

Award Honors The Wall That Heals Event;
City Council Recap

River City Briefs

March 13, 2026

The city of Independence, Oregon | 555 S Main St, Independence, OR 97351 | 503 838-1212

Para La Versión En Español

60-Second Council - March 10, 2026 Meeting



City Council and Urban Renewal Agency Recap

On Tuesday evening, the Urban Renewal Agency met first, followed by the city council meeting to address several items on the agenda:

- The urban renewal agency received the annual auditor's report, and the city's auditors issued a clean audit.

- The mayor provided an update, followed by council liaison reports on various committee activities.
- During the city manager's report, updates were shared on the transition to digital meeting packets, revisions to the council bill process, and recent communications analytics showing increased community engagement.
- The council adopted ordinances related to mobile vending units and the annexation of approximately 46.7 acres along 13th Street.
- The council approved the first reading of an ordinance addressing fence requirements associated with governmental uses.
- The council received the second-quarter financial report.
- The council held a public hearing to close out the Community Development Block Grant that supported childcare development in the community.
- The council also held a public hearing on the new Parks System Master Plan and approved moving forward with the first reading of the ordinance adopting the plan.
- The council then entered executive session to consult with legal counsel regarding litigation with a former construction contractor. After returning to open session, the council authorized the city manager to finalize a settlement.

The next city council meeting is scheduled for April 14. For more information on these topics, visit the city of Independence website.

[Watch Video Here](#)

Key Takeaways from the City's Annual Financial Audit

INDEPENDENCE FINANCIAL AUDIT SUMMARY 2025



INDEPENDENCE

Oregon's Story Begins Here

The city of Independence recently completed its annual independent financial audit. The report helps ensure transparency and accountability in how public funds are managed. Here are several key takeaways:

Independent auditors issued a clean opinion

- The city received a clean audit opinion, meaning financial statements were found to be accurate and prepared according to government accounting standards.

City debt continues to decline

- The city reduced its outstanding debt by about \$1.2 million this year through scheduled payments.

Grant funding helped support major community projects

- Capital grants increased by about \$3.75 million, helping fund infrastructure and community improvements.

New public safety fee supports police services

- The public safety fee generated about \$480,000, helping stabilize funding for police services.

Continued investment in community infrastructure

- Infrastructure investment increased by about \$2.6 million, bringing the value of city assets like roads, parks, buildings, and water and sewer systems to roughly \$50 million.

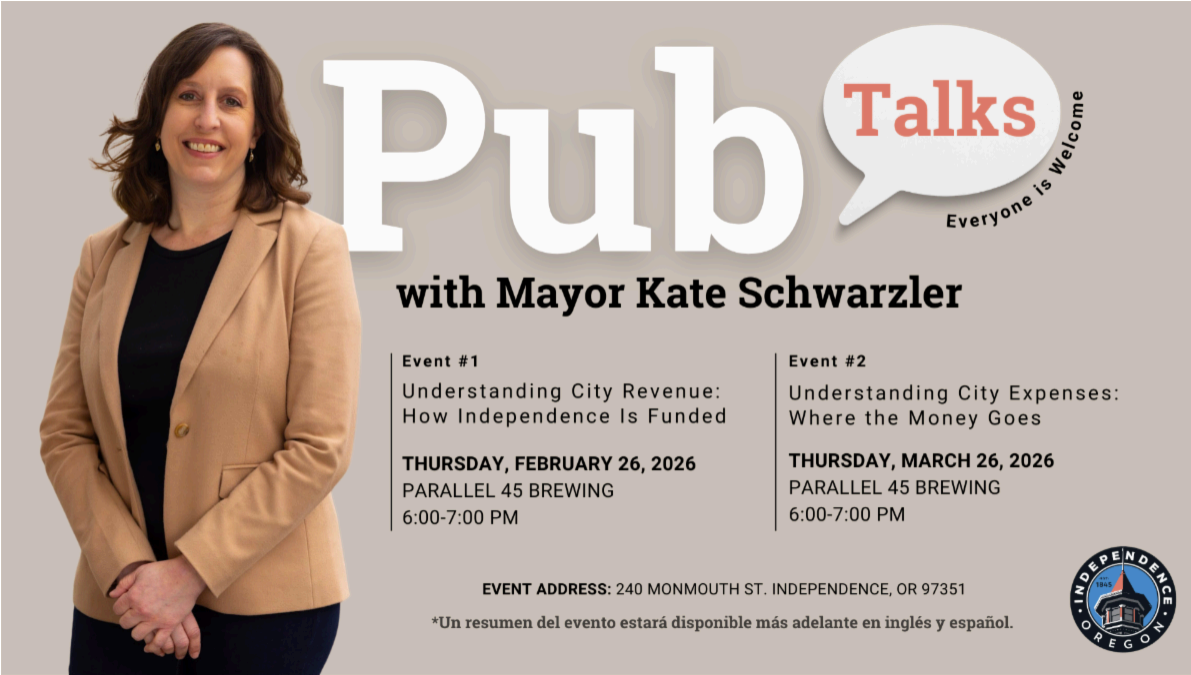
Financial challenges remain ahead

- Like many communities, Independence continues to face rising costs for infrastructure, utilities, and public safety services, making long-term planning essential.

You can read the full report by clicking the button below.

[Read Full Report Here](#)

Mayor Kate Invites you to Pub Talks




Pub Talks
Everyone is Welcome

with Mayor Kate Schwarzler

Event #1 Understanding City Revenue: How Independence Is Funded	Event #2 Understanding City Expenses: Where the Money Goes
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2026 PARALLEL 45 BREWING 6:00-7:00 PM	THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2026 PARALLEL 45 BREWING 6:00-7:00 PM

EVENT ADDRESS: 240 MONMOUTH ST. INDEPENDENCE, OR 97351

*Un resumen del evento estará disponible más adelante en inglés y español.



Understanding City Expenses: Where the Money Goes

In advance of this year's budget process, join Mayor Kate for a public conversation about how the city of Independence allocates its resources.

This session will:

- Explain major spending categories
- Clarify fixed vs. discretionary costs
- Break down what's mandated by law
- Explore thoughtful ideas for efficiency and cost savings

This is a constructive conversation focused on innovation and stewardship — not personnel decisions or criticism of individuals.

All are welcome.

Event Details:

Thursday, March 26

6:00 – 7:00 PM

Parallel 45 Brewing

Regional Cooperative Project Award Honors The Wall That Heals Event



Last week at the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments annual award banquet, The Wall That Heals in Independence was honored with the 2025 Regional Cooperative Project Award.

Bringing this traveling replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to Oregon was a true regional effort. Over 18 months, 17 local governments, state agencies, nonprofits, and more than 200 volunteers worked together to plan and execute the event. Highlights included a motorcade through four cities led by veterans on motorcycles and Corvette club members, a 24-hour memorial site operation in Independence, a Blackhawk flyover, a 21-gun salute, and a daily bugler performing Taps.

More than 8,600 visitors came to honor veterans, participate in guided tours, and experience the history of the Wall firsthand. Hosting The Wall That Heals demonstrated the impact of what's possible when cities, counties, nonprofits, and communities move together as one.

Books, Laughs, and Hard-Hitting Questions



Last week, we had a great time visiting Ash Creek Elementary School as part of their Guest Celebrity Reader event celebrating literacy. Mayor Kate Schwarzler and Police Chief Banuelos joined students and read some of their favorite children's books, helping highlight the joy of reading and the important role it plays both in school and throughout our community.

After the reading, students had the chance to ask some hard-hitting questions. They asked Chief Banuelos about how long he's been in law enforcement, while Mayor Kate faced questions like "Have you played Fortnite?" and the truly challenging "Can you say 6-7?"

It was a great time connecting with students and celebrating the power of books!

**Independence Police Connect with Students at
Western Oregon University Career Fair**



The Independence Police department had a great time meeting students at the Criminal Justice Career Fair at Western Oregon University!

It was great connecting with future public safety professionals, answering questions, and sharing what it's like to serve the Independence community. The future of law enforcement looks bright!

Monmouth Garden Club Plant Sale

MONMOUTH GARDEN CLUB
ANNUAL PLANT SALE
SATURDAY, MAY 2, 2026
9:00am - 2:00pm
MONMOUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY
(No Early Sales)

Perennials, Annuals, Bulbs, Vegetable Plants, Trees,
Shrubs, Herbs, Sedum Gardens, New to You garden
related items and Decorative House Plants

"From our gardens to yours."
(Great gifts for Mother's Day!)

For further information contact:
Sharon Lofton at (503) 586-6746

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