

# Linking Letter

July 5, 2017

by **Anne Scheck**

6/27/2017 CITY COUNCIL

Order of Content in the *Linking Letter*

- ~| **Budget:** Tax Passage
  - ~| **Update:** Old City Hall
  - >| **PIN REPORT:** Mike Danko
  - <| **DATE-TO-NOTE:** Apple Box Days
  - ! | **Letter from the Editor:** Back to YOU
  - ! | **FINALE:** Grant for River Park
- 

## ~| **Budget, Property Tax**

A tax rate of \$4.59 per \$1,000 of assessed property value was adopted by the Independence City Council at last week's meeting, making it likely that once again Independence will have the highest tax rate among cities within Polk County. The tax-rate – technically \$4.5897 per \$1,000 of assessed property value – tops Monmouth, Dallas and Falls City, according to state tax rolls.

However, it's the same tax rate the city has had since the early 1990's, when all local governments "were frozen" at tax rates then in effect, according to David Clyne, Independence city manager. Unlike neighboring states of Washington and California, "Oregon cities have no access to sales tax revenues," he pointed out. "Moreover, Oregon cities have virtually no access to income tax either," he stated.

The tax-rate passage was part of a session in which city councilors approved a budget for the coming fiscal year of about \$28.6 million including \$92,000 in reserve funds, with \$1.5-~~to~~-\$2 million distributed as contingency funding to different municipal funds.

The Council also passed a supplemental budget of \$453,000, largely to cover closing costs and debt service on a city bond. The sum was part of the total appropriations package, but it necessitated a special vote. Previously, it had been “incorrectly categorized,” explained Independence Finance Director Gloria Butsch.

Then, acting as the city’s Urban Renewal Agency, the councilors also approved a budget for the Urban Renewal District (URD) in the sum of \$939,054, which leaves the URD with a budget deficit of about \$1.7 million. In another action, the Independence City Council also endorsed a draft strategic plan with a top goal of maintaining and improving the city’s financial stability.

---

## **~| Old City Hall Update**

The old city hall, previously targeted as a potential parking site, may now get new life as the home of the Heritage Museum, which is currently housed a short distance away.

An architectural review that explores the possibility for the move is underway, said David Clyne, Independence city manager. “There is a lot of excitement about the possibility of the museum moving down to the old city hall,” said City Councilor Marilyn Morton.

---

## **>| PIN REPORT: Honored!**

Public Interest News

Michael Danko, who is retiring as Independence community planning director, was commended at the last Independence City Council meeting for 27 years of “outstanding service” that “influenced and shaped” the city over a period in which the population climbed from about 4,000 to nearly 10,000. Mr. Danko’s contributions ranged from creating the logo that currently graces the city’s signs to improvements on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street which smoothed the previously uneven surface near the railroad tracks. Mr. Danko was given a plaque and an engraved knife – he is a collector of

them and immediately unsheathed it to view the blade. Mr. Danko received a standing ovation at the conclusion of the ceremony.

---

<|**DATE-TO-NOTE:** July 6-8

Apple Box Theater, a local group of charming young thespians, will present "Arabian Nights" July 6, 7 & 8 at 7 pm. The classic tales will magically appear at Western Oregon University's outdoor stage near Rice Auditorium. Free entrance. Bring seating.

**!!!PICK UP** the July *Independent*, free:  
The Golden Horse, The Ovenbird Bakery,  
Elite Cleaners (all downtown) and  
The Starduster (at Independence Airport)

===To Unsubscribe Hit Reply===

## **LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

To Readers of the *Linking Letter* from Anne Scheck:

*Feedback from the last letter-to-the-editor I published hasn't been in short supply. One resident sent me the Code of Ethics from the Society of Professional Journalists, which (coincidentally) I've been advocating for years – I'd announced my belief in that very code more than a year ago, and in a Linking Letter Sept. 19, 2016. But it certainly doesn't hurt to be reminded, from time to time!*

*Another reader urged me to share my credentials. Before I do so, let me reiterate that freedom of speech means anyone has a right to an opinion -- and a right to be heard. Publishing a critical letter often provides the most solid proof that the First Amendment is alive and thriving. To suppress unflattering language would be wrong, wrong, wrong.*

*As for my credentials: I have three college degrees, one in journalism. I worked for newspapers and wire services in Southern California over my 25 years as a journalist there, mostly covering health & science. Some of the California cities I covered in my salad days were Ojai, Burbank and Ventura. But I've never liked writing for anyone as much as I've liked*

*reporting for you. I hope that clears things up. I'm grateful and humble for your readership.*

*Thank you, Anne Scheck*

+++++

**FINALE: City Clinches Grant \$**

The City of Independence was approved for a Local Government Grant in the amount of \$414,582 for further riverfront park development, according to Mark Cowan, grant program coordinator for the State of Oregon. The grant was approved by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission on June 14. A grant agreement and a "Notice to Proceed" letter will be completed with the city in next couple of months, Mr. Cowan added.

---

LINK to 6/27/2017 meeting video below  
via youtube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1q0hIUodnwM>