



City of Independence
811 W. Laurel
Independence, KS 67301



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 8, 15 (9 a.m./special meeting), 22

November 12, 19 | December 10, 16

CITY COMMISSION MEETINGS

5:30 p.m. - Independence Civic Center & Facebook Live

October 15, 22, 29

FALL FARMERS MARKET

3 p.m.-6:30 p.m.

Parking Lot at Chestnut & 8th Street

October 23-31

NEEWOLLAH & HALLOWEEN EVENTS

Limited Activity Festival

Queen Neelah Pageant ■ Medallion Hunt

Other Community Activities

November 3

GENERAL ELECTION DAY

Get out and vote!

November 6 | December 4

FIRST FRIDAY

7:30 a.m. Independence Civic Center

& Facebook Live

Co-sponsored by City & Chamber

November 11, 26-27

December 24 (12 noon), 25, 31 (12 noon) | January 1

CITY HALL CLOSED

For Holiday Observances



FALL 2020

CITY HALL NEWS



One-Cent Sales Tax renewal on election ballot this fall



If you are an Independence resident and registered voter, when you head to the polls or complete your mail-in election ballot this fall, you will have the opportunity to vote for a renewal of a one-cent sales tax to benefit continued progress in our community.

Thanks to an overwhelmingly favorable community vote a decade ago, a one-cent Special Use Sales Tax has been in place in Independence since October 2012 to support major community improvement projects. Among others, these projects have included:

- Extensive improvements at **Riverside Park** and **Ralph Mitchell Zoo** (carousel, miniature train depot, tennis courts, assistance with stadium renovation, enhancements to animal enclosures and exhibits);
- **Major street improvements**, including the West Main, 10th & Chestnut, Penn & Chestnut and Peter Pan Road projects;
- Mandated ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) projects for ramp and sidewalk accessibility throughout the community;
- Improvements at **Memorial Hall**; assistance with the

Independence Dog Park development; and installation of an **emergency alert system** for citizens;

- Necessary Phase 1 work at 1916 City Hall facility to remediate issues and secure the building;
- Stabilizing property taxes and support for debt repayment.

The current one-penny sales tax will expire in October 2022, and the Independence City Commission has approved ballot language for a vote to reinstate a one-cent sales tax to run October 2022-October 2032 to support the following projects, among others:

- Additional City facility improvements, including **enhancements at Riverside Park & Ralph Mitchell Zoo and an improved sporting complex**;
- More **improvements to streets and sidewalks**;
- Property tax stabilization;
- **Economic Development** initiatives;
- Debt repayment for bonds related to previous and future improvement projects.

Early voting opens **October 14**, and the general election will be conducted **November 3**. [Read more.](#) ▶

City of Independence
811 W. Laurel ■ Independence, KS 67301 ■ 620-332-2500
www.independenceks.gov



Carousel Refurbish



Monkey Island Makeover



West Main Street Project



Tennis Court Improvements

Just a few examples of improvement projects funded with the one-cent sales tax passed by voters in 2012.

One-Cent Sales Tax Vote Frequently Asked Questions

Is this a new sales tax?

If the one-cent sales tax is passed, the **current sales tax rate (9.5%) will not change**. This would be a renewal of the rate we are currently paying. The existing one-cent sales tax will expire October 2022 and the renewed tax would take effect immediately, so you would see no change to your current sales tax expenditures.

Who pays sales tax?

Unlike property tax, the **responsibility of paying sales tax is shared** with visitors, tourists and those passing through our community. Because our community continues to evolve as a popular regional destination for shopping, dining and recreation, our base of sales tax payers is significantly broader than just our local residents.

What if the sales tax does not pass?

If the sales tax is **NOT** renewed, property tax increases will be **necessary** to cover the City's obligations.

What does a one-cent sales tax amount to?

For every \$1,000 in discretionary spending, a 1¢ sales tax amounts to \$10. Again, **this is the same amount of sales tax that we have paid since 2012.**

Will I see tangible benefits from my sales tax?

Through the recent community strategic planning process, **citizens have indicated their desire for many quality-of-life improvements in the community** - such as beautification and recreation facilities - which would be priorities funded with a continued special use sales tax.

How does the tax break down in terms of projects?

- 25%** - Continued mill levy support to stabilize property taxes;
- 31%** - Payment of contractual obligations/debt financing for previous or future bonds to fund major improvement projects;
- 12%** - **Equipment, building and facility improvements**, including but not limited to Riverside Park & Ralph Mitchell Zoo; Riverside Beach Family Aquatic Center; neighborhood parks; ball fields and other recreational facilities; Independence Public Library; Fire/EMS; Public Works and additional ADA improvements; City government technology and infrastructure;
- 27%** - **Street and sidewalk improvements**, including but not limited to multi-use paths; drainage and storm water management; alley improvements; public parking; traffic control;
- 5%** - **Economic development initiatives**, including but not limited to business recruitment and retention; housing initiatives; beautification; industrial park improvements; improved community broadband.

(Note: Additional funds for economic development will be drawn from franchise fees and other revenue streams.) ★

READY TO LEAD

Kelly Passauer assumes role as Independence City Manager

After more than 30 years of employment with the City of Independence - including three separate stints serving as Interim City Manager - Kelly Passauer has been appointed City Manager by the Independence City Commission.

Passauer's appointment was announced September 16, with commissioners lauding her "exceptional" performance in the interim role since July 2019, as well as her extensive experience, communication skills, attention to detail and vision for a progressive community and effective municipal government.

"Kelly has shown her ability...and shared her vision for new directions that will benefit the City's operations," said Mayor Leonhard Cafilish. "I look forward to seeing the relationship between the Commission and Kelly work for the betterment of Independence."

Prior to her most recent stint, Passauer also served as Interim City Manager in 2017 and 2010, and has worked in the City Manager's office for more than 26 years. She is a Certified Public Manager and member of the International City/County Management Association, the Kansas Association of City/County Management and the American Planning Association.

"I am beyond excited and thankful to the City Commission for entrusting me with this critical leadership role with the City of Independence," Passauer said.

A component of the "new directions" referenced by Mayor Cafilish is a reorganization of the City's staffing to mirror that of many corporate structures with a CEO (City Manager) dealing with executive level planning and outreach to external entities, and a COO (Assistant City Manager) that would deal with daily routine operational duties. This approach will allow the City Manager to focus on a regional directive set by the City Commission while ensuring the required administrative support for continuing operations occurs and the overall workload is managed efficiently, Passauer said.

The commission affirmed the first phase of reorganization during a special meeting September 30, when Passauer announced the appointment of another long-time City leader, David Cowan, as Assistant City Manager.

Cowan is in his 34th year as a City of Independence employee and was promoted to the role of Public Safety Director in January 2012, and his title was later changed to Director of Safety and Code Enforcement. Under the reorganization plan,



Cowan's oversight responsibilities will include the operations of Fire/EMS, Park & Zoo, Public Works, Utilities, Building Department, Code Enforcement and Memorial Hall - some of which have already been under his supervision for several years.

Passauer said a key element of the City's organizational structure already in place is the Administration Team, which in addition to the City Manager, consists of the Assistant City Manager, Police Chief and Finance Director. This team will continue to work together on higher level administrative projects and recommendations. With the reorganization, the members of the Administration Team will

continue to report directly to the City Manager, while the other department directors will now report directly to the Assistant City Manager.

"Although some department directors will report directly to the Assistant City Manager for daily routine operations, we will still maintain communications, including weekly meetings led by the City Manager with all of our Department Directors to ensure we are moving forward on City projects and initiatives," Passauer said.

"David is a hard worker, is passionate about the City, and has excellent customer service and problem-solving skills. I am excited to see David in his new role."

Administrative Aide, Lydia Collins, will provide clerical staff support for the City Manager. Collins has worked for the City for more than 25 years and recently transferred from Finance to Administration.

Additional restructuring is planned in the coming months as some department directors retire, Passauer said.

"I am excited about this reorganization, and I look forward to working with the Commission, the City Administrative Team, the Department Directors and others on current and future City projects. I am appreciative of the great people I have the pleasure of working with to see these initiatives through." ★



David Cowan was promoted to the role of Assistant City Manager during a special Commission meeting September 30.

The toll of COVID-19

Safeguard your mental wellbeing along with your physical health

Stress is a killer, they say, and it's true. In normal times, anxiety and depression are prevalent, with 18% of the population experiencing an anxiety disorder and 7% experiencing a depressive episode at any given time. These statistics are from the "olden times," the pre-COVID-19 times. Since the pandemic has hit, stress and depression have increased phenomenally, as we now have added stress with illness, wellbeing of ourselves and others, a catastrophic death toll, increase in unemployment, school stress, stress with homeschooling our children and a massive political battle about the whole thing. It is enough to make anyone stressed out and feel hopeless. However, it does not do any good to talk about the stress and the pandemic without talking about ways to cope with it.

So how do we cope with this stress? Certainly, there are different ways to cope for different people, and some things will work better for some people, other things for other people. Certainly, there are what is considered to be positive coping skills and those considered to be negative coping skills. Things like drugs, alcohol, binge eating and increased screen time

may help in the moment or for short periods of time, but they may also lead to other problems, including physical health problems, social problems and legal troubles, and ultimately may increase your stress rather than decrease it. Social isolation can provide some feelings of security during this challenging time and may seem the best way to prevent COVID from your house. The danger of isolation, though, is the loss of human connection, which is a natural way to manage stress, depression and anxiety. Social media can be a positive experience for many, but there are downsides to social media use and information overload. As it is recommended with children, it may be helpful to limit screen time, especially social media and various news stories; instead plan a time each day to engage on the

'The key to good mental health is self-care.'

internet, but set a clear start and end time for yourself.

HEALTHY COPING SKILLS

Luckily, there are many positive coping skills that can be used to help manage stress and manage ourselves to be able to thrive in this stressful time and handle stress as well as we are able. Three things that naturally boost mood are sunlight, fresh air and exercise; these things, in and of themselves, can help you fight stress and decrease depression. Use them in any combination; go for a run, a walk, a hike; go camping; take your children to the park and play with them; go visit the free Ralph Mitchell Zoo; geocache; fly a kite; start your fall garden; paint rocks and hide them around for people to find; have a socially distanced get-together like an outdoor

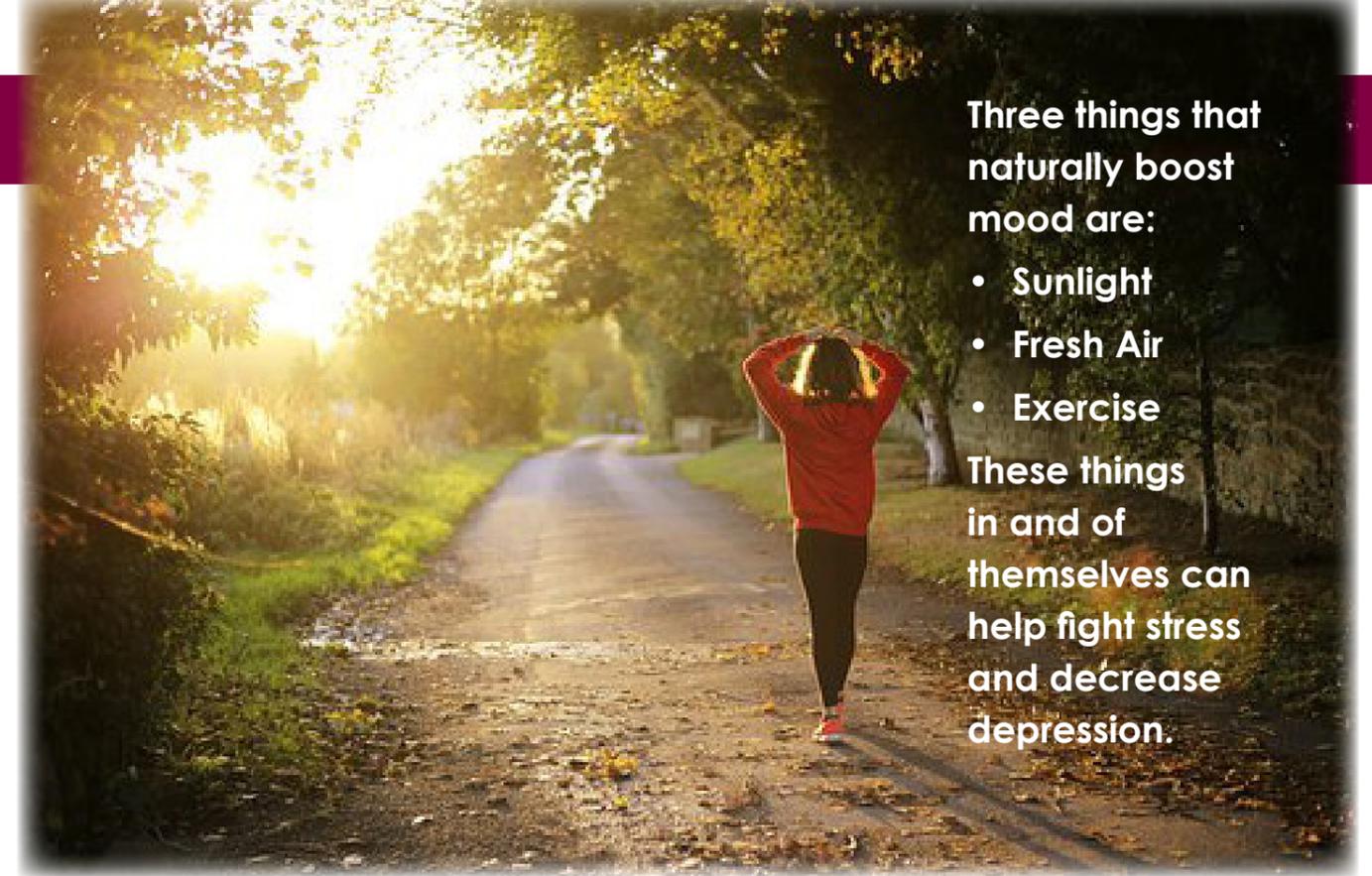
cookout...the list of things goes ever on and on, and there are NO WRONG ANSWERS!

Of course, maybe you're not outdoorsy, and that's okay, too! Find things inside that can help boost your mood, such as playing games with family and friends; socially distanced time with family and friends; cooking; organizing your house; taking a warm bath; reading...again, the list is endless and you very likely have your

own ideas for what works for you, and again, there are NO WRONG ANSWERS! For those in recovery from substance use, spending time with healthy supports such as local self help, sponsors and peer support can help ensure that despite the stressors of the pandemic, you are able to remain in recovery.

The key to good mental health is self-care. This is true for stress any time, and it is especially true through particularly stressful periods, like right now. Self-care involves a few different actions. One step is rational detachment, or the ability to put stress to the side when you can, whether it be for a weekend, the night, an hour or five minutes. The stress will be there and needs to be dealt with, and it can be most effectively dealt with if you can put it aside for brief periods

Courtesy Four County Mental Health Center
MEGAN BROWN, LMSW, LMAC:
Crisis Diversion Services Coordinator
IAN CIZERLE-BROWN, LMLP:
NAVIGATE Coordinator



Three things that naturally boost mood are:

- Sunlight
- Fresh Air
- Exercise

These things in and of themselves can help fight stress and decrease depression.

of time and focus on self-care. Self-care involves finding positive things to do that are not stressful and that recharge your battery and pep you up, so that you are able to jump into the fray and once more be able to handle the stress that life brings, and in this case, be able to handle the stress of an ongoing pandemic that wants to break you down and make you stressed. It's not a bad thing to take a break and to give yourself time and grace to handle stress. You wouldn't begrudge someone else needing to take that time - treat yourself as nicely as you would treat other people. You are equally as important, and you equally deserve that break.

WHEN AND HOW TO SEEK HELP

Of course, if you've tried these things and find that they are not working for you, if you cannot think of ways to deal with stress, if stress is overwhelming you and the coping skills and not there, mental health services are always available for those who need them.

There are several great resources to utilize when it is time to seek help. **Four County Mental Health Center** is the local community mental health center and can be contacted by calling **620-331-1748** or **800-499-1748**, and there are crisis services which can be utilized 24/7 by calling the Four County phone number. Primary care physicians are another great resource for seeking assistance.

Additionally, there are several text and hotline phone numbers to utilize including:

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE:

1-800-273-8255 or text HOME to 741741

VETERANS CRISIS LINE:

1-800-273-8255 and select option 1 or text 838255

COMPASSIONATE EAR WARM LINE:

(866) 927-6327

Hours: 4pm to 10pm every night of the year

Taking care of your mental health is not a weakness, it is a strength. No one would say that going to the doctor for diabetes is a weakness; taking care of your mental health is as important as taking care of your physical health. Take advantage of all the resources you have to ensure that you are mentally healthy, and recognize that in times of great stress, consciously taking care of your mental health may be the best thing that you can do. ★

Retirees rack up 101 years of City service

Soon, the City of Independence team will be missing three familiar faces, after longtime employees with an astounding 101 years of combined service make their retirement exits.

Brenda Weaver, Deputy City Clerk, retired July 31, after more than 29 years of service, and the retirements of husband-and-wife duo Barb (Park & Zoo Director) and Barry Beurskens (Memorial Hall caretaker and former Fire Captain) will be effective January 1, 2021, after 40 and 32 years of service, respectively.

"We are very blessed at the City of Independence to have many loyal, longtime employees, and these are three of the best," said City Manager Kelly Passauer. "We work hard to maintain a work culture that encourages longevity. We want our employees to stay here, feel connected here and retire here. Brenda, Barb and Barry are the definition of dedication and have modeled great service and work ethic throughout their careers."

Weaver joined the City in May 1991, and worked through the ranks in the Water Department and City Clerk's office. She was promoted to Deputy City Clerk in October 2012.

"I really loved working for the City," Weaver said. "I had lots of great experiences, and I liked the interaction with customers and employees. That is what I really miss the most...(along with) meeting new employees and being in the 'action seat.'"

Barb Beurskens was hired as secretary to the City Clerk in June 1981 and actually was one of Weaver's predecessors as Deputy City Clerk until transferring to the Park & Zoo as Assistant Supervisor in October 2010. She was promoted to Park & Zoo Director in September 2012.

Barry Beurskens was hired as a Firefighter in April 1989. He literally "climbed the ladder" and was promoted to Fire Captain in November 2014, then trained to be an EMT when the Fire and



Barb & Barry Beurskens



Brenda Weaver

Emergency Medical Services departments merged. After 29 years in the Fire Department, he transferred to Memorial Hall in 2018 to "do something different before he retired."

The Beurskens plan to spend retirement working on their farm, traveling, contributing more time to their church and also continuing with their 2B Smokin' BBQ food truck business and mowing business.

"The City has been very good to both of us," Barb Beurskens said. "We certainly have enjoyed working for the City and took pride in a job well done."

"One of my greatest accomplishments was being part of the renovation of Logan Fountain...It was a joy to work with various people, groups and organization towards the improvement of the park and zoo facilities."

"The people we have met have been our greatest reward. Our co-workers are just like family, and we will certainly miss seeing them every day." ★

Roll up your sleeve and
GET YOUR FLU SHOT!
FLU SEASON IS HERE, and it's a DOUBLE WHAMMY
during the COVID-19 pandemic.
It's never been more important to protect your health!
Check with your primary care provider for availability.

Current Employment Opportunities



PATROL OFFICER I

- Patrols city to enforce law and order.
- Investigates and prepares reports of complaints and accidents.
- Issues citations and makes arrests.
- Responds to crime, accident and emergency scenes.
- Serves subpoenas and warrants.
- Controls traffic and crowds.
- Appears in court.
- Books and transports prisoners.
- Takes fingerprints.

Full-time
\$16.67/hr, plus benefits

DISPATCHER/CLERK I

- Receives regular and 911 telephone calls and dispatches personnel to handle emergencies.
- Processes reports for prosecutors.
- Maintains case, report, accident, complaint, insurance and related files.
- Tests sirens, radios and phones.
- Checks validity of driver's licenses and vehicle tags.
- Submits crime information to law enforcement databases.

Full-time
\$14.31/hr, plus benefits



BUILDING INSPECTOR

- Reviews building plans and approves building permits.
- Inspects industrial, commercial and residential projects.
- Inspects plumbing, electrical, mechanical and structural installations.
- Maintains project documentation and filing.
- Responds to complaints and inquiries.
- Serves as Asbestos and Backflow inspector.
- Serves on Condemnation Committee.
- Serves as backup for Code Enforcement Officer.

Full-time
\$18.21/hr starting | \$22.30/hr midpoint, plus benefits

Building Inspector Trainee
 (See "Building Inspector" Job Duties)

PARK & ZOO DIRECTOR

- Directs all Park, Zoo and Cemetery activities.
- Prepares departmental budget.
- Handles staffing and supervises employees.
- Ensures facility and animal maintenance.
- Organizes public events and coordinates personnel.
- Coordinates and facilitates FORPAZ and Park Board meetings.
- Maintains organized records and works with regulatory agencies.

Full-time
\$54,750/annual starting, plus benefits



STREET SUPERVISOR

- Organizes and directs the maintenance, repair and construction of highways, bridges, streets, alleys, curbs, sewers, storm drains, sidewalks and parking lots.
- Schedules and assigns crews and equipment to projects.
- Repairs streets, manholes and stret signs.
- Drives vehicles and operates equipment.

Full-time
\$18.95/hr, plus benefits



TWO WAYS TO APPLY:

- 1 Complete an application online at:
www.independenceks.gov



(or scan here)

- 2 Applications also accepted at:
KansasWorks, 317 N. Penn
620-332-5904
www.southeastkansasworks.com

MARK YOUR CALENDAR
NOVEMBER 7, 2020
4TH ANNUAL VETERANS DAY OF HONOR
IN INDEPENDENCE