



**TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE
REGULAR SCHEDULED COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 9, 2025
329 DAVIS STREET
INDEPENDENCE, VIRGINIA 24348
5:00 PM**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Mark Miller, Vice Mayor Joan Collins, Jason Cassell, Buddy Halsey, Kit Marshall, Aaron Davis, and Lance Hart.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

TOWN STAFF PRESENT: Kathy Knutson, Town Manager, Roger Brooks, Town Attorney, Matthew Adams, Police Chief, Terry Osborne, Public Works Director, Kim Farmer, Town Clerk, Tenda Kinser, DMV Deputy Clerk, Kim Phipps Deputy Clerk, and Jacqueline Smith Clerk.

CITIZENS & GUESTS: Sandy Venzie, Larissa Venzie, Shannon Miller, Steve Boyer, Grayson County Administrator, and Michelle Pridgen.

COUNCILMAN AARON DAVIS 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, Town Manager Kathy Knutson, Town Clerk Kim Farmer and Grayson County Administrator Steve Boyer to stay. **COUNCILWOMAN KIT MARSHALL** seconded; motion carried with all ayes.

COUNCILMAN AARON DAVIS 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 Miller asked for a roll call vote:

Jason Cassell – I So Certify
Joan Collins – I So Certify
Aaron Davis – I So Certify

Buddy Halsey-I So Certify
Kit Marshall-I So Certify
Lance Hart – I So Certify

- Public Hearing (None)
- Call to Order

- Welcome/Decorum- Mayor Mark Miller called the meeting to order this 9th day of September 2025 and declared a quorum present.
- Approval of Agenda, Consent Agenda, Meeting Minutes-Mayor Mark Miller asked for a motion. **COUNCILMAN AARON DAVIS made a motion to approve the agenda, consent agenda and minutes as presented. COUNCILWOMAN KIT MARSHALL seconded; motion carried with all ayes.**

Summary:

- The Town Council Meeting began with approval of the previous month's minutes and recognition of Trena Kinzer's 20-years of service. The Treasurer reported August revenues for G&A of \$101,001 and expenses of \$117,497, noting the town received \$22,001 for personal property tax relief. Water revenue was \$32,005, and sewer expenses were \$74,003. The Sewer I&I Project is 77% complete, and the Lead and Copper Project is 62%. The Police Chief attended meetings and will attend the Southwest Academy board meeting. The Utility Director discussed sewer repair plans and a significant leak. The Town Manager presented the Town Park rental agreement amendment to include food trucks and discussed with council the long standing 16-year bonus contract between the town and DMV staff.

Action Items:

- [X] Mayor Miller asked for approval of the food truck agreement amendment which includes a \$50 fee for hookup to the outlet for each truck with an additional fee of \$25 if that truck needs an additional hookup. **COUNCILWOMAN KIT MARSHALL made a motion approve the updated food truck agreement. COUNCILMAN JASON CASSELL seconded; motion carried with all ayes.**
- [X] DMV bonus agreement. **COUNCILMAN AARON DAVIS made a motion to give the DMV bonus as previously done for the past 16 years with a 90% incentive and only this one time. COUNCILMAN JASON CASSELL seconded; all ayes with the exception of Councilman Buddy Halsey opposing.**

Town Staff Reports and Updates:

- Town Clerk, Kim Farmer, provides a detailed finance report, including disbursement requests and project updates for sewer and lead and copper projects.
- Town Clerk, Kim Farmer, thanked Trena Kinzer for her 20 years of service to the town and thanked Town Manager Kathy Knutson for helping wait on customers while short staffed at the office.
- Police Chief Matthew Adams reports the departments increase in shoplifting cases. Chief Adams attended the Chiefs Conference. Chief Adams also met with Southwest Academy

regarding the police department getting out of the New River Valley Criminal Justice to go with them.

- Utility Director Terry Osborne talks about maintenance needs for various facilities, including the water plant and pump stations.

Food Truck Amendment and Fall Festival Planning

- Town Manager Kathy Knutson presented an amendment to the park agreement for food trucks, based on Town Council request during last committee meeting, which was approved by the council.
- Discussion ensues about potentially purchasing bounce houses for events due to significant savings offered by a rental company.
- Concerns about storage space for the bounce houses are raised.
- The possibility of borrowing the Fire Department's bounce house is considered.

DMV Bonus Proposal and Budget Concerns

- Town Manager Kathy Knutson proposes a partial bonus for DMV staff who missed their target by 10%, explaining the challenges faced during the year.
- Debate occurs that this should not become a regular practice but rather remain a one-time exception.
- The council ultimately agrees to award the partial bonus while maintaining the existing performance criteria.

Exploring Online Meeting Options

- Councilwoman Joan Collins suggests transitioning town meetings to an online format for greater accessibility. Town Manager Knutson stated that she would have in place by next meeting.
- Concerns about sound quality and the need for proper setup are addressed. Microphones can be placed at each desk.
- The council agrees to explore options for streaming meetings online.

Community Events and Website Updates

- Councilwoman Kit Marshall emphasizes the need for more teams to participate in the Privy Races to ensure the event's continuation.

- Michelle Pridgen, Independence Farmers Market provides updates on the Apple Festival, including an apple dessert contest and involvement from local high school students.
- Plans for the final market of the season and upcoming winter markets are outlined.
- Challenges with vendor participation and customer feedback are discussed.
- **COUNCILMAN AARON DAVIS 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 Kathy Knutson to stay. COUNCILWOMAN KIT MARSHALL seconded; motion carried with all ayes.**
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 - Joan Collins – I So Certify
 - Aaron Davis – I So Certify
 - Buddy Halsey-I So Certify
 - Kit Marshall-I So Certify
 - Lance Hart – I So Certify

Final Discussions and Meeting Adjournment:

Mayor Miller adjourns the meeting.

-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,
- People 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.