

**TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE  
TOWN COUNCIL**

**Public Hearing to take public comments on two proposed Independence Town Code changes**

**OCTOBER 10, 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, Mark Miller, Joan Collins, and Kit Marshall.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:** Buddy Halsey.

**TOWN STAFF PRESENT:** Laura Ratcliffe, Town Manager, Roger Brooks, Town Attorney, Kim Phipps, Assistant to the Town Clerk, Matthew Adams, Police Chief, and Terry Osborne, Utility Supervisor.

**CITIZENS & GUESTS:** Steve Marshall, Jennifer Snow, Teresa Osborne, Jessica Newton, and Michelle Pridgen.

Mayor Sexton opened the public hearing to order this 10<sup>th</sup> day of October 2023. Mayor Sexton stated the public hearing was to take public comments on two proposed Independence Town code changes:

- 1) Town Council is considering changing Chapter 5, Article 3, Sections S.12 to 5.19 of the Town Code, reducing and consolidating the number of Council Committees. Currently there are 8.
- 2) Town Council is considering changing Chapter 172, Article 1, Section 172-10 of the Town Code regarding the water and sewer billing timing. Council proposes changing the billing from monthly to every other month. This change will reduce costs for the Town in administering the billing systems.

Mayor Sexton turned the meeting over to Town Manager Laura Ratcliffe. Town Manager Ratcliffe stated that the change in committees will be more efficient to the community. The change with the utility billing would have a savings for the Town due to the amount of time it takes employees, cost of supplies, etc. Town Manager Ratcliffe stated that a survey will be available so customers may give their input.

Sandra Venzie, East Main Street, stated she liked quarterly with online payments. Town Manager Ratcliffe also addressed the issue of changing the convenience fee for card users. Town Attorney Roger Brooks suggested having on-line and auto draft payments available to customers.

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