



City of Independence Minutes

Community Services & Parks Sustainability
Committee Meeting
Thursday, January 8, 2026

1. **Call to Order.** Chair Seiler called the meeting to order at 11:02 AM.

2. **Roll Call.**

Present: Budget Committee Member Erin Seiler
Committee Member Nathan Christensen
Member Bradley Karkanen
Board Member Vickie McCubbin

Absent: Board Member Jasper Smith, excused, attempted to join via zoom but had issues.

City Staff Present: Kenna West, City Manager
Myra Russell, City Recorder
Amanda Carey, Finance Director
Shawn Irvine, Assistant City Manager
Patrick Bodily, Library Director
Amy Christensen, Museum Director

3. **Minutes.**

3.1. **Regular Meeting 12/16/2025.**

Action:

Board Member McCubbin moved to approve minutes as submitted; Member Karkanen seconded. Discussion: None
Roll call vote. Motion 4-0-0

Ayes: Erin Seiler, Nathan Christensen, Bradley Karkanen, Vickie McCubbin
Nays: None
Abstentions: None

4. **Staff Presentation: Fee Scenarios and Revenue Impact.**

4.1. **Overview of Fee Scenarios:**

- **Presentation of service impacts associated with different fee configurations.**
- **Discussion of service levels supported under each scenario**
- **Questions and clarification.**

Chair Seiler recapped information from the previous meeting to get started.

5. **Committee Discussion: Fee Options and Policy Consideration.**

5.1. **Discussion topics include:**

- **Tiered fee approaches (residential vs. business)**
- **Sunset provisions**
- **Additional considerations identified by the Committee.**

Finance Director Carey presented information on fee scenarios and revenue impacts. Carey reviewed a presentation on potential fees and levies to address a budget shortfall, comparing Independence's fees to peer cities. The committee explored tiered fees based on service levels, but decided against this approach. They also considered a \$10 and \$15 flat fee proposal, noting that current economic growth is outpacing revenue growth, leading to potential deficits. The \$15 scenario showed a significant shortfall that would need to be made up elsewhere. Current service levels were described as "cut to the bare bones," with the library open only 4 days a week and City staff covering for absent library colleagues. The discussion highlighted the limitations of volunteers, who cannot perform certain tasks due to privacy laws and policies associated with the Chemeketa Cooperative Regional Library Service (CCRLS).

6. Long-Term Considerations and Funding Outlook.

6.1. **Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA)**

- **Overview and implications.**

Assistant City Manager/Economic Development Director Shawn Irvin discussed economic development strategies for Independence. Discussion of a comprehensive approach to industrial recruitment. The city is working with SEDCOR to assess industrial properties, evaluate supply chains, and engage with existing businesses to identify growth opportunities. The discussion highlighted the importance of creating a business-friendly environment, including infrastructure improvements and addressing wetland constraints. The city is also exploring enterprise zone incentives to attract new industries, while acknowledging that quality of life factors increasingly influence business location decisions.

6.2. **Long-Term Funding Analysis**

- **Anticipated debt retirement**
- **EOA-related funding potential**
- **Current recruitment.**

A two-pronged approach to community development was discussed, emphasizing both meeting specific requirements and creating a desirable community environment. Members discussed the importance of maintaining core services like parks and libraries, as well as the need for a sunset review of fees and financial structures every 2-5 years, given the uncertainty of economic development timelines. Members and staff discussed the city's debt situation, focusing on the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) and general fund obligations. The URA has several bonds coming due, with payments ranging from \$175,000 to \$500,000 annually, while the general fund faces a museum loan of \$70,000 per year and general obligation bonds of \$400,000 per year. The group agreed that as these debts are paid off, particularly the URA bonds by 2030, the city will have more flexibility to repay interfund loans to the general fund, with calculations indicating this could happen in about 5 years. The discussion also touched on park fees and the potential impact of selling certain properties,

though the savings would be nominal. There was concern about how to frame sunset provisions for fees, with the group acknowledging that while a sunset clause could create expectations, future councils could still repeal fees regardless of such provisions.

6.3. **Committee Discussion and Feedback.**

The members discussed financial challenges and potential solutions, focusing on maintaining current services while exploring long-term growth strategies.

The group emphasized the need for community stability before pursuing major expansions like a levy, with plans to reassess the 2040 plan and engage the community in discussions about the city's vision. They also discussed the importance of using various tools, including fees and property sales, to support the general fund while maintaining service levels. The committee discussed the timing and approach for a potential levy or bond proposal. They established a target timeline for making a recommendation to City Council by the end of February, with a work session with the council planned for January 28th.

7. **Identification of Follow-up Items.**

- 7.1.
 - **Additional analysis or information requested by the Committee**
 - **Direction to staff for next steps.**

The committee would like to see more information on topics including fee assessment, indexing, and the structure of a potential levy campaign. They also discussed the need to provide clear documentation of their recommendations and intentions for future council members.

8. **Confirmation of Next Meeting Topics and Date.** The Committee agreed to meet on January 22nd at 5:30 PM to further develop recommendations for the city council.

9. **Adjournment.** Chair Seiler adjourned the meeting at 12:41 PM.

Minutes submitted by:
Myra Russell, City Recorder