for Service

Unless otherwise specified, it shall be assumed these guidelines apply to three quarter inch or smaller connections. Any connections over three quarter inch will require ~~negotiations with~~ **approval by** the Council

Sections A, C, D, E – no recommended changes

B) If a property changes ownership at a time when there is a delinquent account against the original owner, the proper legal procedures are to be taken to collect the amount due.

*Need guidance from Attorney Brooks on what are the proper legal procedures. The committee recommends language in the code that a lien should be placed on all properties associated with an account with amounts due more than 90 days.

F) If the service is available to a unit serviced by the town system, the customer will be required to pay the monthly **minimum** fee. The only exceptions to this rule are:

In the case of illness lasting 30 days or more in which case the customer would be in a hospital, rest home, nursing home or other such facility and the unit to which the service is provided would be unoccupied for the entire period. In such case, the meter bill will still be read at the regular time and the customer will be billed if the meter shows any usage.

In case of customer death or property vacancy, if the property owner or estate does not want services at the unit, they may request the services be disconnected and the meter removed. In such cases, the property owner/estate will be required to pay a fee set by Council from time to time to help offset the overhead costs of maintaining the Town's water system.

Note: Committee recommendation is for this fee to be \$15 per month.

The committee also asked that Attorney Brooks draft proposed language for large bulk water purchases.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Cassell at 7:30pm

Respectfully submitted

Laura Ratcliffe, Town Manager

Town Code Change Recommendations
Community Development Committee
March 4th, 2024

1. Section 91.03 Nuisance Enumerated
 - a. No Changes
 - i. No changes
 - ii. Remove “annoying”
 - iii. Remove “annoying” add **downed trees, including root ball, removed within 60 days of happening or discovery.**
 - iv. Remove “annoying”
 - v. All Obstructions caused or permitted on any ~~street or sidewalk~~ **property**
 - vi. No changes
 - vii. Remove “annoying”

The committee would like Attorney Brooks guidance on the best wording and place to add the following items:

- Trash and Rubbish not allowed to accumulate on any property, this does not include a well-controlled/maintained compost pile.
- Grass/Lawn/Weed height not to exceed 8” in height.
- Street parking only allowed in designated places where enough space exists to allow traffic to operate safely.

2. Section 150.24 Posting and Size Numbers:

Numerals indicating the official numbers for each principal building or each front entrance to such building shall be posted in a manner as to be visible and distinguishable from the street on which the property is located. **Buildings not visible from the street shall have the numbers posted at the street.** These numbers shall be at least ~~three~~ **4” high and ½ inch wide.**
building is located



Trended Data March 2024



Finance



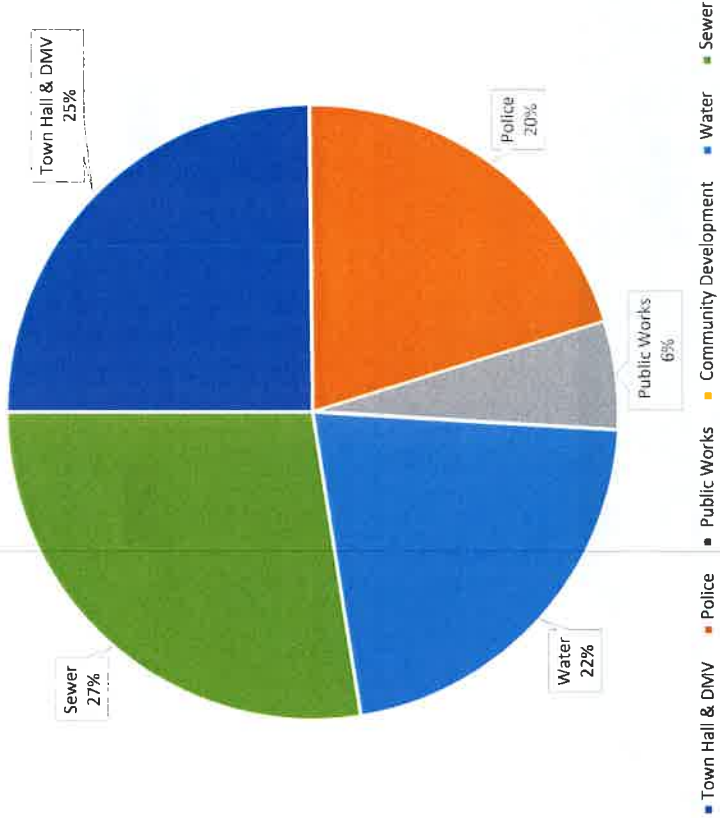
February 2024 Expenses





February 2024 Expenses by Department

February 2024 Expenses by Department



January 2024 v. February 2024 Expenses Large Single Costs

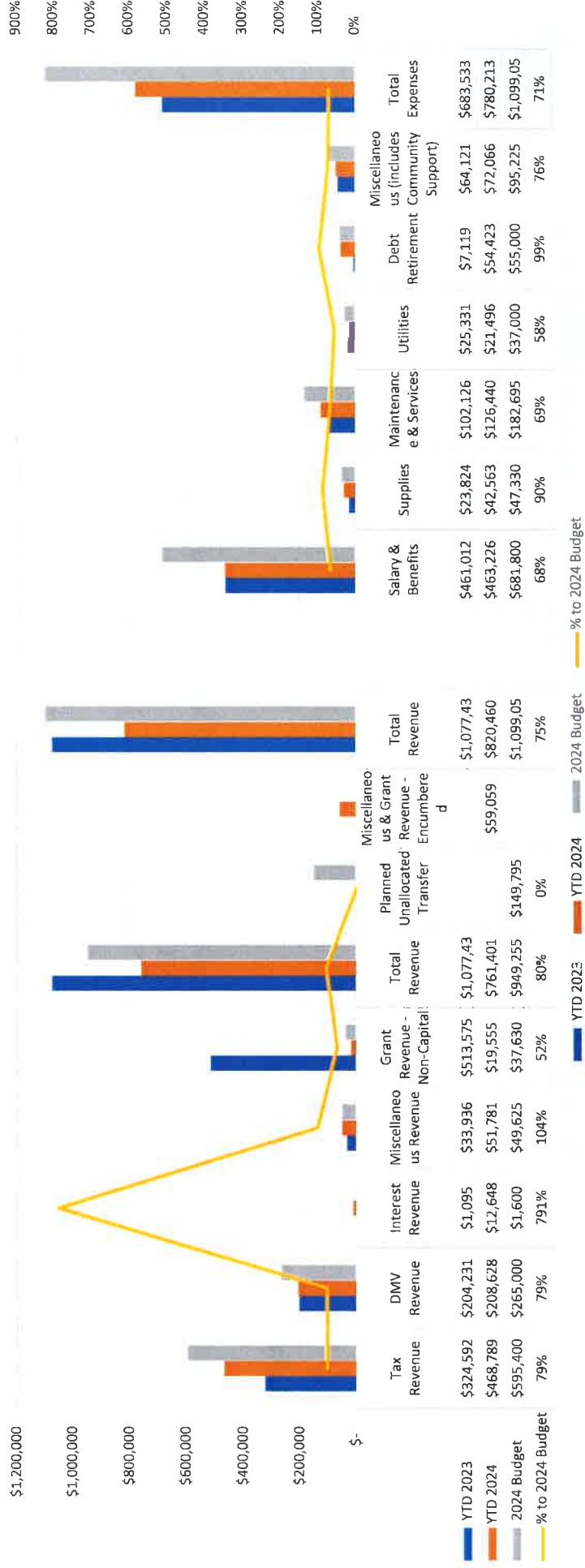


January 2024 Expenses were \$253,704
February 2024 Expenses were \$172,257

The reduction of \$78,447 is attributed to:

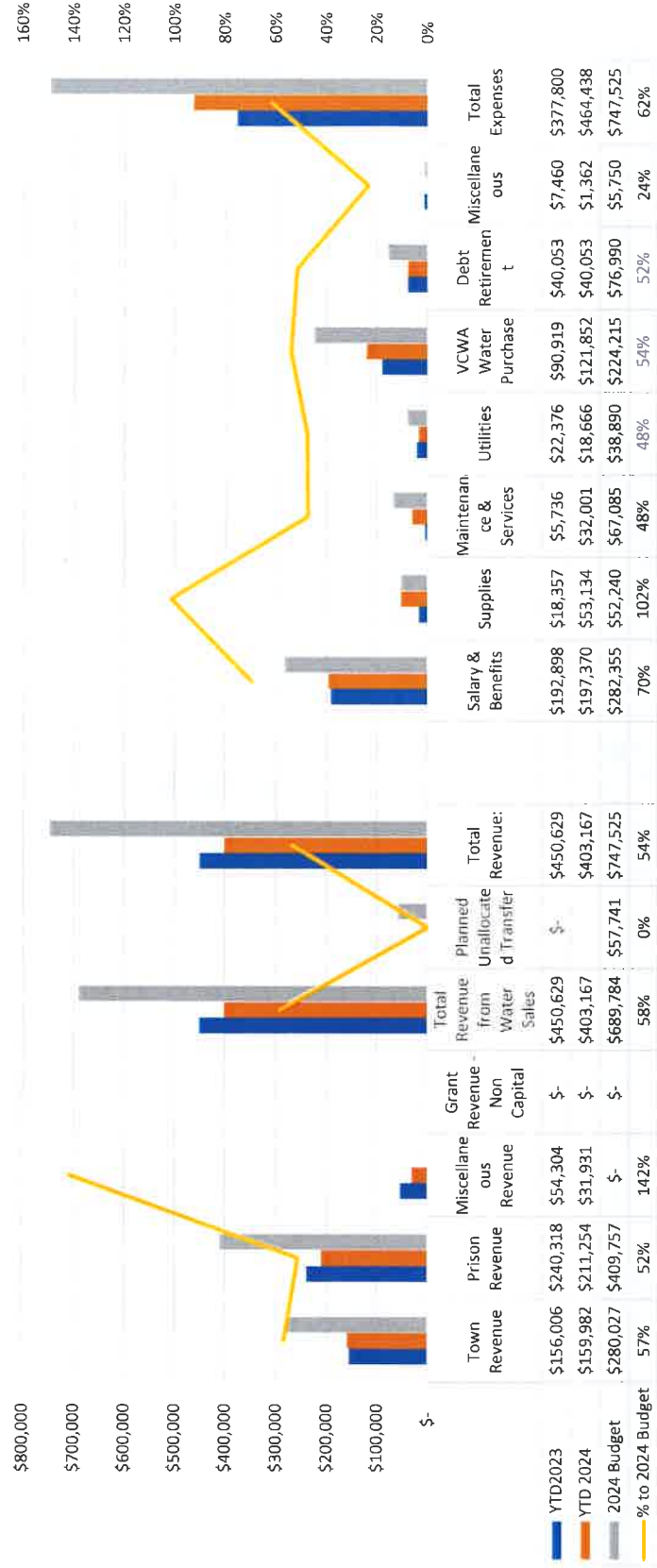
- 1) No unusual one- time payments in February which resulted in reduced supply, maintenance and service costs being lower (Total \$39,964 vs. \$92,329)
- 2) Payroll \$4k less
- 3) VCWA Water Purchase cost for single month (\$18k savings)

General Administration 2024 YTD





Water 2024 YTD



Sewer 2024 YTD



Revised Capital Budget 2024

Revenue	YTD 2023 Actual	YTD 2024 Actual	2024 Budget	% to Budget
Rural Development Grant	\$ 33,000.00	\$ -	\$ 175,000.00	0%
Unallocated from Savings/ ARPA Money		\$ 249,018.49	\$ 350,215.00	71%
Miscellaneous Gifts		\$ 29,358.54	\$ 29,358.54	50%
Total		\$ 278,377.03	\$ 554,573.54	
Grants Returned		\$ -	\$ (175,000.00)	73%
Revised Capital Budget		\$ 278,377.03	\$ 379,573.54	

Expenses

Capital Project Costs - General Admin	YTD 2023 Actual	YTD 2024 Actual	2024 Budget	% to Budget	Items
General Administration/DMV	\$ 20,908.93	\$ 7,247.00	\$ 7,247.00	100%	Server
Public Works	\$ 20,908.93	\$ 26,631.66	\$ 64,755.00	41%	Excavator, Line Detector, Public Works Bldg Roof Repair
Police	\$ 52,276.03	\$ 54,000.00	\$ 54,000.00	97%	Police Car
Community Development - Town Park	\$ 36,396.76	\$ 79,358.54	\$ 79,358.54	46%	Town Park Design
Water Capital Expenditures	\$ 37,431.97	\$ 44,182.85		85%	Excavator, Line Detector, Well House Roof Replacement, Public Works Roof Repair
Sewer Planned Capital Expenditures	\$ 14,762.00	\$ 93,631.37	\$ 130,030.50	72%	Excavator, Line Detector, Sewer Plant Roof Replacement, Public Works Roof Repair
Total	\$ 35,670.93	\$ 253,614.79	\$ 379,573.89	67%	Projects/purchases pending/not included- 3 six inch meters, Gorman Rupp Pump, PLC, Composite Sampler

Penn Court Project

Miscellaneous Grant - Rural Development/ MRPD	YTD 2023 Actual	YTD 2024 Actual	2024 Budget
Penn Court Repair - 2024 Expenses	\$ 156,250.00	\$ 112,685.70	\$ -
Town Funds Used - Not Budgeted in 2024		\$ 381,754.01	
		\$ 112,818.31	

Sewer I & I Project

Engineering Expenses	YTD 2023 Actual	YTD 2024 Actual	2024 Budget
Town Funds Used - Not Budgeted in 2024		\$ 54,422.50	\$ 6,550.00
		\$ 47,872.50	

Town Park Project

Original Budget for 2024	\$ 225,000.00
Less Rural Development Grant Returned	\$ (175,000.00)
Town Funds	\$ 50,000.00
Gift Funds	\$ 29,358.54
Total Funds in 2024	\$ 79,358.54
Funds Used as of 2/29/24	\$ 36,396.76
Funds Remaining	\$ 42,961.78

VOF Grant funds for Landscaping/Furnishing \$ 65,000.00

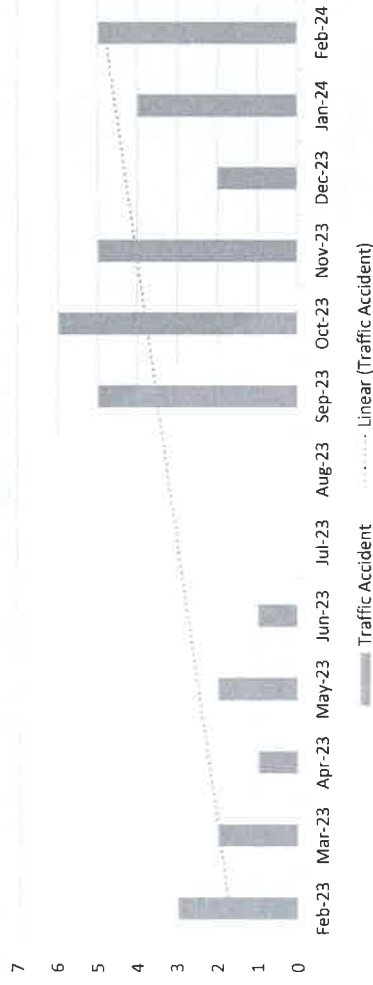


Police Department

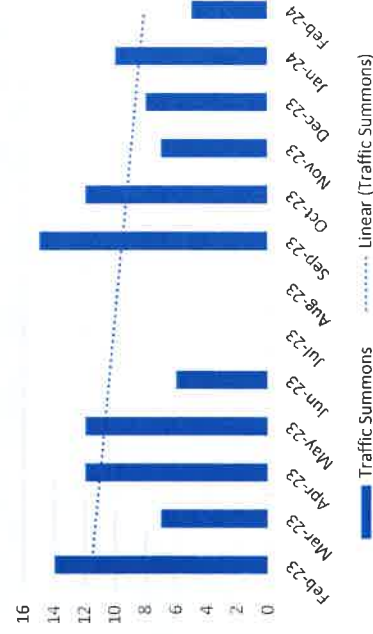
January 2024 Traffic Stats



Traffic Accidents



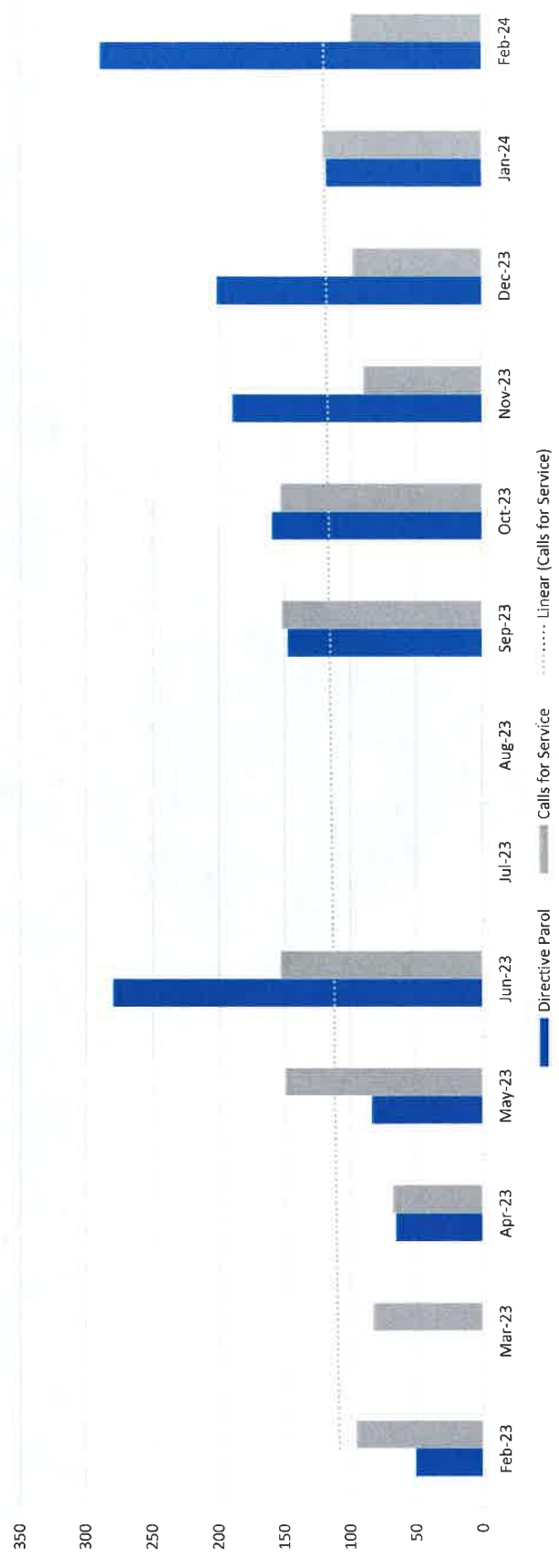
Traffic Summons



January 2024 Service Stats



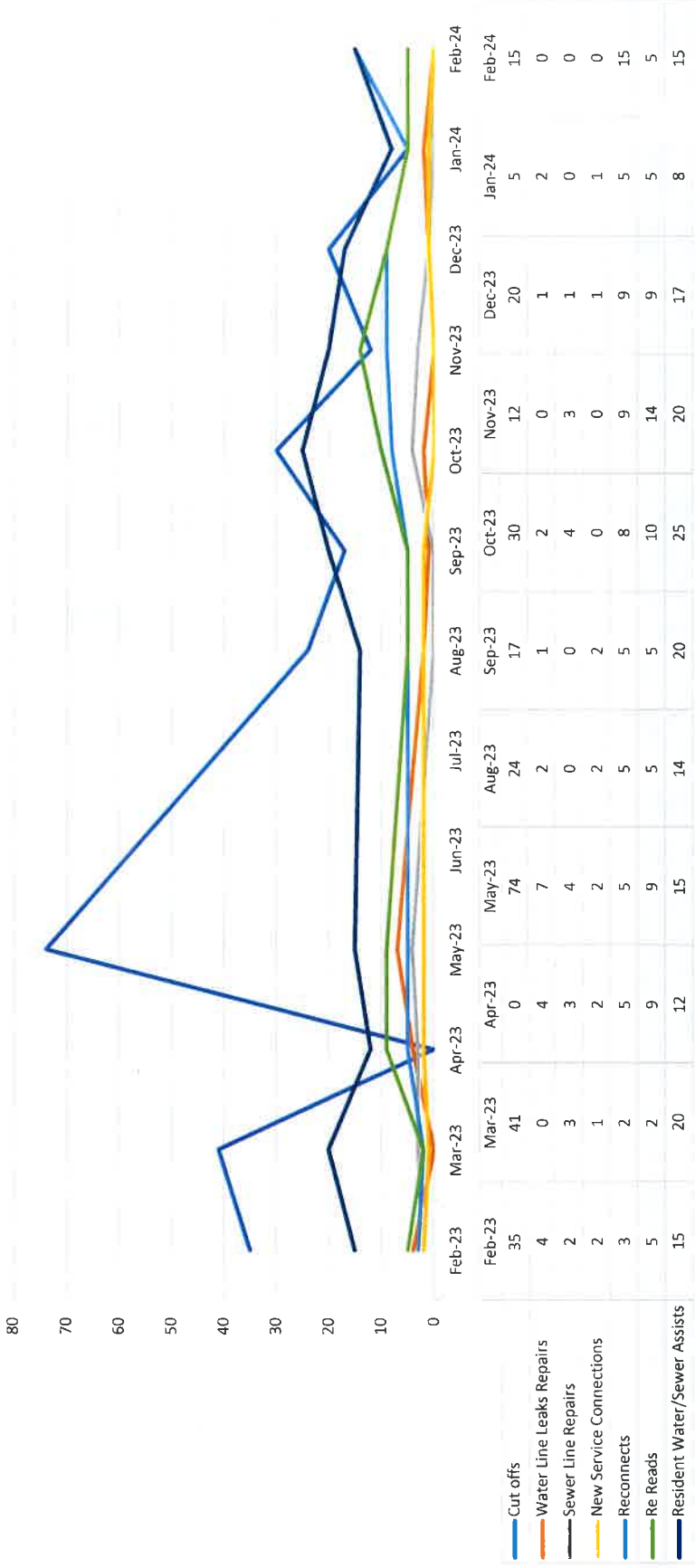
Directed Patrol and Calls for Service





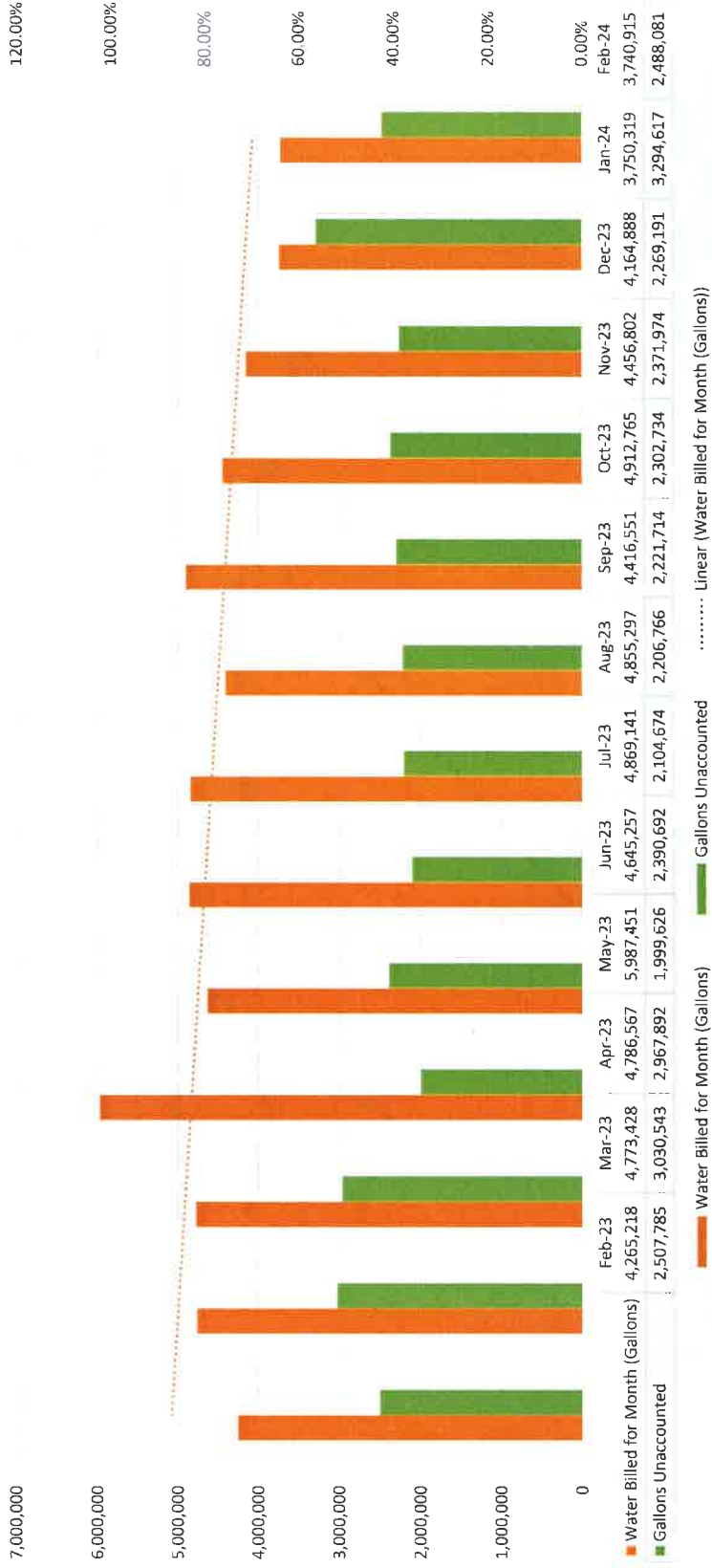
Public Works

Public Works Service Data

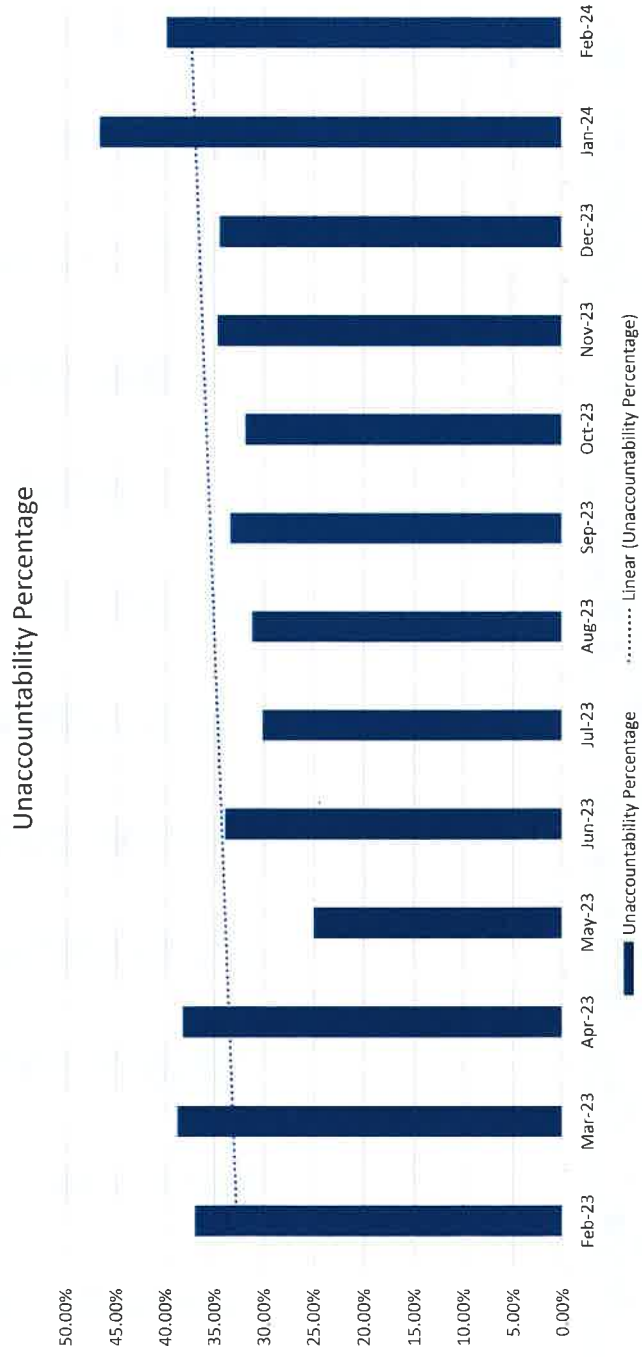




Water Usage

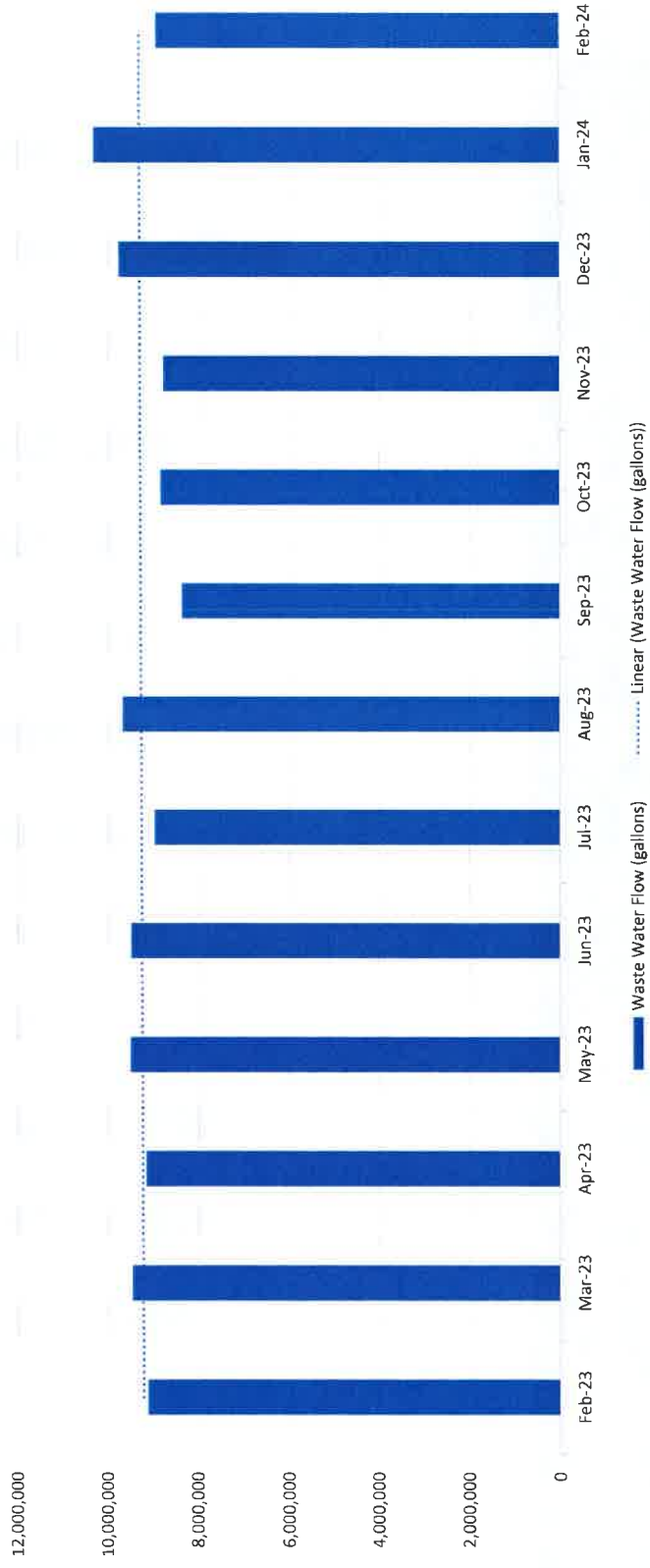


Water Usage





Sewer Volumes



Monthly Department Activity Totals

Month: February

Year: 2024

Total Milage: 3895

Of vehicles stopped

Traffic: 12

Of Shifts 52

Check Points: 0

General	
Open Business Checks	176
Closed Business Checks	235
Welfare Checks	4
Funerals	4
Bank Escorts	2
Motorist Assist	6
Directive patrols	290
Community Engagement	15
Vehicle Unlocks	6
Alarms	3
Calls For Service (other)	99
Magistrate Assist	2
Warrants	
Warrants Obtained	0
Warrants Served	0
Citations	
Traffic Summons	5
Parking Tickets	3
Warnings -Traffic	4
Investigations	
Domestic Complaints	1
Traffic Accident	5
Follow-up	15
Shop Lifting	3
Larceny	0
Other Criminal	2
Emergency Orders	
ECO	0
TDO	0
Protective Orders	0

Arrests	
DUI	0
Intoxicated in public	0
Criminal Arrests - Non Traffic	0
Criminal Arrest - Traffic stop	0
Juvenile Petitions	0
Criminal Summons	0
Assistance	
Assist Fire Department	6
Assist Rescue	4
Assist Sheriff's Office	10
Assist Other LEO	0
Assist DSS	3
Assist Public Works	6
Special Duty	
School Traffic	45
Court - On Duty	4
Court - Off Duty	0
Prisoner Transport	4
Training / Instruction	4
Town Code Enforcement	3
Special Events	0
Meeting	9
Street Lights	9
Other	9

Cross Walk Observed 15 Hours

**Monthly Utility Manager Report
Council Reporting
February 05, 2024 March 03, 2024**

1. Number of monthly work orders filled:

- a. 130

2. Number of cutoff's:

- a. 15

3. Number of waterline leaks/repairs:

- a. 0

4. Number of sewer line repairs:

- a. 0

5. Special projects started this month:

- a. Work on shop
- b. Take down Snowflakes
- c. Remove Flower Pots
- d. Install Meter Heads
- e. Hang Fire Extinguishers

6. Special projects completed this month:

- a. Program Meters
- b. Flower Pots Removed
- c. Decorations down and put up
- d. Extinguishers Installed

7. Vehicle, Tool & Equipment problems / inventory:

- a. White Dodge

- b. Greased Trackhoe And Skidsteer
- c. Brakes And Rotors installed on service Truck

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

- a. Digesters operational now
- b. New Timers On Each Well Working Well

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

- a. 0 new service, 15 reconnects

10. Re-reads:

- a. 5 re-reads

11. Meter replacement (Bad or suspected):

- a. Install and Reprogram 1 Meter 2 Meter Heads

12. Water or Sewer Problems for Customers:

- a. 15 (ASSISTED RESIDENTS WITH DIFFERENT PROBLEMS)

13. Waste water effluent flow for the month:

- a. 8,966,000 gallons

14. Water System gallons billed for the month:

- a. 3,740,915 gallons

15. Water system gallons pumped for the month;

- a. 69,996 gallons – Wells
- b. 6,159,000 gallons – VA/NC Plant
- c. 16,218,000 gallons – Total VA WTP

16. Gallons not accounted for:

- a. 2,488,081 gallons

17. Unaccountability percentage:

- a. 40 %

b. last month ~~44%~~ 46.77%

18. Transaction Corrections:

a. 25

19. Work Planned For Next Month:

- a. Meter installation
- b. Get Mowing Equipment Ready
- c. Exercise Valves
- d. Find and paint valves
- e. Flow Hydrants and Exercise
- f. Work at the shop
- g. Install New Hydrant



Town of Independence, VA

To: Mayor Sexton and Town Council

From: Laura Ratcliffe, Town Manager

Date: March 2, 2024

RE: Manager's Report

Following is a summary of the status of various projects and other activities since the last update in February 2024:

- **Personnel**
 - a. We have started using the newly implemented annual review/probationary review process. Reviews are in process for all employees, including our newest employees who completed their 6-month probationary period at the end of February.
 - b. The annual salary review for the upcoming budget cycle is in process. This will be reviewed with the Personnel Committee prior to recommendation to Council.
 - c. We will have several trainings during the second quarter, including a defensive/distracted driving course for all Public Works employees who drive Town vehicles. Additionally, Town Clerk Farmer and Deputy Clerk Phipps will attend software training in mid-March and Officer Holderfield is in Intox training this week.
- **Finance/General Administration**
 - a. **Grants –**
 - i. The Rural Development grant for the police vehicle is for \$25,000. It can be used for new vehicles, subject to following the proper procurement. Chief Adams is in the process of procuring quotes for an unmarked vehicle. Current estimates are between \$54k and \$60k, fully outfitted, depending on make and model. The department has “raised” approximately \$13,000 from the sale of surplus equipment. This does not include monies from the sale of the current 2015 SUV. The difference in funding that would need to be covered by the Town from savings would be \$16-22,000. Council needs to decide if they want to authorize the additional funds in the current year or wait to consider in the 2025 budget year.

- ii. The ARPA Law Enforcement Grant has closed and the \$10,000 should be received in the next week. This grant was used to purchase the new vests and rifles for our officers.
 - iii. Virginia Outdoor Foundation Grant – I’ve submitted the revised deed of dedication to Attorney Brooks for his review and approval before sending to VOF for approval. We will also need a Title Search or a letter from Attorney Brooks confirming clear title.
 - iv. Litter Grant – The Town received \$2,085 from DEQ for the 2024 Litter Grant. The funds are being used to purchase trash cans for Town Park. These will match those purchased last year for the core commercial district.
 - b. **FOIA** – There were no FOIA requests in January.
 - c. **Real & Personal Property Tax Billing Dates** – The Town received 88% of the Real Estate Tax budget as of 2/29/24 and 158% of the Personal Property Tax budget. **Second notices will be mailed by March 15th.**
 - d. **Business License Renewal Notices** – Notices were mailed on February 28th per Town Code. We reiterated the need for documentation to support the claimed revenues and communicated that, as allowed by Town Code, we would request documentation from the Virginia Taxing authority for any license applications returned without proper documentation. Applications are due by mid-May and payments are due by July 14th.
 - e. **Department of Corrections Contract Audit** – To date, I have not received communication from the DOC regarding the audit. I am following up and hope to have a verbal update.
 - f. **Online Bill Pay, Auto Draft, Email Bills** – We are testing the email utility billing in March. If this is successful, we’ll begin offering for the April billing cycle. We have 4 testers for this process, including two Town Council members, one Town employee and one resident. Online Bill Pay is in design with a goal of implementation by the end of March. Auto draft will be last and should be implemented by the end of the year.
 - g. **General Ledger Account audit** – Town Clerk Farmer and I conducted an audit of the coding of all expenses for this fiscal year. All adjustments have been made and are reflected in the year-to-date February financials. This activity will help ensure our budgeting for next cycle uses clean data to help make better decisions.
- **Infrastructure**
 - a. **Penn Court** – Closeout is still pending. The contractor is waiting for signoff by VDOT for the work done at the Hwy 21 entrance. A meeting is scheduled with VDOT on March 11th. Terry Osborne will attend that meeting. If the contractor can receive sign off, I expect the project will be closed by mid-April.
 - b. **Sewer I & I** – Per the Infrastructure Committee’s direction, I authorized our engineering firm, Lane Engineering, to bid the project. This is being advertised on March 9th. Bids are due April 16th at 2pm. Bid information will be presented for review and recommendation at the April Infrastructure Committee. I have communicated to VRA and bond counsel the need to delay the finance closing. They will update their underwriting based on our 2023 audit and will advise if there are any issues. If pricing comes in higher than originally anticipated, we will have an opportunity to revise the financing request. This will also help with the upcoming budget process.

- c. **Lead & Copper Assessment** – We’ve received approval for the project approach from DEQ. The survey will be mailed to all customers within the next month. Customers may complete the survey online through a link on our website or on paper. Once the survey response is validated, the customer’s account will be credited as approved at last Town Council. We had a planning call with Lane Engineering on March 4th. The project is on track to be completed by August. The deadline for filing is October 14th, 2024.
- d. **Past Due Penalties/Utility Bills** – In follow up to last month’s report, below are the remaining account balances through 2022 to be written off:

Water	\$	10,872.59
Sewer	\$	20,191.88
Penalty	\$	208,557.16
Water Flat	\$	183.24
Sewer Flat	\$	181.16
i. Total	\$	239,986.03

I am requesting approval to write off of the amount listed above.

- **Community Development**

- a. **Town Park** –The project request was issued February 26th with quotes due March 11th at noon. The quotes will be reviewed with Town Council during closed session to discuss contract negotiation. The contract should be awarded March 18th. At this time we have 4 interested contractors.
- b. **Town Clean-up Day** – The Town will host a trash pickup/clean-up day on Saturday, March 23rd at 10am. Volunteers are asked to meet at the Town Office. We’ll have vests and trash bags for pick up. Rain date is TBD. The event is being shared on social media and also with flyers distributed through Town businesses. Councilwoman Collins has been instrumental in organizing this event and has contacted the High School for ROTC involvement, Grayson Land Care and Community Matters. We would like to see all Town Council involved in this activity.
- c. **Zoning Requests** – The Planning Commission met on March 6th to review a zoning request to change the Core Commercial Zone to include Temporary Vacation Rentals not to exceed two bedrooms per unit. A public hearing will be held on April 9th at 6pm to hear comment on the change.
- d. **Making Grayson Glow** – The holiday lights need to find a new home. Historically, the lights have been stored in the basement of the building across from Town Hall. The building owners (previous and current) have graciously stored the lights for free; however, the space is now needed for other commercial pursuits. Town Council needs to decide if they plan to cover future storage costs or if this will be a cost to be covered by the Making Grayson Glow group.
- e. **Upcoming Town Event Sponsorship** – The Town will sponsor the 2024 Grayson County Art & Ag Tour in September and the upcoming Legends of Grayson Old Time event to be held at the Historic 1908 the weekend of April 5th & 6th. Tracy Cornett with Grayson County sent a letter of thanks for the continued support of the Art & Ag Tour.
- f. **Mass Communication** – The Town’s Everbridge Mass Communication site is enabled and configured. All Town Council and Town employees have been added and we are testing

the system. We need to continue to collect and load resident and business data to the site; however, we plan to go live with the site by the end of March.

g. Town Sponsored Special Events –

i. Following is a summary of the expenses/revenues from 2023-24 Town Events:

Summary	Direct	Revenue	Labor Cost	Total
4th of July	\$ 16,601.34	\$ 865.00	\$ 12,775.50	\$ 28,511.84
Privy Races	\$ 6,163.03	\$ 2,461.00	\$ 13,363.03	\$ 17,065.06
Safe Halloween	\$ 1,178.18	\$ -	\$ 1,778.00	\$ 2,956.18
Christmas Parade/Santa	\$ 1,040.19	\$ -	\$ 1,590.00	\$ 2,630.19
Total	\$ 24,982.74	\$ 3,326.00	\$ 29,506.53	\$ 51,163.27

- ii. **Independence Day** – Council needs to make a decision regarding the location for the fireworks. The options are the elementary school ball field (last year’s location) or the open field by the Rec Park. If the Rec Park field is selected, the fireworks will not be viewable (or will be limited view) from Town. We need to order the fireworks in April. At this time there is \$10,782 left in the Special Events budget for the Fireworks. Last year we spent \$10,800 on fireworks. The remaining expense for the 4th celebration will be covered by the 2025 budget.
- iii. **Special Events Volunteers** - I need Council to decide if they want to make the decision on the use of the Volunteer group to manage a portion of Special Events or if they want me to make that decision. My recommendation is they be asked to organize, advertise and run the Privy Races while the Town Special Events Coordinator organizes the festival/parade portions of the 4th of July, Mountain Foliage, Safe Halloween, and Christmas events.
- iv. **Food Truck Friday** – I propose the Town explore hosting a Food Truck Rally on Fridays from late spring to mid-fall in the vacant lot beside the Roots building. For those not familiar, food truck rallies are where multiple food trucks gather to sell so that customers have a choice of foods at one spot. It’s like a mobile food court. There would be a low cost to the Town, it would provide something fun and different in the Town, and the Town would benefit through increased meals tax revenue.

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

- Tuesday, March 19th @ 6pm – Infrastructure Committee – 2nd Floor 136 E. Main
- Saturday, March 23rd @ 10am – Town Clean Up – Town Hall
- Tuesday, March 26th @ 6pm – EDA – 2nd Floor 136 E. Main
- Tuesday, April 9th @ 6pm – Town Council – Fire Department
- Tuesday, April 16th @ 2pm – Sewer I & I Bid Opening – Fire Department

Upcoming Town Closures:

1. Friday, March 29th – Good Friday

JOIN US IN CLEANING UP THE TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE!

VOLUNTEER FOR A CLEANER AND GREENER TOWN

Saturday, March 23rd @ 10am

Meet at Town Office



