

**Infrastructure Committee
Town of Independence
Draft Minutes
March 19, 2024**

Attending - Committee Members: Jason Cassell, Chairman, Jim Meier, Buddy Halsey, Terry Osborne
Adhoc: Ronald Sexton, Laura Ratcliffe

- 1) Chairman Cassell welcomed the group.
- 2) Old Business:
 - a. Status of County Trash Contract – Town Manager Ratcliffe has received feedback from the County. Pricing will remain the same subject to their tipping fee staying flat. The group decided to obtain alternative quotes from GFL. Town Manager Ratcliffe to obtain and report back.
 - b. Current status of projects in process – Terry Osborne
 - i. Penn Court – Street and Parking lot being repaired. Stripping will happen in May or June. Should be able to go ahead and close out project.
 - ii. Sewer I & I – Pre-Bid Conference 3/27 at Fire Department. Bid Opening 4/16 at Fire Department. Town Manager Ratcliffe has submitted paperwork to VRA for financing extension.
 - iii. Lead Assessment – Utility Director Osborne has provided meter listing to Lane Group for upload. Town Manager Ratcliffe working on sending out the survey and adding it to Town website. Town Manager Ratcliffe brought up one issue regarding the reimbursement of Lane’s funds via the grant. The Town has to show Lane’s service were procured appropriately when the 5 year contract was signed. At this time they are unable to locate the scoring sheets for the RFP process. It is unknown if they were destroyed by accident. References to an upcoming scoring process during the RFP are in Town Council meeting minutes; however, there is no resulting documentation. Town Manager Ratcliffe is following up with the grant agency to understand the impact on the grant. Vice Mayor Meier asked for a copy of the scoring questions.
 - iv. Town Park – Work beginning this week with a 3-week timeframe, subject to weather. Public Works crew may have overtime to get fence and water installed.
 - c. Code Review Plan – Jason Cassell
 - i. The committee continued to review sections of the Water Code for updates. The committee reviewed sections 51.14 G through 51.14 (W) 5, 51.15, and 51.16. Discussion ensued regarding each section. There were no specific changes recommended; however, the Committee did make specific comments regarding process to support the following sections:
 1. 51.14 H – the meters will be disconnected but kept in the meter box.
 2. 51.14 J – The fee charged for the 3rd meter check is \$50.

3. 51.14 O – Discussion came up regarding a recent situation where the Fire Dept was hosting a fire school. They wanted to draw down 100,000 in a period of a few hours. Utility Director Osborne denied their request. The request had not gone to Council originally. The Committee agreed with Utility Director Osborne’s decision and stated in the future they would want to support the Fire Dept in its training activities; however, more notice and planning would be needed. Town Manager Ratcliffe to communicate this to Fire Chief Hash.
4. 51.15 B – The Committee discussed the possible fee and how to manage distribution. Utility Director Osborne recommended always using the hydrant at the Fire Station as there is good parking for larger vehicles. It was identified that there is no meter on any hydrant to measure the amount sold. **The Committee asked Utility Director Osborne to obtain pricing on a meter for the hydrant.** The Committee also agreed the rate should be the Outside of Town Commercial Rate.

3) New Business

- a. 2025 Budget – Committee discussed needs for budget – Committee will need to make recommendations on Water & Sewer Rate and capital expenditures. Town Manager Ratcliffe will perform the rate analysis and Utility Director Osborne will work on the capital requests. All agreed the Lakeview/Grayson Street PER, the water tanks and the well pump replacements were priorities.
- b. Unaccountability Rate – Councilman Halsey asked to discuss the increase in the unaccountability rate. Utility Director Osborne stated there are 593 meters. It is odd that we are pumping similar water amounts and are processing a similar water amount at the WWTP. We do know the prison usage is down, school is no longer watering the field, Grayson Natural Farms usage is down and Grayson Manor is still billing based on an old average because the meter is broken. Rural Water is coming with listening devices to see if they can help locate any line leaks. The team will verify bypass flows are working correctly. Also, have been looking at data to try to pinpoint decreased usage. Part of the issue could be on the billing side.
- c. Abandonment of Poole Place Road – Town Manager Ratcliffe advised the group that she recently learned the Town is responsible for a portion of Poole Place Road. It was deeded to the Town in 1962. The property owner on either side of Poole Place wants to erect a fence and the property owner at the end of Poole Place has requested maintenance on the road. VDOT is involved as they have responsibility for a portion of Poole Place. VDOT is agreeable to adding the remainder of Poole Place to their rural “T” route, in exchange for the homeowner at the end of Poole Place giving them a turn around easement. This would remove all responsibility for maintenance from the Town. A remaining issue is that it appears a portion of the Town land has been encroached upon by the owner at the end of Poole Place and has become his yard. Town Manager Ratcliffe is working with Attorney Brooks to understand what needs to be done to remedy this particular situation. The committee agreed they were in favor of turning the road way over to VDOT and asked this come to the April Town Council meeting for presentation and discussion.

- d. Cross Walks & Traffic Light Timing– Town Manager Ratcliffe reported she had approached VDOT about adding additional crosswalks to the Town Core and General Commercial districts, repainting existing crosswalks, adding flexible pedestrian delineators to the cross walks and adjusting the timing of the Hwy 58/21 intersection. Of the 7 requested cross walks, two are tentatively approved. The issue with the remaining 5 are they are either within 300 feet of an existing crosswalk or there is sidewalk on only one side of the street. Crosswalks must connect sidewalk to sidewalk. A review is underway by VDOT to add a crosswalk between the existing crosswalks on Main Street, close to Lonesome Street, and at the Bike Trail at the entrance to the Elementary School. The other requested crosswalks were at Food City, S 21 at the Library, N 21 at Roots, a second crosswalk at Town Hall, and a second crosswalk across Hwy 58 at the Elementary School. VDOT will allow the flexible crosswalk delineators. The Town is responsible for purchasing, installing and maintaining. Town Manager Ratcliffe has begun collecting pricing for the devices. There has been no feedback at this time on the light timing.

There being no

Next meeting – TBD – 6-7:30pm