INDEPENDENCE
MISSOURI
A GREAT AMERICAN STORY

City Council Round Table Meeting Minutes

July 28, 2025 8:30 AM

IUC, 17221 E. 23rd St. S., Room 117, Independence, MO 64057

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

Those in attendance: City Manager Zach Walker, Deputy City Manager Lisa Reynolds, Assistant City Manager Charlie Dissell, Director of IPL Joe Hegendeffer, Councilmember McCandless, Councilmember Perkins, Councilmember Fears, Mayor Rowland, Councilmember Stewart, Councilmember Vaught, Councilmember Wiley and Lindsey Kolisch from Lauber Municipal Law.

DISCUSSION OVERVIEW

1. Presentation of Discussion Overview

CITY COUNCIL ROUNDTABLE

1. General Obligation Bond

    - Potential future election dates
    - Overview of potential projects
    - Next Steps

In discussing the cost of putting questions on the ballot, Councilmember Fears asked if part of the cost could come from the IPL budget. Lindsey Kolisch responded that IPL Governance 'may' be able to help pay for the election for that issue, but it needs to be reviewed by the legal department.

Questions to Ponder

- Does the Council wish to revisit any of the projects considered in Q1 or Q3?
- If so, when does the Council wish to seek reconsideration?
- Does the Council wish to review one of the project budgets or seek approval for any additional projects that weren't previously considered, such as a new community center?
- Does the Council wish to reappoint a GO Bond Advisory Committee to weigh in on these topics?

GO Bond Question 1 only passed in 3 of the 29 precincts.
We would need to get an additional 2400 yes votes for this question to pass.

Retrospective Questions to Ponder

- Was the total amount of the question too large?
- Were safety concerns regarding police detention adequately addressed?
- Did messaging focus too much on police building conditions and not even on space needs and operating efficiencies?
- Should the question have split the Justice Center and the Animal Shelter?
- Would the Animal Shelter have fared better if a purchase agreement was in place with Jackson County?

There was probably too much offered at once.
Justice Center Recommendation

- Pursue Courts, PD Addition & IUC Phase 2 Renovation Only
- $97M Bond Issue
- Recommended timing: April 2027

Recommended Future Approach: Animal shelter

- Standalone ballot question
- Negotiate transfer of shelter to City of Independence
- Propose $5M for facility improvements
- Recommended timing: April 2026

$3M for the acquisition and $2M for improvements
University of Florida is coming to do a shelter audit in September. Councilmember Wiley would like to see this worked on for the next year. We need to work with Jackson County to get this facility acquired. She thinks bringing in a nonprofit to run it would be beneficial.

Councilmember Perkins suggested a 3-person committee to look at all of the issues for information to put out to the voters.

Work out the agreement with Jackson County
Continue to work on a sustainable budget source to benefit the shelter
Councilmember Perkins suggested this be led by Councilmember Wiley. He will work on it as well.
The goal is to get this on the ballot in April 2026.

GO Bond Question 3

- This question passed in 10 of 29 precincts
- Retrospective Questions to Ponder
- Why was the support so low in precincts close to the athletic complex?
- What impact did the closure of Adventure Oasis have on this issue?
- Would a standalone historic sites question fare better?
- Support for Historic Sites maintenance routinely exceeds 80% in citizen satisfaction surveys
- Will completion of the Parks Master Plan help with messaging? (Zach feels this would be very beneficial)

Councilmember Stewart suggested taking the athletic complex out of the question.

Recommended Election date: April 2026

- Bingham Waggoner Estate $3,599,531
- Vaile Mansion $2,031,361
- MO Model RR Museum $1,619,108
- 1827 Log Courthouse $1,100,000
- Old Fire Station 1 $900,000
- Truman Memorial Building $750,000
- Historic Sites Maintenance Total $10M

Other Recommendations
Complete Parks Master Plan (January 2026) and identify priorities for funding

- Aquatics Center
- Park Revitalization?

Form Recreation Center Advisory Committee to advise on issues such as:

- Location
- Amenities
- Cost

Propose Parks question(s) in April 2027

Transient guest tax 6.5% cap is 7%
We have the ability to ask for an increase in that amount, specifically for the addition of a community center/rec center.
Councilmember Stewart we should put a question on to do this before we even consider a rec center.
Councilmember McCandless thinks this would be a better issue for the 2028 election.

2. IPL Governance Charter Amendment

   - Discussion of language and potential future election dates

3. Other Charter Amendments

   - Identification of amendments under consideration
   - Discussion of timing and potential future election dates

Proposed Changes
Delete current Sections 3.13 through 3.18
Add new Sections 3.12 through 3.32

- Electric utility controlled by Public Utilities Board
- Water and sewer utilities controlled by City unless transferred to the public utility board
- Establishes a public utility advisory board for utilities not operated by the public utilities board

Next steps

- Recommended election date Nov 2025
- If yes, adopt an ordinance calling for election by Aug 25, 2025

Do we have the bandwidth to get this out in time for the ballot?
Councilmember Stewart raised questions regarding the director, who hires/fires them and how are they paid?

Councilmember McCandless recommends this be on the April ballot.
Councilmember Fears feels a November timeframe would not be beneficial. We would not have time to get community input by the deadline of August.
Would the city receiving utility services for free be a conflict of interest?
Currently the municipal buildings pay for utility services.
Councilmember Wiley stated that at the last study session it was decided that we focus on governance and remove the other issues.
Councilmember McCandless proposed we do a Study Session on just the language, breaking it down. We also allow questions from citizens before and after to hear their feedback and modify what we need to. This should be done in the next two months. It should also be published and allow people to give written feedback.

Councilmember Perkins asked if this could be a working engagement with the community. Everyone agreed this would be a good idea. This would be held at the IUC so it's more informal and engaging.

Other Charter Amendments
Question 1 approved
Question 2 defeated by 2,537 votes which included changes to municipal court and judges.
Questions 3, 4 and 5 average margin of defeat was 122 votes.
Recommendation:

- Rewrite questions 3, 4 and 5 and seek voter approval.
- Drop municipal court changes and incorporate other portions of question 2
- November 2025

Councilmember Stewart does not have much interest in putting this on the ballot again except for question 4 which allows people to stand in line to get their name on the ballot. He thinks a random drawing would be better.
Councilmember McCandless said most of these items are not structural items. There are other more important things to work on.

4. Museum and Tourism-Related Activities Tax

    - Interest in pursuing the tax
    - Potential uses and purpose of the funds
    - Legal feasibility and timeline

Museum & Tourism Related Activities Tax –
Reshaping the Square
National Frontier Trails Museum
"Concurrent with our master planning process is that the city has put into motion moving the current City Hall and police station, opening up a large city block to the east of the Truman Courthouse and Square. This new land area combined with the acquisition of a few additional pieces of property in this block could arguably create the most exciting new development in downtown Independence since the very beginnings of the Square. It is suggested to be a modern community/civic oriented space consisting of a new Community Center, museum, living spaces, grocery store marketplace, eateries, a large open flexible lawn with amphitheater and other small pop-up style commercial use. We see this block as a key player, establishing the next 100 years of a resurgent community, filled with new local business, entertainment and tourism.
Statute: RSMO 82.850 (Cities of Independence & Joplin)
• A tax on gross receipts derived from the amount of sales or charges for all meals and drinks furnished by every person operating a food establishment

• May be imposed in increments of 1/8 of 1%, up to 2% of such gross receipts
• Estimated annual revenue: $809k-$13M
• 1/2 of tax MUST be used for development/promotion/operation of a museum
• Key definitions:

• Food: all products commonly used for meals or drinks, including alcohol
• Food establishment: any café, cafeteria, lunchroom, or restaurant which sells meals or drinks to the public
• Gross receipts: the gross receipts from sales of meals or drinks prepared on the premises and delivered to the purchaser
• Recommendation: Complete NFTM Feasibility Study and pursue MTRA Tax in August 2027

Zach presented a very hypothetical scenario on costs.
A 1 cent sales tax would not generate enough money for us to operate this.
Councilmember McCandless said that the country is still trying to recover from COVID. She cannot support this knowing the City likely could not support this financially.

Capital Improvements for Police Sales Tax
• 1/8th of one percent
• Originally approved Aug. 2004
• Renewed April 2016 for the period of January 1st, 2017, through December 31st, 2028 (67% approval)
• FY 26 Proposed Budget: $3.3M
• Funding supports vehicle replacement, mobile data terminals, in-car radios, handheld portable radios, and other equipment needs
• Recommendation: Seek approval in April 2027
This did not get renewed the first time on the ballot. It had to be put on the ballot again to pass. Zach stated it does not expire until December 2028; however, we do not want to wait too long and suggested it be on the ballot in April 2027.

5. Public Safety Sales Tax Renewal

   - Timeline and legal deadline for renewal
   - Discussion of ballot strategy and community engagement

Tax expires at the end of 2028. We will wait to put this on the ballot until later 2026 or 2027.

IPL Governance
Joe Heggendeffer said information for a public engagement can be put together fairly quickly as he has the information ready.
Ballot choices are November 2025 or April 2026
General consensus is that it go on the April ballot so we take time to do right and answer citizen questions. Public engagements should start toward end of September so communications has time to get the word out.
Councilmember Fears suggested we get public input on other questions as well since we are already having these meetings. Councilmember suggested we add a Saturday meeting for the convenience of citizens. Councilmember Perkins suggested we do two Saturday meetings.
The plan is to do one during the evening during the week and one on a Saturday afternoon at the

IUC.

GO Bond
Councilmember McCandless likes the idea of historic being by itself.
Tourism sales tax should be with this question.
We should do another advisory committee
Councilmember Wiley would like to include the Animal Welfare Committee for the Animal Shelter question.
Zach feels the historic site question is ready to go and should definitely go on the ballot again.
Councilmember Stewart said the GO Bond for historic sites and the animal shelter should go on April.

Summary:
End of September Council will have 2 meetings to have community input on IPL Governance.
April ballot

GO Bond issues of historic sites and animal shelter questions for April
Committee to get something worked out with the County
Museum tax issue back burner as well as charter amendments
Public Safety Sales Tax renewal will wait for bit.

Justice Center needs a different approach. There are a lot of conversations with this topic that should take place. This will be delayed for now. This another topic that should have public engagement.

Public Safety Sales Tax renewal – need to know how long of a renewal do we ask for, 10 years, 12 years? Do we increase it?

Charter amendments and museum tax
The museum tax never received majority support

Meeting adjourned 10:32 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

INFORMATION ONLY

1. **Please Note**: In accordance with RSMo. 610.021, the City Council may convene in a Closed Executive Session during or after the meeting, on matters of litigation, legal action, and/or attorney client communications, as permitted by Sec. 610.021(1), on matters of personnel, as permitted by Sec. 610.021(3) and personnel records, as permitted by 610.021(13), on matters of contracts, as permitted by 610.021(12), on matters of real estate, as permitted by 610.021(2) and/or matters of labor negotiations, as permitted by 610.021(9).

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Presiding Officer of the City Council
of the City of Independence, Missouri

ATTEST:

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City Clerk