



**TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE
REGULAR SCHEDULED COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY NOVEMBER 18, 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, Joe Holderfield, Policeman, Kim Farmer, Town Clerk, Tenda Kinser, DMV Deputy Clerk, Jacqueline Smith, Clerk.

CITIZENS & GUESTS: Larissa Venzie, and Shannon Miller.

COUNCILMAN AARON DAVIS made a motion for Council to go into closed session citing VAFOIA Section 2.2-3711, to discuss litigation personnel and contract negotiation asking the Town Attorney Roger Brooks, Town Manager Kathy Knutson, Town Clerk Kim Farmer, and Policeman Joe Holderfield to stay. **COUNCILMAN JASON CASSELL** 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. **COUNCILWOMAN KIT MARSHALL** seconded. 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 18th day of November 2025 and declared a quorum present.
- Approval of Agenda, Consent Agenda, Meeting Minutes-Mayor Mark Miller asked for a motion. **COUNCILMAN BUDDY HALSEY made a motion to approve the minutes and payables as presented. COUNCILMAN JASON CASSELL seconded; motion carried with all ayes.**

Summary:

- The Town Council Meeting on November 18 reviewed previous minutes, clarifying that only 50 pavers are available, not 250. Further investigation accounted for 235 pavers. Kathy Knutson discussed the \$25,000 grant. Town clerk discussed \$172,250 in the CD, proposing to keep it separate for LG IP funding. The town clerk reported October revenues and expenses, including \$15,000 aid to locality and \$7,001.24 from FEMA. Public Works highlighted Lee Williams' certification and ongoing projects. The mayor noted the successful grand opening of Whiskey River and Water Flowers and the completion of road repairs on Powerhouse. The council approved Kathy's proposal for a Christmas light competition and discussed upcoming events and grants.

Action Items:

- [] @Kathy Knutson - Verify the actual number of pavers available.
- [] @Kathy Knutson - Coordinate with the county on an innovative plan to address the issue of roadside dumping.
- [] @Kathy Knutson - Work with Grayson Glows to organize a Christmas light competition.
- [] @Kathy Knutson - Ensure the Friday evening Farmers Market dates are blocked out for next season.
- [X] **COUNCILMAN BUDDY HALSEY, made a motion to formally vote in Mark Miller as the Town's Mayor. COUNCILMAN JASON CASSELL seconded; motion carried with all ayes.**
- [X] **COUNCILMAN BUDDY HALSEY, made a motion to transfer the EDA funds of \$172,250 from the general fund to LGIP account. COUNCILMAN LANCE HART seconded; motion carried with all ayes.**

Town Staff Reports and Updates:

Financial Report and Tax Updates

- Town Clerk Kim Farmer provides a detailed report on G&A revenues and expenses for October, including specific figures for water and sewer revenue and expenses.
- Town Clerk Kim Farmer mentions the receipt of \$15,000 aid to locality for the fire department and \$7,001.24 from FEMA for emergency work at the Reeves bridge.

- Taxes were mailed out last week, and pre-auditors were present on November 5 to prepare for the final auditors.
- Town Clerk Kim Farmer requests a motion to keep the \$172,250 in the CD and check in the LG IP funding, which is passed.

Police Department Updates

- Policeman Joe Holderfield reports on ongoing investigations at a facility in Town limits and community engagement activities, including attending ball games and firearms certification.

Water and Sewer Department Updates

- Town Manager Kathy Knutson recognizes Mr. Lee Williams for passing the Virginia wastewater works Operator class two exam, highlighting his dedication and professional achievement.
- Kathy updates on the cleaning and inventorying of parts and supplies at the public works shop, as well as the installation of Christmas lights.
- The team is working on a meter insulation plan and ensuring equipment is in proper working order for the upcoming winter.

Town Manager's Report

- Town Manager Kathy Knutson discusses the competitive litter grant, which was awarded \$25,000 instead of the requested \$68,000, and the need to work with the county on minimizing roadside dumping.
- Kathy mentions the \$15,000 grant from Mount Rogers for the preliminary engineering report at the sewer plant.
- Kathy proposes a Christmas light competition with Grace and Glows, offering incentives for businesses and residents to participate.
- The proposal is well-received, and Kathy plans to move forward with the project.
- Kathy created an outlook calendar for the pavilion at Town Park. Everyone has access to it.
- Kathy reminded council and residents that candy is to be handed out rather than thrown due to the danger of someone getting hurt.

Mayor's Report

- Mayor Mark Miller reports on the successful grand opening of Whiskey River and Water Flowers, an antique gallery type mall.
- The Safe Halloween event was well-attended with no issues, and pictures were featured in the local paper.

- Mayor Miller mentions the completion of road repairs on Powerhouse and Elliot Lance roads.
- The town is still receiving items for the goodie bags. Town Manager Knutson suggested items such as business cards, maps, etc.

Committee Updates

- **Infrastructure Committee:** Chairman Buddy Halsey did not have anything to report on.
- **Personnel Committee:** Chairman Jason Cassell personally thanked retired Utility Supervisor Terry Osborne on his years of service to the Town. The Town is in the process of filling this position.
- **Finance Committee:** Chairwoman Joan Collins did not have anything to report on.
- **Community Development:** Chairwoman Kit Marshall stated that she is looking forward to the Christmas parade on December 6th. Hopefully, there will be a good turnout.

Final Discussions and Meeting Adjournment:

Mayor Miller spoke for Michelle Pridgen with the Independence Farmer's Market due to her not being in attendance. The Market will have 3 more markets on November 21st, November 28th and December 6th.

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.