

**TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE, LOUISIANA**  
**ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023**

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**

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Dennis E. James, CPA  
Lyle E. Lambert, CPA  
Paul M. Riggs, Jr., CPA  
J. Bryan Ehricht, CPA  
Megan E. Lynch, CPA  
B. Jacob Steib, CPA



JAMES  
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## Independent Auditor's Report

The Honorable Jim Paine, Mayor  
and Members of the Board of Aldermen  
Independence, Louisiana

### **Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements**

#### ***Opinions***

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the Town of Independence, Louisiana (the "Town"), as of and for the year ended June 30, 2023, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the Town's basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the Town of Independence, Louisiana, as of June 30, 2023, and the respective changes in financial position and, where applicable, cash flows thereof for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

#### ***Basis for Opinions***

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Town and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.

#### ***Emphasis of Matter – Change in Accounting Principle***

As described in Note 1 to the financial statements, in 2023, the Town adopted new accounting guidance, GASB Statement No. 96, *Subscription-Based Information Technology Arrangements*. Our opinion is not modified with respect to this matter.

#### ***Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements***

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and

The Honorable Jim Paine, Mayor  
and Members of the Board of Aldermen  
Town of Independence, Louisiana

maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Town's ability to continue as a going concern for twelve months beyond the financial statement date, including any currently known information that may raise substantial doubt shortly thereafter.

### ***Auditor's Responsibility for the Audit of the Financial Statements***

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinions. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards* will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards*, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Town's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Town's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

The Honorable Jim Paine, Mayor  
and Members of the Board of Aldermen  
Town of Independence, Louisiana

### ***Required Supplementary Information***

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require that the management's discussion and analysis; the budgetary comparison information; the schedules of the Town's proportionate share of the net pension liability; and the schedules of Town contributions on pages 6–13, 60–61, 62–63, and 64–65, respectively, be presented to supplement the basic financial statements. Such information, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. We have applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, which consisted of inquiries of management about the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance.

### ***Supplementary Information***

Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming opinions on the financial statements that collectively comprise the Town's basic financial statements. The combining and individual non-major governmental fund financial statements; the schedule of compensation of paid elected officials; the schedule of compensation, benefits, and other payments to agency head; the schedule of insurance coverage in force; the water and sewer rate schedule; the schedule of water and sewer information; and the schedule of justice system funding – collecting / disbursing entity are presented for purposes of additional analysis and are not a required part of the basic financial statements.

The combining and individual non-major fund financial statements; the schedule of compensation of paid elected officials; the schedule of compensation, benefits, and other payments to agency head; and the schedule of justice system funding – collecting / disbursing entity are the responsibility of management and were derived from and relate directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the basic financial statements. Such information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the basic financial statements or to the basic financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the combining and individual non-major fund financial statements; the schedule of compensation of paid elected officials; the schedule of compensation, benefits, and other payments to agency head; and the schedule of justice system funding – collecting / disbursing entity are fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the basic financial statements as a whole.

The schedule of insurance coverage in force; the water and sewer rate schedule; and the schedule of water and sewer information have not been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements and, accordingly, we do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on them.

### ***Other Reporting Required by Government Auditing Standards***

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated December 20, 2023 on our consideration of the Town's internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, and other matters. The purpose of that report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the Town's internal control over financial reporting or on

The Honorable Jim Paine, Mayor  
and Members of the Board of Aldermen  
Town of Independence, Louisiana

compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the Town's internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

*James Lambert Riggs  
& Associates*

James Lambert Riggs and Associates, Inc.  
Hammond, Louisiana

December 20, 2023

**Required Supplemental Information (Part I):**

**Management's Discussion and Analysis**



**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Management's Discussion and Analysis  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

As management of the Town of Independence, Louisiana (the "Town"), we offer readers of the Town's financial statements this narrative overview and analysis of the financial activities of the Town for the year ended June 30, 2023. This Management Discussion and Analysis (the "MD&A") is designed to provide an objective and easy to read analysis of the Town's financial activities based on currently known facts, decisions, or conditions. It is designed to be read in conjunction with the financial statements and to provide readers with a broad overview of Town finances. It is also intended to provide readers with an analysis of the short and long-term activities of the Town based on information presented in this financial report, as well as fiscal policies that have been adopted by the Town. Specifically, this section is designed to assist the reader in focusing on significant financial issues, provide an overview of the Town's financial activity, identify changes in the Town's financial position, identify any material deviations from the financial plan (the approved budget), and identify individual fund issues or concerns.

As with other sections of this financial report, the information contained within this MD&A should be considered only a part of a greater whole. The readers of this statement should take time to read and evaluate all sections of this report, including the footnotes and the other Required Supplemental Information (RSI) that is provided in addition to this MD&A.

**Financial Highlights**

- Total assets and deferred outflows for the year were \$14,965,807 at June 30, 2023, and exceeded liabilities and deferred inflows in the amount of \$7,764,554 (i.e., net position). \$6,567,648 was invested in capital assets, \$636,124 was restricted for debt service, and \$560,782 was unrestricted.
- The Town's total revenues for the year increased from the prior year by 2.20% from \$3,484,969 to \$3,561,684.
- Expenditures for the year increased by \$294,890 from the prior year from \$3,087,736 to \$3,382,266.
- Total net position increased by \$179,418.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Management's Discussion and Analysis (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

### **Overview of the Financial Statements**

This discussion and analysis is intended to serve as an introduction to the Town's financial statements. The Town's financial statements consist of the following components:

- Government-Wide Financial Statements,
- Fund Financial Statements,
- Notes to the Financial Statements,
- Required Supplementary Information and
- Other Supplemental Information, which is in addition to the financial statements themselves.

### **Government-Wide Financial Statements**

Government-wide financial statements required by GASB Statement 34 provide readers with a concise “entity-wide” Statement of Net Position and Statement of Activities, seeking to give the user of the financial statements a broad overview of the Town's financial position and results of operations in a manner similar to a private-sector business.

- The Statement of Net Position presents information on all of the Town's assets and liabilities using the accrual basis of accounting, which is similar to the accounting method used by most private-sector companies. The difference between the assets and liabilities is reported as net position. Over time, increases or decreases in net position may serve as an indicator of whether the financial position of the Town is improving or weakening.
- The Statement of Activities presents information showing how the Town's net position changed during the most recent fiscal year. All changes in net position are reported as soon as the underlying event giving rise to the change occurs, regardless of the timing of related cash flows. Thus, revenues and expenses are reported in this statement for some items that will only result in cash flows in future fiscal periods (e.g., uncollected taxes and earned but unused vacation time).

The government-wide financial statements further assist the reader in their evaluation by distinguishing functions of the Town into *Governmental Activities* that are principally supported by taxes and intergovernmental revenues, and *Business-Type Activities* from other functions that are intended to recover all or a significant portion of their costs through user fees and charges (Water and Sewer).

### **Government-Wide Financial Analysis**

The purpose of financial analysis is to help determine whether the Town is in a healthier financial state due to the current year's activities. In this analysis, data from two of the basic financial statements, the Statement of Net Position and the Statement of Activities, are presented on the next page in condensed format. Following these statements is a separate schedule summarizing and analyzing budget changes for the current fiscal year.



**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Management's Discussion and Analysis (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

**Condensed Statement of Net Position**

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Assets:				
Current and Other Assets	\$ 2,722,338	\$ 2,117,108	\$ 605,230	28.59%
Capital Assets	<u>11,801,993</u>	<u>11,783,599</u>	<u>18,394</u>	0.16%
Total Assets	<u>14,524,331</u>	<u>13,900,707</u>	<u>623,624</u>	4.49%
 Deferred Outflows of Resources	 <u>441,476</u>	 <u>212,064</u>	 <u>229,412</u>	 108.18%
Liabilities:				
Current Liabilities	620,669	347,557	273,112	78.58%
Long-Term Debt	5,100,017	5,234,405	(134,388)	-2.57%
Net Pension Liability	<u>1,134,490</u>	<u>586,941</u>	<u>547,549</u>	93.29%
Total Liabilities	<u>6,855,176</u>	<u>6,168,903</u>	<u>686,273</u>	11.12%
 Deferred Inflows of Resources	 <u>96,239</u>	 <u>358,732</u>	 <u>(262,493)</u>	 -73.17%
Net Position:				
Net Investment in Capital Assets	6,567,648	6,418,944	148,704	2.32%
Restricted Net Position	636,124	619,264	16,860	2.72%
Unrestricted Net Position	<u>560,782</u>	<u>546,928</u>	<u>13,854</u>	2.53%
Total Net Position	<u>\$ 7,764,554</u>	<u>\$ 7,585,136</u>	<u>\$ 179,418</u>	2.37%

At June 30, 2023, assets exceeded liabilities by \$7,764,554 (net position). The Town had an Unrestricted Net Position of \$560,782 compared to \$546,928 for the prior year. The Town's net position is comprised of \$2,159,874 from Governmental Activities and \$5,604,680 from Business-Type Activities, as shown on Exhibit A.

The largest portion of the Town's net position (82%) reflects its investment in capital assets (e.g., land, buildings, machinery & equipment, vehicles, infrastructure, etc.), less any related debt used to acquire those assets that are still outstanding. The Town uses these capital assets to provide services to citizens; consequently, these assets are not available for future spending. Although the Town's investment in its capital assets is reported net of related debt, it should be noted that the resources needed to repay this debt must be provided from other sources, since the capital assets themselves cannot be used to liquidate these liabilities.

An additional portion of the Town's net position, 8%, represents resources that are subject to external restrictions on how they may be used.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Management's Discussion and Analysis (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

**Condensed Statement of Activities**

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Revenues:				
Program Revenues:				
Charges for Services	\$ 1,435,726	\$ 1,247,037	\$ 188,689	15.13%
Grants and Contributions	170,514	453,504	(282,990)	-62.40%
General Revenues	<u>1,955,444</u>	<u>1,784,428</u>	<u>171,016</u>	9.58%
Total Revenues	3,561,684	3,484,969	76,715	2.20%
Expenses:				
Governmental Activities	2,117,824	1,781,119	336,705	18.90%
Business-Type Activities	<u>1,264,442</u>	<u>1,306,257</u>	<u>(41,815)</u>	-3.20%
Total Expenses	<u>3,382,266</u>	<u>3,087,376</u>	<u>294,890</u>	9.55%
Change in Net Position	179,418	397,593	(218,175)	-54.87%
Net Position:				
Beginning of the Year, Original	7,585,136	7,178,546	406,590	5.66%
Prior Period Adjustment	<u>-</u>	<u>8,997</u>	<u>(8,997)</u>	
Beginning Balance, Restated	<u>7,585,136</u>	<u>7,187,543</u>	<u>397,593</u>	
End of the Year	<u>\$ 7,764,554</u>	<u>\$ 7,585,136</u>	<u>\$ 179,418</u>	2.37%

While the Statement of Net Position shows the change in financial position of net position, the Statement of Activities provides answers to the nature and scope of these changes. "Program Revenues" increased by \$188,689 to \$1,435,726. Grant and Contribution Revenue decreased by \$282,990 to \$170,514.

Total expenses increased by \$294,890 to \$3,382,266. Business-Type Expenses decreased by \$41,815. Governmental Activities expenditures increased by \$336,705 due to increases and decreases in various expenditure accounts.

### **Fund Financial Statements**

For governmental activities, these statements depict how services were financed with a short-term focus as well as what remains for future spending. Fund financial statements provide more detail than the government-wide statements for the Town's most significant funds. Non-significant funds are consolidated into a single category for the purposes of displaying financial information. The fund financial statements should be viewed as providing detailed information about a specific fund rather than Town as a whole. Some funds are required to be established by state law or certain bond covenants. Other funds are established by the Town Aldermen to manage money for particular purposes or meeting legal responsibilities for using restricted money such as certain tax and grant revenue.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
**Management's Discussion and Analysis (Continued)**  
**For the Year Ended June 30, 2023**

Governmental Funds – these funds provide a short-term view for the reader of the financial statements. These funds are designed to provide the user with information on short-term inflows and outflows of spendable resources as well as balances of those resources near the end of the year. Governmental funds are presented using an accounting method called modified accrual. Modified accrual measures cash and all other financial assets that are easily converted to cash. The financial information displayed in governmental funds assists the user in determining if the Town has sufficient financial resources to operate in the short term. The Town of Independence has two major funds, which are the general fund and the Innovative Housing Fund. Governmental funds are reconciled back to the fund balance displayed in the governmental activities in Exhibit F.

Proprietary Funds – these funds account for business-type activities and their accounting is similar to commercial accounting. The proprietary funds account for customer revenue the town collects in connection with services it provides. These funds fall under the business-type activities column under the government wide financial statements. Proprietary funds are accounted for using the full accrual accounting basis. The Town currently has one proprietary fund.

Notes to the Financial Statements – The notes provide additional information that is necessary to fully understand the data provided in the government-wide and fund financial statements.

Other Information – Required supplementary information (budget vs. actual schedules) is also presented in these financial statements. This information should be read in conjunction with the financial statements.

**Financial Analysis of the Government's Funds**

The general government operations of the Town are accounted for in the General Fund and Special Revenue Funds. The focus of these funds, as noted earlier, is to provide information on near-term inflows, outflows, and balances of spendable resources. Such information is useful in assessing the Town's financing requirements. A summary of general governmental operations of 2023 by fund type is as follows:

	General Fund	Innovative Housing	Non-Major Funds	2023
Revenues and Transfers In	\$ 2,136,255	\$ 3,359	\$ 46	\$ 2,139,660
Expenditures and Transfers Out	<u>2,166,538</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,166,538</u>
Excess (Deficiency) of				
Revenues over Expenditures	(30,283)	3,359	46	(26,878)
Fund Balance - Beginning	<u>585,331</u>	<u>185,265</u>	<u>(2,009)</u>	<u>768,587</u>
Fund Balance - Ending	<u>\$ 555,048</u>	<u>\$ 188,624</u>	<u>\$ (1,963)</u>	<u>\$ 741,709</u>

The General Fund is the primary operating fund of the Town. At the end of the year, the Town reported a fund balance of \$555,048.

The Town's other major fund, the Innovative Housing Fund, increased by \$3,359 during 2023.

Non-Major Funds increased by \$46 due to interest income.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
**Management's Discussion and Analysis (Continued)**  
**For the Year Ended June 30, 2023**

Revenues of the primary government for the general governmental fund types for 2023 totaled \$2,128,387. The Town's activities are largely supported by tax revenues, solid waste fees, and licenses and permits, which represent 80% of the total governmental resources. Sources of governmental revenues, excluding other financial sources, are summarized below.

Source of Revenue	<u>2023</u>		<u>2022</u>	
Taxes	\$ 1,051,396	49.40%	\$ 1,086,867	50.24%
Solid Waste	146,190	6.87%	144,740	6.69%
License and Permits	213,524	10.03%	186,200	8.61%
Fines and Forfeitures	89,245	4.19%	105,358	4.87%
Intergovernmental	5,597	0.26%	5,794	0.27%
Rental	108,205	5.08%	113,853	5.26%
Other	514,230	24.16%	520,456	24.06%
Total	<u>\$ 2,128,387</u>	<u>100.00%</u>	<u>\$ 2,163,268</u>	<u>100.00%</u>

Expenditures of the primary government for governmental fund types increased in 2023 by \$381,105. The change is attributable to a significant increase in capital outlay and the donation of the fire station building. General governmental expenditures by functions are summarized as follows:

Function	<u>2023</u>		<u>2022</u>	
General Government	\$ 324,614	14.98%	\$ 388,596	21.76%
Public Safety	972,346	44.88%	808,492	45.28%
Public Works	473,810	21.87%	333,393	18.67%
Solid Waste	131,665	6.08%	122,688	6.87%
Health and Recreation	27,955	1.29%	27,955	1.57%
Debt Service	3,576	0.17%	5,646	0.32%
Fire Station	121,400	5.60%	-	0.00%
Capital Outlay	111,172	5.13%	98,663	5.53%
Total	<u>\$ 2,166,538</u>	<u>100.00%</u>	<u>\$ 1,785,433</u>	<u>100.00%</u>

**General Fund Budgetary Highlights**

For the general fund, actual revenues and other financing sources were \$18,099 less than final budgeted amounts. Actual expenditures and other financing uses were \$73,774 more than final budgeted amounts. The net change in fund balance was \$100,417 less than the final budgeted amounts.

For the general fund, original budgeted revenues and other financing sources were \$2,158,900 and final budgeted revenues and other financing sources were \$2,290,934.

Significant variations from the general fund's original budget amounts and final budget amounts are as follows:

- Sales taxes were decreased by \$44,634 to account for an anticipated decrease in sales tax.
- Police security detail was increased by \$52,700 to account for a contract with Tangipahoa Parish School System.
- American Rescue Plan Grant Revenue was decreased by \$249,100 to record the amount recorded as deferred revenue at June 30, 2023
- FEMA grant was increased by \$174,700.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Management's Discussion and Analysis (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

**Capital Asset and Debt Administration**

*Capital Assets*

The Town's investment in capital assets for its governmental and business type activities as of June 30, 2023 amounts to \$9,753,293 (net of accumulated depreciation). This investment in capital assets includes land, buildings and improvements, machinery and equipment, park facilities, roads, and water and sewer infrastructure and current construction in process. A summary of capital assets at year-end includes the following:

	Governmental Activities		Business-Type Activities	
	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Construction in Progress	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 210,014	\$ -
Land	100,150	100,150	69,808	69,808
Buildings and Equipment	3,043,193	2,810,621	826,838	802,920
Infrastructure	3,051,049	3,051,049	-	-
Utility Systems	-	-	15,094,153	15,038,686
Accumulated Depreciation	(4,145,692)	(4,034,174)	(6,447,520)	(6,055,461)
Net Capital Assets	<u>\$ 2,048,700</u>	<u>\$ 1,927,646</u>	<u>\$ 9,753,293</u>	<u>\$ 9,855,953</u>

The increase in buildings and equipment is due primarily to renovations to the pavilion and city hall and other equipment purchased for the Town. Additional information on the Town's capital assets can be found in the footnotes of this report.

*Long-Term Debt*

At the end of the current fiscal year, the Town had total bonded debt outstanding of \$5,184,674 payable from a pledge of the Town's sewer and water revenues.

**Economic Factors and Next Year's Budget**

The following factors were considered in preparing the Town's budget for the 2024 fiscal year:

For 2023, the Town transferred \$136,580 from the General Fund to the Utility Fund. The General Fund's Fund Balance decreased by \$30,283 to \$555,048.

**Requests for Information**

This financial report is designed to provide a general overview of the Town's finances for all those with an interest in the Town's finances. Questions concerning any of the information provided in this report or requests for additional financial information should be addressed to Robin Dagro, Town Clerk, P.O. Box 35, Independence, Louisiana 70443.

**Basic Financial Statements –  
Government-Wide Financial Statements**

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**Exhibit A

## Statement of Net Position

June 30, 2023

	Governmental Activities	Business-Type Activities	Total
<b>Assets</b>			
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$ 562,580	\$ 848,291	\$ 1,410,871
Receivables, Net	173,288	91,967	265,255
Franchise Tax Receivables	17,458	-	17,458
Due From Other Governments	6,832	36,221	43,053
Leases Receivable	77,423	-	77,423
Internal Balances	220,184	(220,184)	-
Restricted Cash and Cash Equivalents	-	766,389	766,389
Notes Receivable, Net	113,063	-	113,063
Prepaid Items	16,996	11,830	28,826
Land	100,150	69,808	169,958
Capital Assets, Net	1,948,550	9,683,485	11,632,035
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>3,236,524</b>	<b>11,287,807</b>	<b>14,524,331</b>
<b>Deferred Outflows of Resources</b>			
Pension Related	381,861	59,615	441,476
<b>Total Deferred Outflows of Resources</b>	<b>381,861</b>	<b>59,615</b>	<b>441,476</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
Accounts Payable	70,255	227,217	297,472
Accrued Liabilities	34,505	5,990	40,495
Due to Other Governments	-	2,191	2,191
MERS	6,154	-	6,154
MPERS	9,764	-	9,764
Non-Current Liabilities:			
Due Within One Year	-	134,328	134,328
Due in More Than One Year	-	5,100,017	5,100,017
Payable from Restricted Assets:			
Utility Meter Deposits	-	130,265	130,265
Deferred Revenues ARP	249,838	-	249,838
Net Pension Liability, MPERS	842,141	-	842,141
Net Pension Liability, MERS	153,191	139,158	292,349
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>1,365,848</b>	<b>5,739,166</b>	<b>7,105,014</b>
<b>Deferred Inflows of Resources</b>			
Deferred Inflows of Rents	75,599	-	75,599
Deferred Inflows Pension Related	17,064	3,576	20,640
<b>Total Deferred Inflows of Resources</b>	<b>92,663</b>	<b>3,576</b>	<b>96,239</b>
<b>Net Position</b>			
Net Investment in Capital Assets	2,048,700	4,518,948	6,567,648
Restricted for:			
Debt Service	-	636,124	636,124
Unrestricted	111,174	449,608	560,782
<b>Total Net Position</b>	<b>\$ 2,159,874</b>	<b>\$ 5,604,680</b>	<b>\$ 7,764,554</b>

See independent auditor's report.



**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Statement of Activities  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

Exhibit B

Functions / Programs	Expenses	Program Revenues			Net (Expense) Revenues & Change in Net Position		
		Charges for Services	Operating Grants and Contributions	Capital Grants and Contributions	Governmental Activities	Business-Type Activities	Total
<b>Governmental Activities:</b>							
General Government	\$ 358,934	\$ 111,222	\$ 108,820	\$ 1,439	\$ (137,453)	\$ -	\$ (137,453)
Public Safety	1,069,764	141,913	41,670	-	(886,181)	-	(886,181)
Public Works	525,930	-	-	-	(525,930)	-	(525,930)
Solid Waste	131,665	146,190	-	-	14,525	-	14,525
Health and Recreation	27,955	-	-	-	(27,955)	-	(27,955)
Debt Service Interest	3,576	-	-	-	(3,576)	-	(3,576)
<b>Total Governmental Activities</b>	<b>2,117,824</b>	<b>399,325</b>	<b>150,490</b>	<b>1,439</b>	<b>(1,566,570)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(1,566,570)</b>
<b>Business-Type Activities:</b>							
Sewer	687,736	533,382	-	18,585	-	(135,769)	(135,769)
Water	576,706	503,019	-	-	-	(73,687)	(73,687)
<b>Total Business-Type Activities</b>	<b>1,264,442</b>	<b>1,036,401</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>18,585</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(209,456)</b>	<b>(209,456)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,382,266</b>	<b>\$ 1,435,726</b>	<b>\$ 150,490</b>	<b>\$ 20,024</b>	<b>(1,566,570)</b>	<b>(209,456)</b>	<b>(1,776,026)</b>
<b>General Revenues:</b>							
Sales & Property Taxes					1,043,440	210,336	1,253,776
Licenses and Permits					213,524	-	213,524
Utility Franchise Fees					7,956	-	7,956
Intergovernmental					185,634	-	185,634
Rental Income					108,205	-	108,205
Miscellaneous					18,374	20,122	38,496
Transfers In and (Out)					(136,580)	136,580	-
Sale of Fixed Assets					6,903	-	6,903
Donation of Fire Station					121,400	-	121,400
Insurance Reimbursement					19,550	-	19,550
<b>Total General Revenues</b>					<b>1,588,406</b>	<b>367,038</b>	<b>1,955,444</b>
<b>Change in Net Position</b>					<b>21,836</b>	<b>157,582</b>	<b>179,418</b>
<b>Net Position - Beginning of the Year</b>					<b>2,138,038</b>	<b>5,447,098</b>	<b>7,585,136</b>
<b>Net Position - End of the Year</b>					<b>\$ 2,159,874</b>	<b>\$ 5,604,680</b>	<b>\$ 7,764,554</b>

See independent auditor's report.



**Basic Financial Statements –  
Fund Financial Statements**

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
**Balance Sheet – Governmental Funds**  
June 30, 2023

Exhibit C

		Special Revenue Fund		
	General Fund	Innovative Housing Fund	Non-Major Governmental Funds	Total Governmental Funds
<b>Assets</b>				
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 488,982	\$ 71,903	\$ 1,695	\$ 562,580
Receivables, Net	173,288	-	-	173,288
Franchise Tax Receivables	17,458	-	-	17,458
Due From Other Governments	6,832	-	-	6,832
Leases Receivable	77,423	-	-	77,423
Notes Receivable, Net	-	113,063	-	113,063
Due from Other Funds	220,184	3,658	-	223,842
Prepaid Insurance	16,996	-	-	16,996
<b>Total Assets</b>	<u>\$ 1,001,163</u>	<u>\$ 188,624</u>	<u>\$ 1,695</u>	<u>\$ 1,191,482</u>
<b>Liabilities and Fund Balances</b>				
<b>Liabilities:</b>				
Accounts Payable	\$ 70,255	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 70,255
Accrued Liabilities	34,505	-	-	34,505
MERS	6,154	-	-	6,154
MPERS	9,764	-	-	9,764
Deferred Inflows of Rent	75,599	-	-	75,599
Deferred Revenue ARP	249,838	-	-	249,838
Due to Other Funds	-	-	3,658	3,658
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	446,115	-	3,658	449,773
<b>Fund Balances (Deficits):</b>				
Nonspendable	16,996	-	-	16,996
Unassigned	538,052	188,624	(1,963)	724,713
<b>Total Fund Balances (Deficits)</b>	<u>555,048</u>	<u>188,624</u>	<u>(1,963)</u>	<u>741,709</u>
<b>Total Liabilities and Fund Balances</b>	<u>\$ 1,001,163</u>	<u>\$ 188,624</u>	<u>\$ 1,695</u>	<u>\$ 1,191,482</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this statement.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Reconciliation of the Governmental Funds Balance Sheet to the  
Statement of Net Position  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

Exhibit D

<b>Fund Balances - Total Governmental Funds (Exhibit C)</b>	\$ 741,709
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Amounts reported for governmental activities in the statement of net position are different because:

Capital assets used in governmental activities are not financial resources and, therefore, are not reported in the governmental funds.

Governmental Capital Assets	6,194,392
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	(4,145,692)

Long-term liabilities, including capital leases, are not due and payable in the current period and, therefore, are not reported in the governmental funds.

Governmental Bonds & Capital Leases	-
Compensated Absences Payable	-

In accordance with Governmental Accounting Standards Board Statement No. 68, the net pension liability related to pension plans, deferred outflows of resources, and deferred inflows of resources are not recorded in the governmental funds.

Net Pension Liability:

Municipal Employees Retirement System of Louisiana	(153,191)
Municipal Police Employees Retirement System of Louisiana	(842,141)

Deferred Outflows of Resources	381,861
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Deferred Inflows of Resources	(17,064)
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<b>Net Position of Governmental Activities (Exhibit A)</b>	<b>\$ <u>2,159,874</u></b>
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The accompanying notes are an integral part of this statement.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
**Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in**  
**Fund Balances - Governmental Funds**  
**For the Year Ended June 30, 2023**

Exhibit E

		Special Revenue Fund		
	General Fund	Innovative Housing Fund	Non-Major Governmental Funds	Total Governmental Funds
<b>Revenues:</b>				
Taxes:				
Sales Taxes	\$ 841,345	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 841,345
Property Taxes	202,095	-	-	202,095
Utility Franchise	7,956	-	-	7,956
Solid Waste Fees	146,190	-	-	146,190
Licenses and Permits	213,524	-	-	213,524
Fines and Forfeitures	89,245	-	-	89,245
Security Detail	52,668	-	-	52,668
Rental Income	108,205	-	-	108,205
Charges for Services	111,222	-	-	111,222
Intergovernmental	5,597	-	-	5,597
On-Behalf Payments from State	41,670	-	-	41,670
Other Revenues	7,582	-	-	7,582
Interest Income	7,387	3,359	46	10,792
Grants:				
American Rescue Plan Grant	108,820	-	-	108,820
FEMA	180,037	-	-	180,037
Police Grant	1,439	-	-	1,439
<b>Total Revenues</b>	2,124,982	3,359	46	2,128,387
<b>Expenditures:</b>				
Current:				
General Government	305,000	-	-	305,000
Municipal Court	19,614	-	-	19,614
Public Safety	972,346	-	-	972,346
Public Works	473,810	-	-	473,810
Solid Waste	131,665	-	-	131,665
Health and Recreation	27,955	-	-	27,955
Debt Service:				
Principal	3,414	-	-	3,414
Interest	162	-	-	162
Fire Station	121,400	-	-	121,400
Capital Outlay	111,172	-	-	111,172
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	2,166,538	-	-	2,166,538
<b>Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues</b>				
<b>Over Expenditures</b>	(41,556)	3,359	46	(38,151)
<b>Other Financing Sources (Uses):</b>				
Insurance Reimbursement	19,550	-	-	19,550
Transfers In / (Out)	(136,580)	-	-	(136,580)
Sale of Fixed Assets	6,903	-	-	6,903
Donation of Fire Station	121,400	-	-	121,400
<b>Total Other Financing</b>				
<b>Sources (Uses)</b>	11,273	-	-	11,273
<b>Change in Fund Balances</b>	(30,283)	3,359	46	(26,878)
<b>Fund Balances (Deficits):</b>				
<b>Beginning of the Year</b>	585,331	185,265	(2,009)	768,587
<b>End of the Year</b>	\$ 555,048	\$ 188,624	\$ (1,963)	\$ 741,709

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this statement.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Reconciliation of the Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in  
Fund Balances of the Governmental Funds to the Statement of Activities  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

Exhibit F

**Net Change in Fund Balances - Total Governmental Funds (Exhibit E)** \$ (26,878)

Amounts reported for governmental activities in the statement of activities are different because:

Governmental funds report capital outlay as expenditures. However, in the statement of activities, the cost of those assets is allocated over their estimated useful lives as depreciation expense. This is the amount by which depreciation charged in the current period exceeded capital outlay.

Capital Outlay	232,572
Depreciation Expense	(111,518)

Losses on the disposal of assets reported in the statement of activities do not require the use of current financial resources and therefore are not reported as expenditures in the governmental funds.

The liability and expense for compensated absences are not reported in governmental funds. Payments for compensated absences are reported as salaries when they occur. The payment consumes current financial resources, and it would take a catastrophic event for this liability to become a current liability.

Change in Accrued Compensated Absences	-
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In accordance with Governmental Accounting Standards Board Statement No. 68, the net pension liability related to pension plans is not required to be recorded in the governmental fund financial statements. Adjustments to pension expense related to changes in deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources are reflected in the statement of activities.

Net Change in Pension Expense	(109,571)
Contributions from Non-Employer Contributing Entities	37,231

The issuance of long-term debt (e.g. leases) provides current financial resources to governmental funds and increases long-term liabilities in the statement of net position. Repayment of capital lease obligations is an expenditure in the governmental funds, but the repayment reduces long-term liabilities in the statement of net position.

Payment of Long-Term Debt	-
Capital Lease Proceeds	-

<b>Change in Net Position of Governmental Activities (Exhibit B)</b>	<b>\$ 21,836</b>
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The accompanying notes are an integral part of this statement.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
**Statements of Net Position – Proprietary Funds**  
**June 30, 2023 and 2022**

Exhibit G

	Business-Type Activities - Enterprise Funds		Total (Memorandum Only)	
	Sewer	Water	2023	2022
<b>Assets</b>				
<b>Current Assets:</b>				
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 328,258	\$ 520,033	\$ 848,291	\$ 393,584
Customer Accounts Receivable, Net	46,993	44,974	91,967	82,598
Due from Other Governments	36,221	-	36,221	36,671
Due from General Fund	-	-	-	-
Due from Water Fund	483,591	-	483,591	177,241
Prepaid Items	9,560	2,270	11,830	7,906
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	904,623	567,277	1,471,900	698,000
<b>Non-Current Assets:</b>				
<b>Restricted Cash:</b>				
Certificate of Deposits	273,600	178,347	451,947	446,000
Customer Deposits	-	110,322	110,322	118,281
Debt Service	105,029	99,091	204,120	179,603
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>	378,629	387,760	766,389	743,884
<b>Capital Assets:</b>				
Property, Plant, and Equipment, at Cost	9,897,778	6,023,214	15,920,992	15,841,608
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	(3,968,377)	(2,479,144)	(6,447,521)	(6,055,463)
Construction in Progress	195,822	14,192	210,014	-
Land	40,708	29,100	69,808	69,808
<b>Total Capital Assets</b>	6,165,931	3,587,362	9,753,293	9,855,953
<b>Total Assets</b>	7,449,183	4,542,399	11,991,582	11,297,837
<b>Deferred Outflows of Resources</b>				
Pension Related	31,787	27,828	59,615	26,402

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this statement.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
**Statements of Net Position – Proprietary Funds (Continued)**  
**June 30, 2023 and 2022**

Exhibit G

	Business-Type Activities - Enterprise Funds		Total (Memorandum Only)	
	Sewer	Water	2023	2022
<b>Liabilities</b>				
<b>Current Liabilities (Payable from Current Assets):</b>				
Accounts Payable	\$ 203,347	\$ 23,870	\$ 227,217	\$ 24,186
Accrued Liabilities	2,291	3,699	5,990	3,776
Due to General Fund	220,184	-	220,184	47,227
Due to Sewer Fund	-	483,591	483,591	177,241
Current Portion of Capital Lease	-	16,000	16,000	15,734
Due to Other Governments	1,096	1,095	2,191	1,837
<b>Total Current Liabilities (Payable from Current Assets)</b>	<b>426,918</b>	<b>528,255</b>	<b>955,173</b>	<b>270,001</b>
<b>Current Liabilities (Payable from Restricted Assets):</b>				
Utility Customer Deposits	-	130,265	130,265	124,620
Current Portion of Long-Term Debt	74,853	43,475	118,328	114,518
<b>Total Current Liabilities (Payable from Restricted Assets)</b>	<b>74,853</b>	<b>173,740</b>	<b>248,593</b>	<b>239,138</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities:</b>				
Capital Lease	-	33,671	33,671	49,722
Revenue Bonds	2,814,355	2,251,991	5,066,346	5,184,681
Net Pension Liability	74,199	64,959	139,158	94,087
<b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>	<b>2,888,554</b>	<b>2,350,621</b>	<b>5,239,175</b>	<b>5,328,490</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>3,390,325</b>	<b>3,052,616</b>	<b>6,442,941</b>	<b>5,837,629</b>
<b>Deferred Inflows of Resources</b>				
Pension Related	1,907	1,669	3,576	39,512
<b>Total Deferred Inflows of Resources</b>	<b>1,907</b>	<b>1,669</b>	<b>3,576</b>	<b>39,512</b>
<b>Net Position</b>				
Net Investment in Capital Assets	3,276,723	1,285,700	4,518,948	4,491,298
Restricted	378,629	257,495	766,389	743,884
Unrestricted	433,386	(27,253)	319,343	211,916
<b>Total Net Position</b>	<b>\$ 4,088,738</b>	<b>\$ 1,515,942</b>	<b>\$ 5,604,680</b>	<b>\$ 5,447,098</b>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this statement.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
**Statements of Revenues, Expenses, and Changes in Net Position –**  
**Proprietary Funds**  
**For the Years Ended June 30, 2023 and 2022**

Exhibit H

	Business-Type Activities - Enterprise Funds		Total (Memorandum Only)	
	Sewer	Water	2023	2022
<b>Operating Revenues:</b>				
Charges for Services	\$ 526,353	\$ 495,433	\$ 1,021,786	\$ 938,648
Other Revenue	7,029	7,586	14,615	96
<b>Total Operating Revenues</b>	<b>533,382</b>	<b>503,019</b>	<b>1,036,401</b>	<b>938,744</b>
<b>Operating Expenses:</b>				
Depreciation and Amortization	236,448	155,609	392,057	416,852
Equipment Rental	-	-	-	138,000
Chlorine	-	21,786	21,786	-
Salaries and Employee Benefits	94,074	82,812	176,886	201,945
Repairs and Maintenance	58,533	151,771	210,304	140,356
Utilities and Telephone	80,908	26,773	107,681	94,662
Office Supplies	6,079	3,448	9,527	20,504
Professional Fees	6,900	40,550	47,450	44,601
Environmental Testing	54,317	-	54,317	49,750
Insurance	13,256	13,234	26,490	25,873
Vehicle Expense	-	359	359	896
Miscellaneous	20,779	25,555	46,334	42,018
Pension Expense	25,913	(17,722)	8,191	(38,142)
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>597,207</b>	<b>504,175</b>	<b>1,101,382</b>	<b>1,137,315</b>
<b>Operating Income / (Loss)</b>	<b>(63,825)</b>	<b>(1,156)</b>	<b>(64,981)</b>	<b>(198,571)</b>
<b>Non-Operating Revenues /</b>				
<b>(Expenses):</b>				
Non-Employer Contributions	4,195	3,673	7,868	7,294
Investment Income	5,653	4,859	10,512	4,183
Grant Revenue	-	-	-	11,823
Insurance Reimbursement	-	18,585	18,585	-
Sales and Use Tax	210,336	-	210,336	224,729
Sales of Fixed Asset	-	-	-	-
Other Income	1,742	-	1,742	-
Transfer In- General Fund	34,353	102,227	136,580	56,205
Interest Expense	(90,529)	(72,531)	(163,060)	(168,942)
<b>Total Non-Operating</b>				
<b>Revenues / (Expenses)</b>	<b>165,750</b>	<b>56,813</b>	<b>222,563</b>	<b>135,292</b>
<b>Change in Net Position</b>	<b>101,925</b>	<b>55,657</b>	<b>157,582</b>	<b>(63,279)</b>
<b>Net Position - Beginning of Year</b>	<b>3,986,813</b>	<b>1,460,285</b>	<b>5,447,098</b>	<b>5,510,377</b>
<b>Net Position - End of the Year</b>	<b>\$ 4,088,738</b>	<b>\$ 1,515,942</b>	<b>\$ 5,604,680</b>	<b>\$ 5,447,098</b>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this statement.



**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
**Statements of Cash Flows – Proprietary Funds**  
For the Years Ended June 30, 2023 and 2022

Exhibit I

	Business-Type Activities		Total	
	Enterprise Funds		(Memorandum Only)	
	Sewer	Water	2023	2022
<b>Cash Flows from Operating Activities:</b>				
Receipts from Customers and Users	\$ 535,963	\$ 496,714	\$ 1,032,677	\$ 944,268
Payments to Suppliers	(255,138)	(293,600)	(548,738)	(599,800)
Payments to Employees	(97,894)	(86,791)	(184,685)	(175,672)
<b>Net Cash Provided by / (Used in) Operating Activities</b>	<b>182,931</b>	<b>116,323</b>	<b>299,254</b>	<b>168,796</b>
<b>Cash Flows From Noncapital Financing Activities:</b>				
Transfer In From Other Funds	34,353	102,227	136,580	56,205
Increase / (Decrease) in Amounts Due to Other Funds, Net	(133,393)	306,350	172,957	180,449
<b>Net Cash Provided by / (Used in) Noncapital Financing Activities</b>	<b>(99,040)</b>	<b>408,577</b>	<b>309,537</b>	<b>236,654</b>
<b>Cash Flows From Capital and Related Financing Activities:</b>				
Capital Grants, F.E.M.A Non-Employer Contributions	-	-	-	24,027
Proceeds from Sales Tax Collections	210,336	-	210,336	224,911
Proceeds from Non-Operating Revenues	1,740	18,585	20,325	96
Principal Paid on Capital Lease	-	-	-	(4,482)
Interest Paid on Debt	(90,529)	(72,531)	(163,060)	(168,941)
Principal Paid on Debt	(72,359)	(57,950)	(130,309)	(40,897)
Payments for Capital Assets	(59,867)	(19,517)	(79,384)	(179,948)
<b>Net Cash Provided by / (Used in) Capital and Related Financing Activities</b>	<b>(10,679)</b>	<b>(131,413)</b>	<b>(142,092)</b>	<b>(145,234)</b>
<b>Cash Flows From Investing Activities:</b>				
Interest Earned on Investments	5,653	4,859	10,512	4,183
<b>Net Cash Provided by / (Used in) Investing Activities</b>	<b>5,653</b>	<b>4,859</b>	<b>10,512</b>	<b>4,183</b>
<b>Net Increase / (Decrease) in Cash</b>	<b>78,865</b>	<b>398,346</b>	<b>477,211</b>	<b>264,399</b>
<b>Cash and Cash Equivalents - Beginning of the Year</b>	<b>628,022</b>	<b>509,447</b>	<b>1,137,469</b>	<b>873,070</b>
<b>Cash and Cash Equivalents - End of the Year</b>	<b>\$ 706,887</b>	<b>\$ 907,793</b>	<b>\$ 1,614,680</b>	<b>\$ 1,137,469</b>
<b>Reconciliation of Cash Accounts:</b>				
Unrestricted Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 328,258	\$ 520,033	\$ 848,291	\$ 393,585
Restricted Cash and Cash Equivalents	378,629	387,760	766,389	743,884
<b>Cash and Cash Equivalents - End of the Year</b>	<b>\$ 706,887</b>	<b>\$ 907,793</b>	<b>\$ 1,614,680</b>	<b>\$ 1,137,469</b>

(Continued)

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
**Statements of Cash Flows – Proprietary Funds (Continued)**  
**For the Years Ended June 30, 2023 and 2022**

Exhibit I

	Business-Type Activities Enterprise Funds		Total (Memorandum Only)	
	Sewer	Water	2023	2022
<b>Reconciliation of Operating Income / (Loss) to Net Cash Provided by / (Used in) Operating Activities:</b>				
Operating Income / (Loss)	\$ (63,825)	\$ (1,156)	\$ (64,981)	\$ (198,571)
Adjustments to Reconcile Operating Loss to Net Cash Provided by (Used in) / Operating Activities:				
Depreciation and Amortization	236,448	155,609	392,057	416,852
Changes in Assets and Liabilities:				
(Increase) / Decrease in Accounts Receivable	2,581	(11,650)	(9,069)	5,620
(Increase) / Decrease in Prepaid Insurance	(1,654)	-	(1,654)	(1,689)
(Increase) / Decrease in Deferred Outflows	(23,016)	(10,197)	(33,213)	23,828
Increase / (Decrease) in Accounts Payable	(5,004)	(1,979)	(6,983)	(17,644)
Increase / (Decrease) in Accrued Liabilities	5,677	2,940	8,617	590
Increase / (Decrease) in Due to Unclaimed Properties	-	-	-	-
Increase / (Decrease) in Net Pension Liability	42,943	2,128	45,071	(91,078)
Increase / (Decrease) in Deferred Inflows	(11,219)	(24,717)	(35,936)	18,308
Increase / (Decrease) in Meter Deposits	-	5,645	5,645	12,580
<b>Net Cash Provided By / (Used In) Operating Activities</b>	<u>\$ 182,931</u>	<u>\$ 116,623</u>	<u>\$ 299,554</u>	<u>\$ 168,796</u>
<b>Supplemental Disclosure of Cash Flow Information:</b>				
Interest Paid			<u>\$ 163,060</u>	<u>\$ 168,941</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this statement.

## **Notes to the Financial Statements**

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

**Narrative Profile**

The Town of Independence, Louisiana (the “Town”) is a political subdivision of the State of Louisiana and was incorporated under the provisions of the Lawrason Act. The Town operates under a Mayor / Board of Aldermen form of government. The Mayor is elected for a four-year term. The Board of Aldermen consists of five Aldermen, each elected from a separate district in the Town and each serving a four-year term of office. The Mayor and each member of the Board of Aldermen are compensated for their service to the Town. The Town provides the following services: public safety (police and fire), streets, drainage, water distribution, wastewater treatment sanitation, culture / recreation, public improvements, planning and zoning, and general and administrative services. Other services include providing water and sewer services.

The accounting and reporting policies of the Town conform to generally accepted accounting principles as applicable to governments. The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) is the accepted standard-setting body for establishing governmental accounting and financial reporting principles. Such accounting and reporting procedures also conform to the requirements of Louisiana Revised Statutes (LRS) 24:513 and to the guidance set forth in the *Louisiana Governmental Audit Guide*, and to the industry audit guide, *Audits of State and Local Governmental Units*.

The Town follows GASB Statement No. 34, *Basic Financial Statements – and Management’s Discussion and Analysis – for State and Local Governments*. Certain significant components in the Statement include a management discussion and analysis (MD&A) section providing an analysis of the Town’s overall financial position and results of operations; financial statements prepared using accrual basis accounting for all of the Town’s activities, including infrastructure (roads, bridges, etc.); and fund financial statements to focus on the major funds of the Town.

**1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies**

**A. Financial Reporting Entity**

As the municipal governing authority, for reporting purposes, the Town is considered a separate financial reporting entity consists of (a) the primary municipal government, and where applicable (b) organizations for which the primary government is financially accountable, and (c) other organizations for which the nature and significance of their relationship with the primary government are such that exclusion would cause the reporting entity’s financial statements to be misleading or incomplete.

The Town’s basic financial statements include the accounts of all Town operations. The criteria for including organizations as component units within the Town’s reporting entity, as set forth in Section 2100 of GASB’s *Codification of Governmental Accounting and Financial Reporting Standards*, include whether:

1. The organization is legally separate (can sue and be sued in their own name), incur its own debt, levy its own taxes and charges, expropriate property in its own name, and the right to buy, sell and lease property.
2. The Town appoints a voting majority of the organization’s board.
3. Fiscal interdependency between the Town and potential component units
4. Imposition of will by the Town on the potential component unit and
5. The organization has the potential to impose a financial benefit / burden on the Town.

Based on the aforementioned criteria, the Town has no component units.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

**B. Basic Financial Statements – Government-Wide Financial Statements**

The Town's basic financial statements include both government-wide (reporting the Town as a whole) and fund financial statements (reporting the Town's major funds). Both the government-wide and fund financial statements categorize primary activities as either governmental or business type. The Town's financial statements are prepared in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America and applied to governmental units. The Town's public safety (police and fire), streets, drainage, sanitation, culture / recreation, public improvements, planning and zoning and general and administrative services are classified as governmental activities. The Town's water and sewer utility services are classified as business-type activities.

*Statement of Net Position* – In the government-wide Statement of Net Position, both the governmental and business-type activities columns (a) are presented on a consolidated basis by column, (b) and are reported on a full accrual, economic resource basis, which recognizes all long-term assets and receivables as well as long-term debt and obligations. The Town's net position are reported in three parts – invested in capital assets, net of related debt; restricted net position; and unrestricted net position. The Town first utilizes restricted resources to finance qualifying activities.

*Statement of Activities* – The government-wide Statement of Activities reports both the gross and net cost of each of the Town's functions and business-type activities. The functions are also supported by general revenues (property, sales and use taxes, certain intergovernmental revenues, etc.). The Statement of Activities reduces gross expenses (including depreciation) by related program revenues and operating and capital grants and contributions. Program revenues must be directly associated with the function (police, public works, etc.) or a business-type activity. Operating grants include operating-specific and discretionary (either operating or capital) grants while the capital grants column reports capital-specific grants and contributions.

The Town does not allocate indirect costs.

This government-wide focus is more on the sustainability of the Town as an entity and the change in the Town's net position resulting from the current year's activities.

**C. Basic Financial Statements - Fund Financial Statements**

The financial transactions of the Town are reported in individual funds in the fund financial statements. Each fund is accounted for by providing a separate set of self-balancing accounts that comprises its assets, liabilities, fund equity, revenues, and expenditures / expenses. Funds are organized into three major categories: governmental, proprietary, and fiduciary. The Town does not have any fiduciary funds.

The emphasis in fund financial statements is on the major funds in either the governmental or business-type activities categories. Non-major funds by category are summarized into a single column. GASB Statement No. 34 sets forth minimum criteria (percentage of the assets, liabilities, revenues, or expenditures / expenses of either fund category or the governmental and enterprise combined) for the determination of major funds. The non-major funds are combined in a column in the fund financial statements.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

Major Funds are determined by the following criteria:

- Total assets and deferred outflows of resources, liabilities and deferred inflows of resources, revenues or expenditures / expenses of that individual governmental fund or enterprise fund are at least 10 percent of the corresponding total for all funds of that category or type and
- Total assets and deferred outflows of resources, liabilities and deferred inflows of resources, revenues or expenditures/expenses of that individual governmental fund or enterprise fund are at least 5 percent of the corresponding total for all governmental and enterprise funds.

*Governmental Funds* – Most governmental functions are financed through the governmental funds. The focus of the governmental funds' measurement (in the fund statements) is upon determination of financial position and changes in financial position (sources, uses, and balances of financial resources) rather than upon net income. The Town reports these governmental funds and fund types:

General Fund – The General Fund is the general operating fund of the Town. This fund is used to account for all financial transactions and resources except for those required to be accounted for in another fund. Revenues are derived primarily from property and other local taxes, state and federal distributions, licenses, permits, charges for services and interest income.

Special Revenue Funds – Special Revenue Funds are used to account for the proceeds of specific revenue sources (other than major capital projects) that are restricted by legal and regulatory provisions to finance specific activities. The Innovative Housing Fund is considered to be a major fund.

Debt Service Funds – Debt Service funds are used to account for, and the payment of, general long-term debt principal, interest, and related costs associated with long-term debt. The Town has no debt service funds.

Capital Projects Fund – accounts for all financial resources used for the acquisition or construction of major capital facilities. The 2010 Revenue Bond Capital Projects Fund and the LCDBG Economic Development Fund are considered to be non-major funds.

The activities reported in these funds are reported as governmental activities in the government-wide financial statements.

*Proprietary Funds* – Proprietary Funds are used to account for activities that are similar to those often found in the private sector. All assets, liabilities, equities, revenues, expenses and transfers relating to the government's business-type activities are accounted for through proprietary funds. The measurement focus is on the determination of net income, financial position, and cash flows. Operating expenses include costs of services as well as materials, contracts, personnel, and dedication. In accordance with GASB Statement No. 20, the Town has elected to follow GASB statements issued after November 30, 1989, rather than the Financial Accounting Standards Board, in accounting for proprietary funds.

Enterprise Funds – Enterprise Funds are used to account for operations (a) that are financed and operated in a manner similar to private business enterprises, where the intent of the governing body is that the costs (expenses, including depreciation) of providing goods or services to the general public on a continuing basis be financed primarily through user charges, or (b) where the governing body has decided the periodic determination of revenues earned, expenses incurred, and / or net income is appropriate for capital maintenance, public policy, management control, accountability, and other purposes. Proprietary funds also distinguish between operating and non-operating items. Operating



**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

items generally are the result of providing services in connection with that particular fund's purpose. Operating expenses include cost of sales and services, administrative services, depreciation and other items. All revenues and expenses not meeting this definition are considered non-operating. The Town's Water Enterprise Fund and Sewer Enterprise Fund account for the operations of providing water services and sewer services, respectively.

**D. Basis of Accounting**

The accounting and financial reporting treatment applied to a fund is determined by its measurement focus. All government funds, including General and Special Revenue Funds, are accounted for using a current financial resources measurement focus. With this measurement focus, only current assets and current liabilities generally are included on the balance sheet in the funds statements. Capital assets and long-term liabilities are included in the government-wide statements. Operating statements of these funds present increases (i.e., revenues and other financing sources) and decreases (i.e., expenditures and other financing uses) in net fund balances.

The government-wide Statement of Net Position and Statement of Activities and all proprietary funds are accounted for on a flow of economic resources measurement focus. With this measurement focus, all assets and all liabilities associated with the operation of these activities are either included on the balance sheet or on the statement of net position. Proprietary fund-type operating statements present increases (i.e., revenues) and decreases (i.e., expenses) in total net position.

The fund financial statements of the General and Special Revenue Funds are maintained and reported on the modified accrual basis of accounting. Under this method of accounting, revenues are recognized in the period in which they become measurable and available. The Town considers most revenues "available" if they are collected within 60 days after the fiscal year end. With respect to real and personal property tax revenue and other local taxes, the term "available" is limited to collection within forty-five days of the fiscal year end. Levies made prior to the fiscal year end, but which are not available are deferred. Interest income is recorded as earned. Federal and state reimbursement-type grants are recorded as revenue when related eligible expenditures are incurred. Expenditures, other than accrued interest on long-term debt, are recorded when the fund liability is incurred.

The Statement of Net Position, the Statement of Activities, and financial statements of the proprietary funds are presented on the accrual basis of accounting. Under this method of accounting, revenues are recognized when earned and expenses are recorded when liabilities are incurred without regard to receipt or disbursement of cash.

**E. Budgets and Budgetary Accounting**

Demonstrating compliance with the adopted budget is an important component of a government's accountability to the public. Many citizens participate in one way or another in the process of establishing the annual budgets of state and local governments, and have a keen interest in following the actual financial process of their governments over the course of the year. Many governments revise their budgets over the course of the year for a variety of reasons. As a result, the Town's original budget is shown along with the comparison of the final budget and actual results.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

The Town follows these procedures in establishing the budgetary data reflected in these financial statements:

1. The Town Clerk prepares a proposed budget and submits this budget to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen no later than fifteen days prior to the beginning of each fiscal year.
2. A summary of the proposed budget is published and the public notified that the proposed budget is available for public inspection. At the same time, a public hearing is called.
3. A public hearing is held on the proposed budget at least ten days after publication of the call for the hearing.
4. After holding the public hearing and completion of all action necessary to finalize and implement the budget, the budget is adopted through passage of an ordinance prior to the commencement of the fiscal year for which the budget is being adopted.
5. Budgetary amendments involving the transfer of funds from one department, program, or function to another or involving increases in expenditures resulting from revenues exceeding amounts estimated require the approval of the Board of Aldermen.
6. At the end of the year, any unexpended appropriations automatically lapse. In connection with budget preparation, a portion of unreserved fund balance of an individual fund may be designated for expenditures of the subsequent year. Such designations represent the extent to which the fund balance is used to balance the subsequent year's operating budget.
7. The budgets are integrated into the accounting system, and the budgetary data, as presented in the financial statements for all funds with annual budgets, compare the expenditures with the amended budgets. All budgets are presented on the modified accrual basis of accounting. Accordingly, the Budgetary Comparison Schedules for the General and Special Revenue Funds present actual expenditures in accordance with the accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America on a basis consistent with the legally adopted budgets as amended. Unexpended appropriations on annual budgets lapse at the end of each fiscal year.

**F. Cash, Cash Equivalents, and Investments**

Cash includes cash on hand, demand deposits, and interest bearing demand deposits. Under state law, the Town may deposit funds in demand deposits, interest bearing demand deposits, money market accounts, or time deposits with state banks organized under Louisiana law and national banks having their principal offices in Louisiana. Under state law, the Town's investment options include, but are not limited to, United States Treasury Bonds, Treasury notes, or fully collateralized certificates. These are classified as investments if their original maturities exceed 90 days; however, if the original maturities are 90 days or less, they are classified as cash. Investments are stated at cost. The Town has not formally adopted deposit and investment policies that limit the government's allowable deposits or investments and address the specific types of risk to which the government is exposed. Interest Rate Risk: The Town does not have a formal investment policy that limits investment maturities as a means of managing its exposure to fair value arising from increasing interest rates.

Other provisions require depositories to insure or collateralize all deposits in accordance with state law and require securities collateralizing deposits to be held by an independent third party with whom the Town has a custodial agreement.



**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

For purposes of the statement of cash flows, liquid investments of the enterprise funds with a maturity of three months or less are considered to be cash equivalents.

**G. Receivables**

In government-wide statements, receivables consist of all revenues earned at year-end and not yet received. For governmental activities, uncollectible amounts due for receivables are recognized as bad debts and directly charged off at the time information becomes available which indicates the receivable is not collectible. In governmental fund types, the uncollectible amount is charged to the revenue reported. In business-type activities, uncollectible amounts due from utility billing receivables are recognized as bad debts through the use of an allowance account or are directly charged off at the time information becomes available that a receivable is not collectible. Allowances for uncollectible accounts receivable are based on historical trends and the periodic aging of accounts receivable. An allowance for doubtful accounts of \$10,912 was recorded in the proprietary funds at June 30, 2023.

**H. Short-Term Interfund Receivables / Payables**

During the course of operations, numerous transactions occur between individual funds for goods provided or services rendered. These receivables and payables are classified as due from / due to other funds on the balance sheet. Short-term interfund loans are classified as interfund receivables / payables. Interfund receivables and payables between funds within governmental activities are eliminated in the statement of net position. Any residual balances between the governmental activities and business-type activities are reported in the government-wide financial statements as "internal balances."

**I. Capital Assets**

Capital outlays are recorded as expenditures of the governmental funds and as assets in the government-wide financial statements to the extent the Town's capitalization threshold of \$1,000 is met. In accordance with GASB Statement No. 34, infrastructure has been capitalized retroactively to 1980. Although an exception exists for local governments with annual revenues of less than \$10 million, the Town has elected to report its infrastructure retroactively. Interest incurred during construction is capitalized on a government-wide basis.

Capital outlays of the proprietary funds are recorded as fixed assets and depreciated over their estimated useful lives on a straight-line basis on both the fund basis and the government-wide basis. All fixed assets are valued at historical cost or estimated historical cost if actual cost was not available. Donated fixed assets are valued at their estimated fair market value on the date donated. Infrastructure is capitalized by estimate using current replacement cost for a similar asset and deflating this cost using price indices to the acquisition year. The Town does not capitalize historical treasures or works of art. The Town maintains many items and buildings of historical significance. The Town does not require that the proceeds from the sale of historical treasures or works of art be used to acquire other items for the collection.

Maintenance, repairs, and minor equipment are charged to operations when incurred. Expenditures that materially change capacities or extend useful lives are capitalized. Upon sale or retirement of land, buildings, and equipment, the cost and related accumulated depreciation, if applicable, are eliminated from the respective accounts and any resulting gain or loss is included in the results of operations.

Depreciation of all exhaustible capital assets is recorded as an allocated expense in the Statement of Activities, with accumulated depreciation reflected in the Statement of Net Position. Depreciation is provided over the assets' useful lives using the straight-line method of depreciation.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

The range of estimated useful lives by type of asset is as follows:

Buildings	7 - 40	Years
Infrastructure	15 - 40	Years
Furniture and Equipment	5 - 10	Years
Heavy Equipment	5 - 10	Years
Vehicles	5 - 10	Years
Utilities	5 - 50	Years

**J. Long-Term Obligations**

In the government-wide financial statements, debt principal payments of both governmental and business-type activities are reported as decreases in the balance of the liability on the Statement of Net Position. In the fund financial statements, however, debt principal payments of governmental funds are recognized as expenditures when paid.

**K. Compensated Absences**

The Town's policy is to allow employees' vacation pay based on employee classification and length of service. Vacation pay is non-cumulative with any unpaid amounts paid to employees upon separation from Town's service. In governmental funds, the cost of vacation pay is recognized when payments are made to employees. At June 30, 2023, \$890 was recorded as unused vacation pay in the General Fund. \$1,767 was recorded as unused vacation pay in the Water and Sewer Enterprise Fund.

The Town's employees earn sick pay benefits based on length of service. Employees may accumulate sick leave benefits up to a maximum of 360 days. Sick pay benefits have not been accrued, as the employee's right to sick pay benefits, although cumulative, do not vest.

**L. Pension Plans**

For purposes of measuring the net pension liability, deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to pensions, and pension expense, information about the fiduciary net position of the Town's two pension plans and additions to / deductions from the plans' fiduciary net position have been determined on the accrual basis, which is the same basis as they are reported by the plans. For this purpose, benefit payments (including refunds of employee contributions) are recognized when due and payable in accordance with the benefit terms. Investments are reported at fair value.

**M. Net Position**

In the government-wide and proprietary fund statements, equity is classified as net position and displayed in three components:

1. Net Investment in Capital Assets – consists of the historical cost of capital assets, including any restricted capital assets, net of accumulated depreciation, and reduced by the outstanding balances of any bonds, mortgages, notes, or other borrowings that are attributable to the acquisition, construction, or improvement of those assets.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

2. Restricted – this component of net position consists of assets that have constraints that are externally imposed by creditors, grantors, contributors, or laws or regulations of other governments, or constraints imposed by law through constitutional provisions or enabling legislation.
3. Unrestricted – all other net position is reported in this category.

When both restricted and unrestricted resources are available for use, it is the Town's policy to use restricted resources first, then unrestricted resources as they are needed.

**N. Fund Balance**

In the governmental fund financial statements, fund balances are classified as follows:

1. Nonspendable Fund Balance – amounts that cannot be spent because they are either not in spendable form or legally or contractually required to be maintained intact.
2. Restricted Fund Balance – amounts that can be spent only for specific purposes because of the Town Charter, state or federal laws, or externally imposed conditions by grantors, creditors, or citizens.
3. Committed Fund Balance – amounts that can be used only for the specific purposes determined by a formal action by Board of Aldermen ordinances or resolutions.
4. Assigned Fund Balance – amounts that are constrained by the Town's intent that they will be used for specific purposes. The Board of Aldermen is the only body authorized to assign amounts for a specific purpose and is the highest level of decision-making.
5. Unassigned Fund Balance – all amounts not included in other spendable classifications.

The Town considers restricted fund balances to be spent for governmental expenditures first when both restricted and unrestricted resources are available. When an expense is incurred that can be paid from either restricted or unrestricted resources (net position), the Town's policy is to apply the expenditure in the following priority: restricted, committed, assigned, and then unassigned fund balance.

**O. Interfund Transactions**

During the course of operations, transactions may occur between individual funds. Those related to short-term borrowings are classified as "due from other funds" or "due to other funds" on the balance sheet. Interfund receivables and payables between funds within governmental activities are eliminated in the Statement of Net Position. Any residual balances outstanding between the governmental activities and business-type activities are reported in the government-wide financial statements as "internal balances."

**P. Dedication of Proceeds of Flow of Funds – Sales and Use Tax**

Sales and use taxes of two and one-half percent are levied on taxable sales within the Town. The sales tax is collected by the Tangipahoa Parish School Board, Sales Tax Division, and remitted to the Town in the month following receipt by the School Board. The School Board receives the sales tax approximately one month after collection by vendors. Sales taxes uncollected by Tangipahoa Parish in June and July (which represent sales for May and June) and received by the Town in July and August have been accrued as of June 30, 2023.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

- 1980 ½ % Sales and Use Tax (Enterprise Fund)

The proceeds of the 1980 ½ % sales and use tax levied by the Town (current collections were \$224,729 for the year ended June 30, 2022) were dedicated for the payment of the \$290,000 Public Improvement Bonds. This tax expired January 3, 2005, but collection of the tax continued beyond the date of expiration. On March 31, 2007, a special election was held and the voters approved a proposition to continue to levy this tax. As of March 9, 2005, these \$290,000 Public Improvement Bonds were paid in full and the sales tax is no longer dedicated for payment of these bonds. On July 9, 2013, the Town issued \$2,632,000.00 of Sewer Revenue Bonds, Series 2014 to fund improvements to the Town's sewer system. These bonds are secured by a pledge and dedication of the excess of annual revenues of the Town including the proceeds of the 1980 1/2% sales and use tax.

**Q. Estimates**

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect certain reported amounts and disclosures. Accordingly, actual results could differ from those estimates.

**R. Adoption of New Accounting Pronouncements**

The Town of Independence adopted GASB Statement No. 96, *Subscription-Based Information Technology Arrangements*. The objective of this Statement is to better meet the information needs of financial statements users by improving accounting and financial reporting for subscription-based information technology arrangements by governments. This Statement increases the usefulness of government's financial statements by requiring recognition of certain subscription-based information technology arrangements that previously were classified as operating costs and recognized as inflows of resources and outflows of resources based on the payment provisions of the contract. It establishes a model for subscription-based information technology accounting based on the fundamental principle that subscription-based information technology arrangements are financings of the right to use an underlying IT asset. Under this Statement, a government is required to recognize a subscription liability and an intangible right to use subscription asset, and a lessor is required to recognize a subscription receivable and a deferred inflow of resources, thereby enhancing the relevance and consistency of information about governments' subscription-based information technology activities.

**2. Stewardship, Compliance, and Accountability**

**A. Budgetary Information**

Annual budgets are adopted on a basis consistent with generally accepted accounting principles for the general fund and all special revenue funds. The Town was not in compliance with the Louisiana Local Government Budget Act for the Innovative Housing Fund Budget.

**B. Deposits, Investment Laws, and Regulations**

In accordance with state law, all uninsured deposits of municipal funds in financial institutions must be secured with acceptable collateral valued at lower of market or par. As reflected in Note 3 regarding cash, cash equivalents, and investments, the Town was in compliance with the deposit and investment laws and regulations.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

**3. Cash, Cash Equivalents, and Investments**

On June 30, 2023, the Town had cash and cash equivalents (book balances) totaling \$2,177,260. These deposits are stated at cost, which approximates market.

	Statement of Net Position
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 1,410,871
Restricted Cash and Cash Equivalents	766,389
<b>Total Interest-Bearing Deposits</b>	<b>\$ 2,177,260</b>

*Custodial Credit Risk* – Custodial credit risk is the risk that in the event of a bank failure, the Town's deposits may not be returned to it. The Town does not have a deposit policy for custodial credit risk. As of June 30, 2023, \$1,258,196 of the Town's cash was exposed to custodial credit risk. However, these deposits are secured from risk by the pledge of securities owned by the fiscal agent bank. These securities are being held in the name of the pledging fiscal agent bank in a custodial bank that is mutually acceptable to the Town and the fiscal agent bank.

Under state law, these deposits must be secured by federal deposit insurance, or the pledge of securities owned by the fiscal agent bank. The market value of the pledged securities, plus the federal deposit insurance, must at all times equal the amount on deposit with the fiscal agent. LRS 39:1229 imposes a requirement on the custodian bank to advertise and sell the pledged securities within 10 days of being notified by the Town that the fiscal agent has failed to pay deposited funds upon demand.

The government's investments are categorized as either (1) insured or registered for which the securities are held by the government or its agent in the government's name, (2) uninsured and unregistered for which the securities are held by the broker's or dealer's trust department or agent in the government's name, or (3) uninsured and unregistered for which securities are held by the broker or dealer, or by its trust department or agent but not in the government's name.

**4. Restricted Cash**

Restricted cash is related to utility customer deposits and reserve amounts required in debt service agreements. Restricted cash at June 30, 2023 was as follows:

	Governmental Activities	Business- Type Activities	Total
Debt Service	\$ -	\$ 656,066	\$ 656,066
Customer Meter Deposits	-	110,322	110,322
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 766,388</b>	<b>\$ 766,388</b>

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

**5. Receivables**

As of June 30, 2023, the accounts receivable and due from other governments for governmental activities were as follows:

	General Fund	Special Revenue Funds	Total Governmental Funds
Receivables:			
Franchise Fees	\$ 17,458	\$ -	\$ 17,458
Rent Receivable	18,800	-	18,800
Lease Receivables	77,423	-	77,423
Total Governmental Fund Receivables, Net	<u>\$ 113,681</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 113,681</u>
Due From Other Governments:			
Sales and Use Tax	\$ 144,884	\$ -	\$ 144,884
Tax on Insurance Premiums	9,604	-	9,604
Beer Tax	1,521	-	1,521
Total Due From Other Governments	<u>\$ 156,009</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 156,009</u>

As of June 30, 2023, the accounts receivable and due from other governments for business-type activities were as follows:

Accounts Receivable:	
Utility Charges	\$ 102,879
Less: Uncollectible Allowance	<u>(10,912)</u>
Total Proprietary Fund Receivables, Net	<u>\$ 91,967</u>
Due From Other Governments:	
Sales and Use Tax	<u>\$ 36,221</u>
Total Due From Other Governments	<u>\$ 36,221</u>



**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

**6. Concentration of Credit Risk – Proprietary Funds**

Accounts receivable and related user fees from utility customers were comprised largely of amounts due from residents in the Town. Most customers have made deposits to partially secure their outstanding balance.

**7. Notes Receivable – Innovative Housing Grant Program**

The Town, through a grant program, received mortgage notes from individuals for residential and small business projects. These notes (7 outstanding as of June 30, 2023) are payable to the Town over a long-term payment schedule. The notes range in maturity, with interest between 1 and 3 percent and are secured by the improved real estate. As of June 30, 2023, the total outstanding balance of the notes was \$113,063.

**8. Capital Assets**

The following is a summary of changes in capital assets for the governmental activities for the year ended June 30, 2023:

	Balance June 30, 2022	Increases	Decreases	Balance June 30, 2023
<b>Capital Assets Not Being Depreciated:</b>				
Land	\$ 100,150	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 100,150
<b>Total Capital Assets Not Being Depreciated</b>	100,150	-	-	100,150
<b>Capital Assets:</b>				
Building	2,062,714	168,893	-	2,231,607
Vehicles and Equipment	747,907	63,679	-	811,586
Infrastructure	3,051,049	-	-	3,051,049
<b>Total Capital Assets</b>	5,861,670	232,572	-	6,094,242
<b>Less: Accumulated Depreciation:</b>				
Building	687,533	62,490	-	750,023
Vehicles and Equipment	637,100	39,912	-	677,012
Infrastructure	2,709,541	9,116	-	2,718,657
<b>Total Accumulated Depreciation</b>	4,034,174	111,518	-	4,145,692
<b>Total Governmental Capital Assets, Net</b>	<u>\$ 1,927,646</u>	<u>\$ 121,054</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 2,048,700</u>

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

Depreciation expense was charged to governmental functions as follows:

**Governmental Activities:**

General Government	\$ 32,422
Public Safety	26,976
Public Works	52,120
<b>Total</b>	<u><u>\$ 111,518</u></u>

The following is a summary of changes in capital assets for business-type activities for the year ended June 30, 2023:

	Balance June 30, 2022	Increases	Decreases	Balance June 30, 2023
<b>Capital Assets Not Being Depreciated:</b>				
Construction in Progress	\$ -	\$ 210,014	\$ -	\$ 210,014
Land	69,808	-	-	69,808
<b>Total Capital Assets Not Being Depreciated</b>	69,808	210,014	-	279,822
<b>Capital Assets:</b>				
Vehicles and Equipment	799,109	27,729	-	826,838
Water & Sewer Lines	9,309,664	-	-	9,309,664
Water Storage Tanks	1,753,115	-	-	1,753,115
Water Wells	435,124	-	-	435,124
Sewer Treatment Plan	2,672,651	-	-	2,672,651
Sewer Pumps and Lift Stations	871,945	51,654	-	923,599
<b>Total Capital Assets</b>	15,841,608	79,383	-	15,920,991
<b>Less: Accumulated Depreciation:</b>				
Vehicles and Equipment	606,248	36,808	-	643,056
Water & Sewer Lines	2,423,869	225,528	-	2,649,397
Water Storage Tanks	416,870	50,318	-	467,188
Water Wells	194,228	7,413	-	201,641
Sewer Treatment Plan	1,612,410	67,310	-	1,679,720
Sewer Pumps and Lift Stations	801,838	4,680	-	806,518
<b>Total Accumulated Depreciation</b>	6,055,463	392,057	-	6,447,520
<b>Total Business-Type Capital Assets, Net</b>	<u><u>\$ 9,855,953</u></u>	<u><u>\$ (102,660)</u></u>	<u><u>\$ -</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 9,753,293</u></u>

At June 30, 2023, the Town had two construction projects that were substantially complete. The first was the installation of water and sewer lines to the Family Dollar on Old Hwy 51. The total cost of the installation was \$28,384. This project was completed in July 2023.

The second project was the renovation of three sewer lift stations in Independence. The total cost of the renovations was \$181,630. The renovations were completed on July 27, 2023.



**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

**9. Leases**

**Finance Leases**

On July 21, 2020 the town entered into a lease purchase agreement with Bancorp South Equipment Finance for the purchase of a Lawn Mower. The lease is for 48 months with 48 monthly payments at an interest rate of 2.85%. The lease contains a bargain purchase agreement at the end of the lease. At June 30, 2023, the town recorded an asset of \$13,504 with accumulated amortization of \$5,626. The balance of the lease is \$4,403 with a current maturity of \$4,403 as of June 30, 2023.

On July 8, 2021 the town entered into a lease purchase agreement with CNH Industrial Capital America, LLC for the purchase of a Track Hoe. The lease is for 60 months with 60 monthly payments at an interest rate of 3.99%. The lease contains a bargain purchase agreement at the end of the lease. At June 30, 2023, the town recorded an asset of \$81,884 with accumulated amortization of \$16,377. The balance of the lease is \$49,671 with a current maturity of \$16,000 as of June 30, 2023.

Amortization schedules of the outstanding Finance Leases including interest expense of \$4,498 is as follows:

**Finance Leases**

Lawn Mower Year End	Lease Payments	Track Hoe Year End	Lease Payments
06/30/24	3,576	06/30/24	18,034
06/30/25	894	06/30/25	18,034
06/30/26	-	06/30/26	18,034
	<u>\$ 4,470</u>		<u>\$ 54,102</u>

**Operating Leases**

The Town of Independence has the following Operating Leases:

**Progressive Waste Lease**

The Town of Independence is leasing a building located in the Independence Industrial Park of Northeast Railroad Avenue in Independence, Louisiana. The terms of the lease were for five years commencing on June 1, 2017 through June 1, 2022 at a payment of \$5,168 per month. The Lease was renewed for an additional term of one month at the expiration of its initial term. At June 30, 2023, this lease is month to month.

**Police Station Lease**

The Town of Independence is leasing to the Department of Public Safety and Corrections office space in the Police Department building located in Independence to be used by the Office of State Fire Marshal. The terms of the lease are for five years commencing on June 1, 2017 through June 30, 2022 at a payment of \$1,036 per month. The Lease has an option to renew for an additional five years beginning July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2027 at a payment of \$1,036 per month. The lease was renewed for an additional five years.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

**Head Start Building**

The Town of Independence is leasing premises located at the Independence Industrial Park of Northeast Railroad Avenue in Independence. The terms of the lease are for fifteen years commencing on October 1, 2009 through September 30, 2024. Payments are \$2,000 per month for the first five years. \$2,100 per month for the next five years and \$2,200 per month for the last five years. This building will be used for the purpose of operating a Head Start program for poor and handicapped preschool children.

**Nutrition Store**

The Town of Independence was leasing premises located at 269 East Railroad Ave in Independence. The terms of the lease were for one year commencing on April 15, 2021 through April 15, 2022. Payments were \$350 per month. This building was used for the purpose of selling specialty smoothies and other nutritional drinks at retail. The lease was not renewed.

**Retail Establishment**

The Town of Independence is leasing premises located at 269 East Railroad Ave in Independence. The terms of the lease are for three years commencing on August 1, 2020 through July 31, 2023. Payments are \$0 per month for the first six months and \$650 per month for months Seven through thirty-six. This building will be used as a retail establishment.

**Retail Establishment**

The Town of Independence is leasing premises located at 269 East Railroad Ave in Independence. The terms of the lease are for three years commencing on June 1, 2021 through May 31, 2024. Payments are \$150 per month. This building will be used as a retail establishment.

During the year the Town of Independence adopted Governmental Accounting Standard Number 87. At June 30, 2023, the Town recorded a lease receivable of \$77,423 and deferred Inflows of Rent of \$75,599.

The net present value to amortize the future lease payments at a discount rate of 3% are as follows:

2024	\$	41,132	\$	1,769	\$	39,363
2025		19,032		814		18,218
2026		12,432		426		12,006
2027		12,432		61		12,371
	\$	<u>85,028</u>	\$	<u>3,070</u>	\$	<u>81,958</u>

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

**Long-Term Debt**

The Town's long-term debt is to be repaid from business-type activities. The following is a summary of long-term liabilities of the Town for the year ended June 30, 2023:

	Total Debt 6/30/2022	Increase in Debt	Debt Retired	Total Debt 6/30/2023	Due in One Year
Revenue Bonds	\$ 5,299,199	\$ -	\$ 114,526	\$ 5,184,673	\$ 118,329
<b>Total</b>	<u>\$ 5,299,199</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 114,526</u>	<u>\$ 5,184,673</u>	<u>\$ 118,329</u>

**Business-Type Activities:**

\$975,000 Sewer Revenue Bond dated December 16, 1997; Due in monthly installments of \$4,388 through December 16, 2037; Interest at 4.5%; Payable from a pledge of the Town's revenues of the Sewer System \$ 556,679

\$1,425,000 Water Revenue Bonds dated January 21, 2015; Due in monthly installments of \$4,974 through January 21, 2055; Interest at 2.75%; Payable from a pledge of the Town's revenues of the Water System. 1,256,587

\$1,150,000 Water Revenue Bonds dated May 21, 2015; Due in monthly installments of \$4,508 through January 21, 2055; Interest at 3.50%; Payable from a pledge of the Town's revenues of the Water System. 1,038,880

\$2,632,000 Sewer Revenue Bonds dated, April 28, 2015; Due in monthly installments of \$9,186 through April 16, 2055; Interest at 2.75%; Payable from a pledge of the Town's revenues of the Water System. 2,332,527

**Total Business-Type Activities** \$ 5,184,673

An amortization schedule of the outstanding long-term debt of the Business-Type Activities including interest expense of \$2,677,765 is as follows:

Business Activities

Year End	Sewer			Water		Totals
	Series 2015	Revenue Bond	Revenue Bond	Series 2015 A	Series 2015 B	
06/30/24	\$ 110,232	\$ 9,612	\$ 43,044	\$ 54,096	\$ 59,688	\$ 276,672
06/30/25	110,232	9,612	43,044	54,096	59,688	276,672
06/30/26	110,232	9,612	43,044	54,096	59,688	276,672
06/30/27	110,232	9,612	43,044	54,096	59,688	276,672
06/30/28	110,232	9,612	43,044	54,096	59,688	276,672
2027 - 2055	2,948,383	90,258	403,530	1,455,698	1,581,209	6,479,078
<b>Total</b>	<u>\$ 3,499,543</u>	<u>\$ 138,318</u>	<u>\$ 618,750</u>	<u>\$ 1,726,178</u>	<u>\$ 1,879,649</u>	<u>\$ 7,862,438</u>

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

**Bond Compliance Requirements**

***\$2,632,000 Sewer Revenue Bonds, Series 2014***

These bonds were approved via a board resolution on July 9, 2013. These bonds shall mature no later than forty years and bear an interest rate not exceeding 2 ¾% per annum. The bonds shall be paid solely from the income and revenues derived by the Town from the operation of the sewer system, after paying reasonable and necessary expenses of operating and maintaining the system. The bond resolutions require the revenues earned from operations of the system be deposited in a “Sewer Revenue Fund.” After payment of all reasonable and necessary costs and expenses of maintaining the system, certain monthly payments must be made from the Sewer Revenue Fund as follows:

Each month, there will be set aside into a fund called the “Sewer Revenue Bond and Interest Sinking Fund” (Sinking Fund) an amount to pay promptly and fully the principal of and the interest on the Bond except with regard to the Bond during the first year, a sum equal to 1/12 of the interest falling due on the first payment date. The payments will continue monthly until April 2055, unless the bonds are called in advance of their maturity dates, in which event it is possible to reduce the required payments into the Sinking Fund.

There shall also be set aside into a “Sewer Revenue Bond Reserve Fund” (Reserve Fund) an amount equal to 5% of the amount paid into the Sinking Fund until the Reserve Fund has accumulated an amount equal to the highest principal and interest falling due in any fiscal year payable from the Sinking Fund.

There shall also be set aside into a “Sewer Depreciation and Contingency Fund” (Contingency Fund) an amount equal to 5% of the amount paid into the sinking fund. When a sum equal to the Reserve Fund requirement has been accumulated in the Reserve Fund, an amount equal to 10% of the amount being paid monthly into the Sinking Fund shall be paid into the Contingency Fund.

Funds will also be set aside into a “Sewer Short-Lived Assets Fund” (Asset Fund) in an amount equal to \$1,353 over the life of the Bonds to provide maintenance and replacement of short-lived assets.

The bond resolution also requires the Town to maintain sewer rates which will provide revenues in each year, after paying all reasonable and necessary expenses of operating the Sewer System, of at least 120% of the largest bond principal and interest payments in any future fiscal year.

The Town was not in compliance with the bond covenants as the sewer system revenues were not deposited into a separate Sewer Revenue Fund as required, sewer system expenses were not paid from the Sewer Revenue Fund as required.

***\$1,150,000 Water Revenue Bonds, Series 2015A***

These bonds were approved via a board resolution dated August 13, 2013. These bonds will be payable over a period of time not exceeding forty years and bear an interest rate not exceeding 4 ¼% per annum. The Bonds shall be paid solely from the income and revenues derived by the Town from the operation of the water system, after paying reasonable and necessary expenses of operating and maintaining the system. The bond resolutions require the revenues earned from operations of the system be deposited in a “Water System Revenue Fund.” After payment of all reasonable and necessary costs and expenses of maintaining the system, certain monthly payments must be made from the Water System Revenue Fund as follows:

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

Each month, there will be set aside into a fund called the “Waterworks Revenue Bond and Interest Sinking Fund” (Sinking Fund) an amount to pay promptly and fully the principal of and the interest on the Bond except with regard to the Bond during the first year the sum equal to 1/12 of the interest falling due on the first payment date. The payments will continue monthly until May 2055, unless the bonds are called in advance of their maturity dates, in which event it is possible to reduce the required payments into the Sinking Fund.

There shall also be set aside into a “Water Revenue Bond Reserve Fund” (Reserve Fund) an amount equal to 5% of the amount paid into the Sinking Fund until the Reserve Fund has accumulated an amount equal to the highest principal and interest falling due in any fiscal year payable from the Sinking Fund.

There shall also be set aside into a “Waterworks Depreciation and Contingency Fund” (Contingency Fund) an amount equal to 5% of the amount paid into the Sinking Fund. When a sum equal to the Reserve Fund requirement has been accumulated in the Reserve Fund, an amount equal to 10% of the amount being paid monthly into the Sinking Fund shall be paid into the Contingency Fund.

The bond resolution also requires the Town to maintain water rates which will provide revenues in each year, after paying all reasonable and necessary expenses of operating the Water System, of at least 120% of the largest bond principal and interest payments in any future fiscal year.

The town was in compliance with the bond covenants at June 30, 2023.

***\$1,425,000 Water Revenue Bonds, Series 2015B***

These bonds were approved via a board resolution dated July 9, 2013. These bonds will be payable over a period of time not exceeding forty years and bear an interest rate not exceeding 2 ¾% per annum. The Bonds shall be paid solely from the income and revenues derived by the Town from the operation of the water system, after paying reasonable and necessary expenses of operating and maintaining the system. The bond resolutions require the revenues earned from operations of system be deposited with the Town’s fiscal agent bank in a “Water System Revenue Fund.” After payment of all reasonable and necessary costs and expenses of maintaining the system, certain monthly payments must be made from the Water System Revenue Fund as follows:

Each month, there will be set aside into a fund called the Water Revenue Bond and Interest Sinking Fund (Sinking Fund) an amount to pay promptly and fully the principal of and the interest on the Bond except with regard to the Bond during the first year a sum equal to 1/12 of the interest falling due on the first payment date. The payments will continue monthly until January 2055, unless the bonds are called in advance of their maturity dates, in which event it is possible to reduce the required payments into the Sinking Fund.

There shall also be set aside into a “Water Revenue Bond Reserve Fund” (Reserve Fund) an amount equal to 5% of the amount paid into the Sinking Fund until the Reserve Fund has accumulated an amount equal to the highest principal and interest falling due in any fiscal year payable from the Sinking Fund.

There shall also be set aside into a “Waterworks Depreciation and Contingency Fund” (Contingency Fund) an amount equal to 5% of the amount paid into the sinking fund. When a sum equal to the



**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

Reserve Fund requirement has been accumulated in the Reserve Fund, an amount equal to 10% of the amount being paid monthly into the Sinking Fund shall be paid into the Contingency Fund.

Funds will also be set aside into a "Waterworks System Short-Lived Assets Fund" (Asset Fund) in an amount equal to \$1,833 over the life of the Bonds to provide maintenance and replacement of short-lived assets.

The bond resolution also requires the Town to maintain water rates which will provide revenues in each year, after paying all reasonable and necessary expenses of operating the Water System, of at least 120% of the largest bond principal and interest payments in any future fiscal year.

The town was in compliance with the bond covenants at June 30, 2023.

***\$975,000 Sewer Revenue Bonds***

The Town, through its governing authority, adopted a resolution on March 11, 1997, authorizing the issuance of \$975,000 Sewer Revenue Bonds and entering into certain covenants in connection with the security and payment of said bonds. The proceeds of these bonds are to be used to finance a portion of the cost of acquiring and constructing improvements, extensions, and replacements to the Town's sewerage system.

The bond resolutions require that revenues earned from the operation of the Sewer System be deposited with the Town's fiscal agent bank in a Sewer Revenue Fund. After the payment of all reasonable and necessary costs and expenses of operating and maintaining the system, certain monthly payments must be made from the Sewer Revenue Fund as follows:

Each month, there will be set aside into a fund called the "Sewer Revenue Bond and Interest Sinking Fund" an amount constituting 1/12 of the next maturing installment of principal and interest on the outstanding bonds. The payments will continue monthly until December 2037, unless bonds are called in advance of their maturity dates, in which event it is possible to reduce the required payments into the sinking fund.

There shall also be set aside into a "Sewer Reserve Fund" an amount equal to 5% of the principal and interest payments required during the current fiscal year until such fund reaches an amount of \$60,000. On January 1, 2005, the reserve requirement was reduced to \$52,650. Such amounts may be used only for the payment of maturing bonds and interest coupons for which sufficient funds are not on deposit in the Bond and Interest Redemption Fund and as to which there would otherwise be default.

Funds will also be set aside into a Sewer Depreciation and Contingency Fund at the rate of \$318 per month. Money in this fund may be used for the making of repairs or replacements to the system that are necessary to keep it in operating condition.

Money in this fund may also be used to pay principal or interest on the bonds falling due at any time there is not sufficient money for payment in other bond funds.

All of the revenues received in any fiscal year and not required to be paid in such fiscal year into any of the above noted funds shall be regarded as surplus and may be used for any lawful corporate purpose.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

The bond resolution also requires the Town to maintain sewer rates which will provide revenues in each year, after paying all reasonable and necessary expenses of operating the Sewer System, the principal and interest maturing on the Bonds each year, all reserves or sinking funds or other payments required for the year, or at least 110% of the largest bond principal and interest payments in any future fiscal year.

The Town was not in compliance with the bond covenants as the sewer system revenues were not deposited into a separate Sewer Revenue Fund as required, sewer system expenses were not paid from the Sewer Revenue Fund as required.

**Employee Pension Plans**

A. Municipal Employees' Retirement System of Louisiana

***General Information about the Pension Plan***

Plan Description – Employees of the Town are eligible for participation in the Municipal Employees' Retirement System of Louisiana (the "System") – a cost-sharing, multiple-employer defined benefit pension plan administered by a Board of Trustees and established by Act 356 of the 1954 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature. The System issues a publicly available financial report that can be obtained at [www.mersla.com/annual-reports](http://www.mersla.com/annual-reports). The report may also be obtained by writing to the Municipal Employees' Retirement System of Louisiana, 7937 Office Park Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70809, or by calling (225) 925-4810.

Benefits Provided – The System provides retirement, disability, and death benefits under two separate plans – Plan "A" and Plan "B." The Town was enrolled in Plan "B."

Under Plan "A" Retirement benefits are generally determined as 3.0% of the employee's final compensation multiplied by the employee's years of creditable service. Employees with 25 years of service are eligible to retire at any age. Employees with a minimum of 10 years of service are eligible to retire at age 60. Employees are eligible for disability benefits under age 60 with 5 years of service. Survivor's benefits are available upon the death of a member who has credit for 5 or more years of service who is not eligible for normal retirement benefits. Under state law, cost of living increases to benefits are allowable only if sufficient funds are available from investment income in excess of normal requirements. Cost of living increases cannot exceed 2% of the retiree's original benefit for each full calendar year since retirement.

Under Plan "B" Retirement benefits are generally determined as 2.0% of the employee's final compensation multiplied by the employee's years of creditable service. Employees with 30 years of service are eligible to retire at any age. Employees with a minimum of 10 years of service are eligible to retire at age 60. Employees are eligible for disability benefits with 10 years of service at any age. Survivor's benefits are available upon the death of a member who has credit for 5 or more years of service who is not eligible for normal retirement benefits. Under state law, cost of living increases to benefits are allowable only if sufficient funds are available from investment income in excess of normal requirements. Cost of living increases cannot exceed 2% of the retiree's original benefit for each full calendar year since retirement.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

Contributions – Per Act 788 of the 1978 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, contribution rates for employees are established by state law and employer contribution rates are actuarially determined each year by the System’s Board of Trustees.

Under Plan “B” Employees are required to contribute 5.00% of their annual pay. The Town’s contractually required contribution rate for the year ended June 30, 2023, was 15.50 % of annual payroll. Contributions to the System from the Town were \$51,260 for the year ended June 30, 2023.

***Pension Liabilities, Pension Expense, and Deferred Outflows of Resources and Deferred Inflows of Resources Related to Pensions***

At June 30, 2023, the Town reported a liability of \$292,350 for its proportionate share of the net pension liability. The net pension liability was measured as of June 30, 2022, and the total pension liability used to calculate the net pension liability was determined by an actuarial valuation as of that date. The Town’s proportion of the net pension liability was based on a projection of the Town’s June 30, 2023 contributions to the pension plan relative to the projected contributions of all participating employers, actuarially determined.

For the year ended June 30, 2023, the Town recognized a pension credit of -\$5,651. At June 30, 2023, the Town reported deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to pensions from the following sources:

	Deferred Outflows of Resources	Deferred Inflows of Resources
Differences Between Expected and Actual Experience	\$ -	\$ -
Changes of Assumptions	3,126	-
Change in Investments	53,766	
Change in Proportion	17,089	3,791
Changes of Experience	-	3,721
Net Difference Between Projected and Actual Earnings on Pension Plan Investments	-	-
Changes in Proportion and Differences Between Town Contributions and Proportionate Share of Contributions	-	-
Town Contributions Subsequent to the Measurement Date	51,260	-
	<u>\$ 125,241</u>	<u>\$ 7,512</u>



**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

\$51,260 is reported as deferred outflows of resources related to pensions resulting from Town contributions subsequent to the measurement date will be recognized as a reduction of the net pension liability in the year ended June 30, 2023. Other amounts reported as deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to pensions will be recognized in pension expense as follows:

<b>Year Ended:</b>	
June 30, 2023	(17,513)
June 30, 2024	(19,046)
June 30, 2025	(5,796)
June 30, 2026	(24,115)
Thereafter	-

Actuarial Assumptions – The total pension liability in the June 30, 2021 actuarial valuation was determined using the following actuarial assumptions, applied to all periods included in the measurement:

Inflation	2.50%
Salary Increases:	
1-4 Years of Service	7.40%
More Than 4 Years of Service	4.90%
Investment Rate of Return	6.85%

Mortality rates were based on the RP-2000 Employee Table for active members, the RP-2000 Healthy Annuitant Table for healthy annuitants, and the RP-2000 Disabled Lives Mortality Tables for disabled annuitants for Males or Females, as appropriate.

The actuarial assumptions used in the June 30, 2022 were based on the results of an actuarial experience study for the period from July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2018.

The long-term expected rate of return on pension plan investments was determined using a building-block method in which best-estimate ranges of expected future real rates of return (expected returns, net of pension plan investment expense and inflation) are developed for each major asset class. These ranges are combined to produce the long-term expected rate of return by weighting the expected future real rates of return by the target asset allocation percentage and by adding expected inflation and an adjustment for the effect of rebalancing / diversification.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

The target allocation and best estimates of arithmetic real rates of return for each major asset class are summarized in the following table:

Asset Class	Target Allocation	Long-Term Expected Real Rate of Return
Public Equity	53%	2.31%
Public Fixed Income	38%	1.65%
Alternatives	9%	0.39%
Total	100.00%	4.35%
Inflation		2.60%
Expected Arithmetic Nominal Return		6.95%

Discount Rate – The discount rate used to measure the total pension liability was 6.85%. The projection of cash flows used to determine the discount rate assumed that employee contributions will be made at the current contribution rate and that contributions from participating employers will be made at the actuarially determined rates approved by the Louisiana Public Retirement Systems’ Actuarial Committee

(“PRSAC”) taking into consideration the recommendation of the System’s actuary. Based on those assumptions, the System’s fiduciary net position was projected to be available to make all projected future benefit payments of current plan members. Therefore, the long-term expected rate of return on pension plan investments was applied to all periods of projected benefit payments to determine the total pension liability.

Sensitivity of the Town’s Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability to Changes in the Discount Rate – The following presents the Town’s proportionate share of the net pension liability calculated using the discount rate of 6.85%, as well as what the Town’s proportionate share of the net pension liability would be if it were calculated using a discount rate that is one percentage-point lower (5.85%) or one percentage-point higher (7.85%) than the current rate:

	1.0% Decrease <u>5.850%</u>	Current Discount Rate <u>6.850%</u>	1.0% Increase <u>7.850%</u>
Town's Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability	\$ 119,685,823	\$ 87,798,349	\$ 60,829,104

Pension Plan Fiduciary Net Position – Detailed information about the pension plan’s fiduciary net position is available in the separately issued System financial report.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

Municipal Police Employees' Retirement System of Louisiana

***General Information about the Pension Plan***

Plan Description – Police officers of the Town participate in the Municipal Police Employees' Retirement System of Louisiana (the "Police System") – a cost-sharing, multiple-employer defined benefit pension plan administered by a Board of Trustees and established by Act 189 of the 1973 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature. The Police System issues a publicly available financial report that can be obtained at [www.lampers.org/auditreports.htm](http://www.lampers.org/auditreports.htm). The report may also be obtained by writing to the Municipal Police Employees' Retirement System of Louisiana, 7722 Office Park Boulevard, Suite 200, Baton Rouge, LA 70809-7601, or by calling (225) 929-7411.

Benefits Provided – The Police System provides retirement, disability, and death benefits.

For employees that became members of the Police System prior to January 1, 2013, retirement benefits are determined as 3 1/3% of the employee's average final compensation based on the 36 consecutive months of highest pay multiplied by the employee's years of creditable service, not to exceed 100%. Employees with 25 years of service are eligible to retire at any age. Employees with a minimum of 20 years of service are eligible to retire at age 50. Employees with a minimum of 12 years of service are eligible to retire at age 55.

For employees that became members of the Police System after January 1, 2013, retirement benefits are divided into two sub-plans – Hazardous Duty and Non-Hazardous Duty. Under the Hazardous Duty sub-plan, a member is eligible for regular retirement after he has been a member of the System and has 25 years of creditable service at any age or has 12 years of creditable service at age 55. Under the Non-Hazardous Duty sub-plan, a member is eligible for regular retirement after he has been a member of the System and has 30 years of creditable service at any age, 25 years of creditable service at age 55, or 10 years of creditable service at age 60. Under both sub-plans, a member is eligible for early retirement after he has been a member of the System for 20 years of creditable service at any age, with an actuarially reduced benefit from age 55. Under both plans, retirement benefits are determined as 3% (for Hazardous Duty members) and 2 1/2% (Non-Hazardous Duty members) of the employee's average final compensation based on the highest 60 consecutive months of pay multiplied by the employee's years of creditable service, not to exceed 100%.

Cost of living increases cannot exceed 3% of the retiree's current benefit. The Fire System is authorized to provide an additional 2% cost of living increase, computed on the member's original benefit, to all regular retirees, disability, survivors, and beneficiaries who are 65 years of age or older on the cut-off date which determines eligibility.

Contributions – Per Act 189 of the 1973 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, contribution rates for employees are established by state law and employer contribution rates are actuarially determined each year by the Police System's Board of Trustees. Employees are required to contribute 10.00% of their annual pay. The Town's contractually required contribution rate for the year ended June 30, 2023, was 31.25% of annual payroll. Contributions to the Police System from the Town were \$89,017 for the year ended June 30, 2023.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

***Pension Liabilities, Pension Expense, and Deferred Outflows of Resources and Deferred Inflows of Resources Related to Pensions***

At June 30, 2023, the Town reported a liability of \$842,141 for its proportionate share of the net pension liability. The net pension liability was measured as of June 30, 2022, and the total pension liability used to calculate the net pension liability was determined by an actuarial valuation as of that date. The Town's proportion of the net pension liability was based on a projection of the Town's June 30, 2023 contributions to the pension plan relative to the projected contributions of all participating employers, actuarially determined. At June 30, 2023, the Town's proportion was .0709%, compared to .084048%, at June 30, 2022, and .07094% at June 30, 2021.

For the year ended June 30, 2023, the Town recognized negative pension expense of (\$99,012). At June 30, 2023, the Town reported deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to pensions from the following sources:

	Deferred Outflows of Resources	Deferred Inflows of Resources
Differences Between Expected and Actual Experience	\$ -	\$ -
Changes of Assumptions	29,049	6,264
Changes of Experience	4,153	6,864
Change of Investments	150,349	
Change of Proportion	43,667	
Net Difference Between Projected and Actual Earnings on Pension Plan Investments	-	-
Changes in Proportion and Differences Between Town Contributions and Proportionate Share of Contributions	-	-
Town Contributions Subsequent to the Measurement Date	89,017	-
	<u>\$ 316,235</u>	<u>\$ 13,128</u>

\$89,017 is reported as deferred outflows of resources related to pensions resulting from Town contributions subsequent to the measurement date will be recognized as a reduction of the net pension liability in the year ended June 30, 2023. Other amounts reported as deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to pensions will be recognized in pension expense as follows:

<b>Year Ended:</b>	
June 30, 2023	(64,080)
June 30, 2024	(52,715)
June 30, 2025	(18,434)
June 30, 2026	(78,861)
Thereafter	-



**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

Discount Rate – The discount rate used to measure the total pension liability was 6.75%. The projection of cash flows used to determine the discount rate assumed that employee contributions will be made at the current contribution rate and that contributions from participating employers will be made at the actuarially determined rates approved by the Louisiana Public Retirement Systems’ Actuarial Committee (“PRSAC”) taking into consideration the recommendation of the Police System’s actuary. Based on those assumptions, the Police System’s fiduciary net position was projected to be available to make all projected future benefit payments of current plan members. Therefore, the long-term expected rate of return on pension plan investments was applied to all periods of projected benefit payments to determine the total pension liability.

Sensitivity of the Town’s Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability to Changes in the Discount Rate – The following presents the Town’s proportionate share of the net pension liability calculated using the discount rate of 6.75%, as well as what the Town’s proportionate share of the net pension liability would be if it were calculated using a discount rate that is one percentage-point lower (5.75%) or one percentage-point higher (7.75%) than the current rate as of June 30, 2022.

	1.0% Decrease (5.75%)	Current Discount Rate (6.75%)	1.0% Increase (7.75%)
Town's Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability	\$1,430,852,784	\$1,022,177,525	\$ 680,798,381

Pension Plan Fiduciary Net Position – Detailed information about the pension plan’s fiduciary net position is available in the separately issued Police System financial report.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

**10. Interfund Transactions**

*Interfund Receivable and Payable Balances*

The primary purpose of interfund receivables / payables is to loan monies between funds to cover current expenditures. All interfund receivables / payables are considered short-term and are expected to be repaid within the next year. Individual fund balances due from / to other funds at June 30, 2023, were as follows:

	<u>Due From</u>	<u>Due To</u>
<b>General Fund:</b>		
Due from Enterprise Fund	\$ 220,184	\$ -
Due to Utility Fund	-	-
<b>Innovative Housing:</b>		
Due from General Fund	-	-
Due from Economic Development	3,658	-
<b>Economic Development:</b>		
Due to Innovative Housing	-	3,658
<b>Enterprise Funds:</b>		
<b>Sewer Fund</b>		
Due From Water Fund	483,591	-
Due to General Fund		220,184
<b>Water Fund</b>		
Due to Sewer Fund		483,591
Total All Funds	<u>\$ 707,433</u>	<u>\$ 707,433</u>



**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

*Interfund Transfers*

The following is a summary of the operating transfers between funds during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023.

	<u>Transfers In</u>	<u>Transfers Out</u>
<b>General Fund</b>	\$ -	\$ 136,580
<b>Proprietary Fund</b>	136,580	-
<b>Capital Projects Fund</b>	-	-
<b>Special Revenue Funds:</b>		
Innovative Housing Fund	-	-
Economic Development Fund	-	-
<b>Total All Funds</b>	<u>\$ 136,580</u>	<u>\$ 136,580</u>

Funds were transferred from the General Fund to the Utility Fund to pay for improvements to the Sewer System.

## 11. Tax Revenues

The 1974 Louisiana Constitution (Article 7 Section 18) provided that land and improvements for residential purposes be assessed at 10% of fair market value; other property and electric cooperative properties, excluding land are to be assessed at 15%; and public service properties, excluding land, are to be assessed at 25% of fair market value. Fair market value is determined by the elected assessor of the parish on all property subject to taxation except public service properties, which are valued by the Louisiana Tax Commission (LRS 47:1957). The correctness of assessments by the assessor is subject to review and certification by the Louisiana Tax Commission. The assessor is required to reappraise all property subject to taxation at intervals of not more than four years.

All property taxes are recorded in governmental funds, as explained in Note 1. Revenues in governmental funds are recognized in the period in which they become available and measurable. Ad valorem taxes attach as an enforceable lien on property on January 1 of each year. Taxes are levied by the Town during the year and are billed to the taxpayers in November. Billed taxes become delinquent on December 31 of each year. Revenues from ad valorem taxes are budgeted in the year billed and recognized as revenue when billed. The Town bills and collects its own property taxes using the assessed values determined by the Tax Assessor of Tangipahoa Parish.

For the year ended June 30, 2023, taxes of 16.21 mills were levied on property with taxable assessed valuations totaling \$9,485,472 and were dedicated to general government (6.21 mills), police protection (5.00 mills), and fire protection (5.00 mills). Current year taxes levied were \$153,544. At June 30, 2023, taxes receivable was \$0 and the allowance for uncollectible ad valorem taxes was \$0.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

**12. On-Behalf Payments for Salaries and Benefits**

In accordance with GASB Statement No. 24, *Accounting and Financial Reporting for Certain Grants and Other Financial Assistance*, the Town reports in its financial statements on-behalf salary and fringe benefit payments made by the state to certain Town employees.

The State of Louisiana makes supplementary salary payments to certain groups of employees. The Town is not legally responsible for these salaries. Therefore, the basis for recognizing the revenue and expenditure payments is the actual state contribution. For the fiscal year 2023, the state paid supplemental salaries to the police employees of the Town. The Town is required to pay from its own budget the payroll taxes and retirement contributions on these on-behalf payments.

On-behalf payments recorded as revenues and expenditures in the financial statements are as follows:

	State Supplemental Salaries
Policemen Supplemental Pay	\$ 41,670
<b>Total On-Behalf Payments</b>	<b>\$ 41,670</b>

**13. Commitments and Contingencies**

*Suits and Claims*

Various suits and claims arising in the ordinary course of operations are pending against the Town. The majority of the cases are either covered by insurance or other defenses; however, the ultimate effect of such litigation cannot be ascertained at this time. It is the opinion of Town management that the ultimate resolution of any unrecorded litigation will not have a material effect on the financial position of the Town.

*Risk Management*

The Town is exposed to various risks of losses related to torts; theft of, damage to, and destruction of assets, errors and omissions; injuries to employees; and natural disasters for which the Town carries commercial insurance. There were no major changes in insurance coverage from the prior year and settlements have not exceeded coverage in the current year or in the prior year.

*Grants*

The Town receives federal and state grants for the specific purposes that are subject to audit by grantor agencies. Such audits may lead to requests for reimbursement to grantor agencies for expenditures disallowed under the terms of the grant. Management's opinion is that compliance with the terms of the grants will result in negligible, if any, disallowed costs.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Notes to Financial Statements (Continued)  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

**14. Subsequent Events**

In preparing these financial statements, the Town has evaluated events and transactions for potential recognition or disclosure through December 20, 2023.

## **Required Supplemental Information (Part II)**

# Town of Independence, Louisiana

Schedule 1

## Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance – Budget and Actual – General Fund For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

	Original Budget	Final Budget	Actual Amounts	Final Budget Variance - Favorable / (Unfavorable)
<b>Revenues:</b>				
Taxes:				
Sales Taxes	\$ 891,600	\$ 846,966	\$ 841,345	\$ (5,621)
Property Taxes	179,000	197,712	202,095	4,383
Pilot Tax	8,600	7,956	7,956	-
Solid Waste Fees	147,500	146,800	146,190	(610)
Licenses and Permits	198,000	216,000	213,524	(2,476)
Fines and Forfeitures	102,100	96,000	89,245	(6,755)
Security Detail	-	52,700	52,668	(32)
Rental Income	122,400	122,200	108,205	(13,995)
Charges for Services	59,400	59,100	111,222	52,122
Intergovernmental	13,800	19,900	5,597	(14,303)
On-Behalf payments from State	42,000	42,100	41,670	(430)
American Rescue Plan Grant	350,000	100,900	108,820	7,920
FEMA	-	174,700	180,037	5,337
Police Grant	25,000	1,400	1,439	39
Other Grants	1,000	28,100	-	(28,100)
Other	8,000	33,100	7,582	(25,518)
Interest Income	2,200	2,200	7,387	5,187
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<u>2,150,600</u>	<u>2,147,834</u>	<u>2,124,982</u>	<u>(22,852)</u>
<b>Expenditures:</b>				
Current:				
General Government	248,400	282,400	305,000	(22,600)
Municipal Court	22,800	20,500	19,614	886
Public Safety	835,295	941,600	972,346	(30,746)
Public Works	357,500	447,200	473,810	(26,610)
Solid Waste	122,000	130,300	131,665	(1,365)
Health and Recreation	25,700	42,800	27,955	14,845
Debt Service:				
Principal	3,400	3,400	3,414	(14)
Interest	200	200	162	38
Fire Station	-	121,400	121,400	-
Capital Outlay	143,000	19,900	111,172	(91,272)
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<u>1,758,295</u>	<u>2,009,700</u>	<u>2,166,538</u>	<u>(156,838)</u>
<b>Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over Expenditures</b>	392,305	138,134	(41,556)	(179,690)
<b>Other Financing Sources:</b>				
Transfers out	(350,000)	(211,100)	(136,580)	74,520
Insurance Reimbursements	800	19,600	19,550	(50)
Sale of Fixed Assets	7,500	2,100	6,903	4,803
Donation of Fire Station	-	121,400	121,400	-
<b>Total Other Financing Sources</b>	<u>(341,700)</u>	<u>(68,000)</u>	<u>11,273</u>	<u>79,273</u>
<b>Change in Fund Balances</b>	50,605	70,134	(30,283)	(100,417)
<b>Fund Balances:</b>				
Beginning of the Year,	162,709	162,709	585,331	-
End of the Year	<u>\$ 213,314</u>	<u>\$ 232,843</u>	<u>\$ 555,048</u>	<u>\$ (100,417)</u>

See independent auditor's report.

# Town of Independence, Louisiana

Schedule 2

## Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance – Budget and Actual – Innovative Housing Fund For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

	Original Budget	Final Budget	Actual Amounts	Final Budget Variance - Favorable / (Unfavorable)
<b>Revenues:</b>				
Investment Interest	\$ 4,300	\$ 4,300	\$ 3,359	\$ (941)
<b>Total Revenues</b>	4,300	4,300	3,359	(941)
<b>Expenditures:</b>				
General Government	1,000	1,000	-	1,000
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	1,000	1,000	-	1,000
<b>Excess of Revenues over Expenditures</b>	3,300	3,300	3,359	59
<b>Other Financing Sources (Uses):</b>				
Operating Transfers Out	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Other Financing Sources (Uses)</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>Change in Fund Balance</b>	3,300	3,300	3,359	59
<b>Fund Balance - Beginning of the Year</b>	175,168	173,868	185,264	11,396
<b>Fund Balance - End of the Year</b>	\$ 178,468	\$ 177,168	\$ 188,623	\$ 11,455

See independent auditor's report.

# **Town of Independence, Louisiana**

Schedule 3-A

## Schedule of the Town's Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability – Municipal Employees' Retirement System of Louisiana For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

Fiscal Year	Town's Proportion of the Net Pension Liability	Town's Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability	Town's Covered Employee Payroll	Town's Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability as a Percentage of its Covered Employee Payroll	Plan Fiduciary Net Position as a Percentage of the Total Pension Liability
2023	0.330000%	\$ 292,350	\$ 284,853	102.63%	69.56%
2022	0.298167%	\$ 172,731	\$ 286,012	60.39%	79.14%
2021	0.312472%	\$ 283,170	\$ 242,517	116.76%	66.26%
2020	0.356019%	\$ 311,450	\$ 258,128	120.66%	66.14%
2019	0.348529%	\$ 294,797	\$ 272,163	108.32%	65.60%
2018	0.386929%	\$ 334,784	\$ 271,951	123.10%	63.49%
2017	0.521281%	\$ 213,658	\$ 305,452	69.95%	62.11%
2016	0.000000%	\$ -	\$ 93,120	0.00%	66.18%
2015	0.020476%	\$ 52,551	\$ -	0.00%	73.99%

See independent auditor's report.



**Town of Independence, Louisiana**

Schedule 3-B

Schedule of the Town's Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability –  
Municipal Police Employees' Retirement System of Louisiana  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

Fiscal Year	Town's Proportion of the Net Pension Liability	Town's Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability	Town's Covered Employee Payroll	Town's Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability as a Percentage of its Covered Employee Payroll	Plan Fiduciary Net Position as a Percentage of the Total Pension Liability
2023	0.082400%	\$ 842,141	\$ 284,853	295.64%	70.79%
2022	0.077705%	\$ 414,210	\$ 262,849	157.58%	84.08%
2021	0.076401%	\$ 706,123	\$ 237,059	297.87%	70.94%
2020	0.070759%	\$ 642,610	\$ 209,810	306.28%	71.00%
2019	0.065900%	\$ 556,455	\$ 220,972	251.82%	71.88%
2018	0.006351%	\$ 554,478	\$ 237,833	233.14%	70.08%
2017	0.054470%	\$ 510,565	\$ 189,602	269.28%	66.00%
2016	0.015900%	\$ 124,560	\$ 152,193	81.84%	70.73%
2015	0.017003%	\$ 106,372	\$ 42,540	250.05%	75.10%
2014	0.025776%	\$ 205,910	\$ 44,071	467.22%	66.71%

See independent auditor's report.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**Schedule 4-A

Schedule of the Town's Contribution –  
Municipal Employees' Retirement System of Louisiana  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

Fiscal Year	Contractually Required Contribution	Contributions in Relation to the Contractually Required Contribution	Contribution Deficiency/Excess	Covered Employee Payroll	Contribution as a Percentage of Covered Employee Payroll
2023	\$ 51,260	\$ (51,260)	\$ -	\$ 330,710	15.50%
2022	\$ 41,480	\$ (41,480)	\$ -	\$ 286,012	14.50%
2021	\$ 35,518	\$ (35,518)	\$ -	\$ 242,517	14.65%
2020	\$ 33,886	\$ (33,886)	\$ -	\$ 258,128	13.13%
2019	\$ 38,103	\$ (38,103)	\$ -	\$ 272,164	14.00%
2018	\$ 35,353	\$ (35,353)	\$ -	\$ 271,951	13.00%
2017	\$ 68,476	\$ (68,476)	\$ -	\$ 305,452	22.42%
2016	\$ 18,391	\$ (18,391)	\$ -	\$ 93,120	19.75%
2015	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%
2014	\$ 6,371	\$ (6,371)	\$ -	\$ 33,979	18.75%

See independent auditor's report.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**

Schedule 4-B

Schedule of the Town's Contribution –  
Municipal Police Employees' Retirement System of Louisiana  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Contractually Required Contribution</u>	<u>Contributions in Relation to the Contractually Required Contribution</u>	<u>Contribution Deficiency/Excess</u>	<u>Covered Employee Payroll</u>	<u>Contribution as a Percentage of Covered Employee Payroll</u>
2023	\$ 89,017	\$ (89,017)	\$ -	\$ 284,853	31.25%
2022	\$ 76,411	\$ (76,411)	\$ -	\$ 226,402	33.75%
2021	\$ 80,007	\$ (80,007)	\$ -	\$ 237,059	33.75%
2020	\$ 79,720	\$ (79,720)	\$ -	\$ 209,810	38.00%
2019	\$ 71,264	\$ (71,264)	\$ -	\$ 220,974	32.25%
2018	\$ 62,636	\$ (62,636)	\$ -	\$ 203,694	30.75%
2017	\$ 60,248	\$ (60,248)	\$ -	\$ 189,125	31.86%
2016	\$ 44,897	\$ (44,897)	\$ -	\$ 152,193	29.50%
2015	\$ 13,400	\$ (13,400)	\$ -	\$ 42,540	31.50%
2014	\$ 13,662	\$ (13,662)	\$ -	\$ 44,071	31.00%

See independent auditor's report.

## **Other Supplemental Information**

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Combining Balance Sheet – Non-Major Governmental Funds  
June 30, 2023

Schedule 5

	LCDBG Economic Development 1987 Fund	Total Non-Major Governmental Funds
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 1,695	\$ 1,695
Due from Other Funds	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<u>\$ 1,695</u>	<u>\$ 1,695</u>
<b>Liabilities, Deferred Inflows of Resources and Fund Balances</b>		
<b>Liabilities:</b>		
Accounts Payable	\$ -	\$ -
Due to Other Funds	<u>3,658</u>	<u>3,658</u>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<u>3,658</u>	<u>3,658</u>
<b>Deferred Inflows of Resources:</b>		
Unearned Revenue	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Total Deferred Inflows of Resources</b>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Fund Balances:</b>		
Restricted for Economic Development	<u>(1,963)</u>	<u>(1,963)</u>
<b>Total Fund Balances</b>	<u>(1,963)</u>	<u>(1,963)</u>
<b>Total Liabilities, Deferred Inflows of Resources, and Fund Balances</b>	<u>\$ 1,695</u>	<u>\$ 1,695</u>

See independent auditor's report.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Combining Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances –  
Non-Major Governmental Funds  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

Schedule 6

	LCDBG Economic Development 1987 Fund	Total Non-Major Governmental Funds
<b>Revenues:</b>		
Donations	\$ -	\$ -
Rental Income	-	-
Investment Interest	46	46
<b>Total Revenues</b>	46	46
<b>Expenditures:</b>		
General Government:		
Fireworks	-	-
Professional Fees	-	-
Public Works	-	-
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	-	-
<b>Excess of Revenues over Expenditures</b>	46	46
<b>Other Financing Sources (Uses):</b>		
Interstate Clearing	-	-
Operating Transfers Out	-	-
<b>Total Other Financing Sources (Uses)</b>	-	-
<b>Change in Fund Balance</b>	46	46
<b>Fund Balances - Beginning of the Year</b>	(2,009)	(2,009)
<b>Fund Balances - End of the Year</b>	\$ (1,963)	\$ (1,963)

See independent auditor's report.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Schedule of Compensation of Paid Elected Officials  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

Schedule 7

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Term of Office</u>	<u>Salary</u>	<u>Supplemental Pay</u>
Jim Paine	Mayor	July 1, 2020 June 30, 2024	\$ 25,511	\$ -
Eric Costa	Board of Alderman	July 1, 2020- June 30, 2024	7,000	-
Frank Edwards	Police Chief	July 1, 2020 June 30, 2024	45,572	7,100
Jimmy Gregory	Board of Aldermen	July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2024	7,000	-
Larry Cardaronella	Board of Aldermen	July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2024	7,000	-
Luciano Suarez	Board of Aldermen	July 1, 2020 June 30, 2024	7,000	-
Joe Galofaro	Board of Aldermen	July 1, 2020 June 30, 2024	4,000	-
Evelyn Mitchell	Board of Aldermen	July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2024	3,000	-
<b>Total</b>			<u>\$ 106,083</u>	<u>\$ 7,100</u>

See independent auditor's report.



**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Schedule of Compensation, Benefits, and Other Payments to Agency Head  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

Schedule 8

**Agency Head: Honorable Jim Paine, Mayor**

<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Salary	\$ 25,511
Benefits - Health Insurance	-
Benefits - Other Insurance	-
Social Security & Medicare	1,952
Benefits - Retirement	3,954
Deferred Compensation	-
Benefits - Other - Supplemental Pay	-
Car Allowance	-
Vehicle Provided by Government	-
Vehicle Rental	-
Cell Phone	-
Dues	-
Per Diem	-
Reimbursements	-
Travel	-
Registration Fees	250
Conference Travel	177
Housing	-
Unvouchered Expenses	-
Special Meals	-
Mayor Meetings	-
	<u>\$ 31,844</u>

See independent auditor's report.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Schedule of Insurance Coverage in Force  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

Schedule 9

<u>Insurance Company/ Agent</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Coverage</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Expiration Date</u>
Lane & Associates	Old Police Station	Buildings	300,000	4/11/2024
		Personal Property	53,155	4/11/2024
		Fence	8,190	4/11/2024
	Fire Station # 2	Buildings	114,736	4/11/2024
		Personal Property	26,520	4/11/2024
		Equipment	59,136	4/11/2024
	Senior Citizen Center	Buildings	216,320	4/11/2024
		Personal Property	52,000	4/11/2024
		Fence	35,000	4/11/2024
	Police Station	Buildings	350,000	4/11/2024
		Personal Property	12,000	4/11/2024
	Pavilion	Buildings	325,000	4/11/2024
	Museum	Buildings	100,000	4/11/2024
	Head Start Building	Buildings	300,000	4/11/2024
	Fire Station	Buildings	130,000	4/11/2024
	Waste Water Treatment	Buildings	600,000	4/11/2024
		Fence	70,000	4/11/2024
	Belt Room	Buildings	200,000	4/11/2024
		Personal Property	100,000	4/11/2024
	Blower Room	Buildings	200,000	4/11/2024
		Personal Property	5,000	4/11/2024
	Dumpster Building	Buildings	10,000	4/11/2024
	Canon Copier	Equipment	5,417	4/11/2024
	Case Short Boom	Equipment	37,775	4/11/2024
Rod Prejean & Associates	Case Backhoe	Equipment	56,000	7/18/2024
	Pipe Hunter	Equipment	72,000	7/18/2024
	Bush hog	Equipment	11,600	7/18/2024
	2013 Kubota Lawn Mower	Equipment	7,900	7/18/2024
	2017 Kubota Utility Cab	Equipment	35,000	7/18/2024
	2012 Case Backhoe	Equipment	26,729	7/18/2024

See independent auditor's report.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Schedule of Insurance Coverage in Force  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

Schedule 9

<u>Insurance Company/ Agent</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Coverage</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Expiration Date</u>
EMC Insurance		Errors & Omissions	100,000	5/7/2024
Landmark American Insurance CO				
	New City Hall	Buildings	426,000	4/11/2024
		Personal Property	100,000	4/11/2024
	Storage Shed	Building	50,000	4/11/2024
Markel Insurance Co.				
	Kubota	Equipment	16,468	4/11/2024
Rod Prejean & Associates				
	2007 Chev Crew Cab	Vehicle	2,500	5/14/2024
	2000 C3500 HD	Vehicle	4,000	5/14/2024
	2006 Charger	Vehicle	10,000	5/14/2024
	2014 Tahoe	Vehicle	25,000	5/14/2024
	2002 DS Dump truck	Vehicle	21,000	5/14/2024
	2005 3500	Vehicle	5,000	5/14/2024
	2004 F150	Vehicle	2,000	5/14/2024
	2002 1500 Pickup	Vehicle	8,000	5/14/2024
	2019 Tahoe	Vehicle	32,490	5/14/2024
	2019 Tahoe	Vehicle	32,490	5/14/2024
Powell Insurance				
		Flood Insurance	105,000	5/8/2024
		Flood Insurance	53,000	5/8/2024

See independent auditor's report.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
**Water and Sewer Rate Schedule**  
June 30, 2023

Schedule 10

<u>Customer Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Sewer</u>	<u>Water</u>	<u>Garbage</u>	<u>Fire</u>	<u>Police</u>	<u>DHH</u>
Residential	698			15.73	3.50	2.50	1.00
0-5,000 GL		24.00	21.00				
Over 5,000 GL		3.00 / 1,000 GL	3.00 / 1,000 GL				
Commercial	66			15.73	3.50	2.50	1.00
0-2,500 GL		33.00	32.00				
2,501-5,000 GL		66.00	64.00				
Over 5,000 GL		3.00 / 1,000 GL	3.00 / 1,000 GL				
Schools	5			-	3.50	2.50	1.00
0 - 4,000 GL		256.00	253.00				
Over 4,000 GL		4.00 / 1,000 GL	4.00 / 1,000 GL				
Major Commercial/Industrial	2			-	-	-	1.00
0 - 50,000 GL		750.00	500.00		3.50	2.50	
Over 50,000 GL		3.00 / 1,000 GL	3.00 / 1,000 GL				
Church	12			15.73	3.50	2.50	1.00
0 - 5,000 GL		20.00	15.00				
Over 5,000 GL		3.00 / 1,000 GL	3.00 / 1,000 GL				
Total	<u>783</u>						

See independent auditor's report.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Schedule of Water and Sewer Information  
June 30, 2023

Schedule 11

*Accounts Receivable:*

As of June 30, 2023, accounts receivable from water and sewer billings were as follows:

Accounts Receivable:

Utility Charges	\$ 102,879
Less: Uncollectible Allowance	<u>(10,912)</u>
Total Proprietary Fund Receivables, Net	<u>\$ 91,967</u>

*Schedule of Aged Receivables*

Balance	Current	30 Days	60 Days	Over 60 Days
<u>\$ 102,879</u>	<u>\$ 93,679</u>	<u>\$ 10,912</u>	<u>\$ (629)</u>	<u>\$ (1,083)</u>

*Water and Sewer Users*

As of June 30, 2023, water and sewer users were composed of the following:

Customer Type	Number
Residential	699
Commercial	59
Schools	5
Major Commercial / Industrial	1
Church	<u>19</u>
Total	<u>783</u>

See independent auditor's report.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
**Schedule of Justice System Funding – Collecting/Disbursing Entity**  
**As Required by Act 87 of the 2020 Regular Legislative Session**  
**For the Year Ended June 30, 2023**

Schedule 12

	<b>First Six Month Period Ended 12/31/2022</b>	<b>Second Six Month Period Ended 6/30/2023</b>
<b>Cash Basis Presentation</b>		
<b>Beginning Balance of Amounts Collected(I.E. cash on hand)</b>	\$ 223	\$ 352
<b>Add: Collections</b>		
Other (do not include collections that fit into more specific categories above)	<u>55,686</u>	<u>32,479</u>
<b>Subtotal Collections</b>	<u>55,686</u>	<u>32,479</u>
<b>Less: Disbursements to Governments &amp; Nonprofits:</b>		
Treasury State of Louisiana CMIS	191	205
DHH Traumatic Head & Spinal Cord Injury Trust	365	270
Judicial Administration, Supreme Court of LA	96	103
Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement	374	402
Florida Parishes Juvenile Justice Commission	955	1,025
Tangipahoa Crime Stoppers	382	410
<b>Less: Amount Retained by Collecting Agency</b>		
Amounts "Self-Disbursed" to Collecting Agency - Other	53,194	30,119
<b>Less: Disbursements to Individual/3rd Party Collection or Processing Agencies</b>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Subtotal Disbursements/Retainage</b>	<u>55,557</u>	<u>32,534</u>
<b>Total: Ending Balance of Amounts Collected but not Disbursed/Retained</b>	<u><u>\$ 352</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 297</u></u>

Ending Balance of "Partial Payments" Collected but not Disbursed (only applies if collecting agency does not disburse partial payments until fully collected) - This balance is included in the Ending Balance of Amounts Collected but not Disbursed/Retained.

See independent auditor's report.

**Other Independent Auditor's Reports and  
Findings and Recommendations**



Dennis E. James, CPA  
Lyle E. Lambert, CPA  
Paul M. Riggs, Jr., CPA  
J. Bryan Ehricht, CPA  
Megan E. Lynch, CPA  
B. Jacob Steib, CPA



Independent Auditor's Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting and on  
Compliance and Other Matters Based on an Audit of Financial Statements  
Performed in Accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*

The Honorable Jim Paine, Mayor  
and the Members of the Board of Aldermen  
Town of Independence  
Independence, Louisiana

We have audited, in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, the financial statements of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the Town of Independence, Louisiana (the "Town"), as of and for the year ended June 30, 2023, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the Town's basic financial statements, and have issued our report thereon dated December 20, 2023.

**Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting**

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements, we considered the Town's internal control over financial reporting (internal control) as a basis for designing audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances for the purpose of expressing our opinions on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Town's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the Town's internal control.

A *deficiency in internal control* exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, misstatements on a timely basis. A *material weakness* is a deficiency, or combination of deficiencies, in internal control, such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the entity's financial statements will not be prevented, or detected and corrected, on a timely basis. A *significant deficiency* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose described in the first paragraph of this section and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or, significant deficiencies. Given these limitations, during our audit we did not identify any deficiencies in internal control that we consider to be material weakness. However, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies may exist that were not identified.

The Honorable Jim Paine, Mayor  
and Members of the Board of Aldermen  
Town of Independence, Louisiana

### **Report on Compliance and Other Matters**

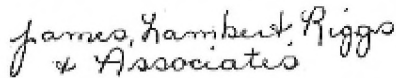
As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the Town's financial statements are free from material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the financial statements. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit and, accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The results of our tests disclosed instances of noncompliance or other matter that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards* and which are described in the accompanying schedule of findings and questioned costs as items 2023-001 and 2023-002.

### **Town of Independence, Louisiana's Response to Findings**

*Government Auditing Standards* requires the auditor to perform limited procedures on the Town's response to the findings identified in our audit and described in the accompanying schedule of findings and questioned costs. The Town's response was not subjected to the other auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements and, accordingly, we express no opinion on the response.

### **Purpose of this Report**

The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control or on compliance. This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the Town's internal control and compliance. Accordingly, this communication is not suitable for any other purpose.



James Lambert Riggs and Associates, Inc.  
Hammond, Louisiana

December 20, 2023

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

We have audited, in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, the financial statements of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the Town of Independence as of and for the year ended June 30, 2023, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the Town of Independence's basic financial statements, and have issued our report thereon dated December 20, 2023. Our audit of the basic financial statements resulted in an unmodified opinion.

**Section I – Summary of Auditor's Reports**

**1. Report on Internal Control and Compliance Material to the Financial Statements**

**Internal Control:**

Material Weakness	<u>      </u>	Yes	<u>  X  </u>	No
Significant Deficiencies	<u>      </u>	Yes	<u>  X  </u>	No

**Compliance:**

Compliance Material to the Financial Statements	<u>  X  </u>	Yes	<u>      </u>	No
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**2. Management Letter**

Was a management letter issued?	<u>      </u>	Yes	<u>  X  </u>	No
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**Section II – Financial Statement Findings**

**Internal Control over Financial Reporting**

**None**

**Compliance and Other Matters**

**2023-001 – Local Government Budget Act**

**Condition:**

The Town of Independence may not have complied with certain provisions of the Local Government Budget Act.

**Criteria:**

Budget procedures applicable to the Town are specified in state law, Louisiana Revised Statute (RS) 39:1301-1315. The pertinent part of the law and the manner in which the Town may not have complied is as follows:

RS 39:1311(A)(1) requires the Town to amend the budget when:

*(1) Total revenue and other sources plus projected revenue and other sources for the remainder of the year, within a fund, are failing to meet total budgeted revenues and other sources by five percent or more.*

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

The Innovative Housing Fund had a revenue budget vs actual variance over the allowable limits as of June 30, 2023:

***Innovative Housing Fund***

	Original Budget	Final Budget	Actual Amounts	Final Budget Variance - Favorable / (Unfavorable)	
<b>Revenues:</b>					
Investment Interest	\$ 4,300	\$ 4,300	\$ 3,359	\$ (941)	
<b>Total Revenues</b>	4,300	4,300	3,359	(941)	-21.88%

**Cause:**

The cause of this condition appears to be due to management oversight to amend the budget before year end.

**Effect:**

Failure to follow precise requirements of the Local Government Budget Act resulted in the Town not being in compliance with the budget laws specified in LRS 39:1301:13115.

**Recommendation:**

We recommend that the Town continue to monitor its financial statements regularly and amend the budgets as needed.

**Management's Response:**

See management's response.

**2023-002 – Violation of \$2,632,000 Sewer Revenue Bond Series 2015 Bond Ordinance and \$975,000 Sewer Revenue Bond Series 1997 Bond Resolution**

**Condition:**

On June 25, 2014, the Town, through its governing authority, adopted an ordinance authorizing the issuance of \$2,632,000 of Sewer Revenue Bonds, Series 2015, to make improvements to the Town's sewer system. On March 11, 1997, the Town, through its governing authority, adopted a resolution authorizing the issuance of \$975,000 Sewer Revenue Bonds, Series 1997, also to make improvements to the Town's sewer system. In Both the \$2,632,000 Sewer Revenue Bond, Series 2015 Bond Ordinance and the \$975,000 Sewer Revenue Bond, Series 1997 Bond Resolution, the Town entered into various covenants with the future owners of the Bonds as to the management and operation of the System.

During our audit and testing of the Town's compliance with the various covenants contained in the \$2,632,000 Sewer Revenue Bond, Series 2015 Bond Ordinance and the \$975,000 Sewer Revenue Bond, Series 1997 Bond Resolution, we noted several instances in which the Town failed to comply with the Bond.

This finding was noted in prior year audits.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

**Criteria:**

The specific requirements of the \$2,632,000 Sewer Revenue Bonds, Series 2015 Bond Ordinance and the manner in which the Town failed to comply are as follows:

- Section 10 of the \$2,632,000 Sewer Revenue Bond, Series 2015, Bond Ordinance requires *“all of the income and revenues derived or to be derived by the Issuer from the operation of the System shall continue to be deposited as the same may be collected in a separate and special bank account established with the regularly designated fiscal agent bank of the Issuer pursuant to the Parity Bond Resolution and known and designated as the “Sewer Reserve Fund” (the “Revenue Fund”), said Fund to be maintained and administered in the following order of priority and for the following express purposes: (a) The payment of, first, all reasonable and necessary expenses of operating and maintaining the System.”*
- Section 10 of the \$975,000 Sewer Revenue Bond, Series 1997 Bond Resolution contains a similar requirement.
- Section 13(d) of the \$2,632,000 Sewer Revenue Bond, Series 2015, Bond Ordinance requires *“That it will maintain separate records and accounts and make full and correct entries of all transactions relating to the system.”*
- Section 13(d) of the \$975,000 Sewer Revenue Bond, Series 1997 Bond Resolution contains similar language.

The Town co-mingled and deposited all income and revenues derived from the operation of the Sewer System and the Water System into one bank account titled “Water Enterprise Account”. Furthermore, the Town paid all operating expenses of both the Sewer System and Water System out of the same bank account.

**Cause:**

The cause of this condition appears to be the Town is following the advice of the Town’s external accountant.

**Effect:**

The failure to properly deposit all income and revenues derived from the operation of the Sewer System into the Sewer Revenue Fund, to pay all operating expenses of maintaining the Sewer Fund out of the Sewer Revenue Fund and to maintain separate records and accounts for the Sewer System as required by the Bond Ordinance and Bond Resolution resulted in a comingling of sewer system funds with water system funds weakening the fiscal integrity of each individual fund resulting in a transfer of funds from the Sewer System to the Water System totaling \$483,591, as June 30, 2023.

**Recommendations:**

We recommend the Town take the following actions:

- Segregate the sewer system revenues and expenses from the water system revenues and expenses by depositing all sewer system revenues and paying all sewer system expenses from the Sewer Revenue Fund bank account as required by the Bond Ordinance and Bond Resolution.
- Have the water system repay to the sewer system the \$483,591 loan from the sewer system.

**Management’s Response:**

See management’s response.

**Town of Independence, Louisiana**  
Schedule of Prior Findings and Questioned Costs  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2022

Ref.#	Description of Findings	Corrective Action Taken	Plan Corrective Action - Partial Corrective Action Taken
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**Internal Control Findings**

None

**Compliance Findings**

None

# Town of Independence

Mayor Jim Paine



Post Office Box 35  
Independence, Louisiana 70443

JULIE PETERSON  
Town Clerk

GEORGE "PEEWEE" BICKFORD  
Maintenance Supervisor

FRANK EDWARDS III  
Police Chief

LUKE SUAREZ  
Mayor Pro-Tem

Aldermen  
LARRY CARDARONELLA  
JIMMY GREGORY  
ERIC COSTA  
JOE GALOFARO

December 20, 2023

James, Lambert, Riggs and Associates, Inc.  
401 E. Thomas Street  
Hammond, La 70401

This letter is in response to the Fiscal Audit for the Town of Independence for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023. The town staff will continue to work closely with the Board of Aldermen and Town CPA Phil Hebert, to ensure all policies and procedures are adhered to and implemented correctly.

Sincerely,

  
Jim Paine  
Mayor

City Hall: 985-878-4145

Fax: 985-878-4568

"THE TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE ON THE BASIS OF RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN, SEX, AGE, DISABILITIES OR VETERAN STATUS. WE ARE AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER AND PROVIDER."



**TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE, LOUISIANA**  
**STATEWIDE AGREED UPON PROCEDURES ENGAGEMENT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023**

Dennis E. James, CPA  
Lyle E. Lambert, CPA  
Paul M. Riggs, Jr., CPA  
J. Bryan Ehricht, CPA  
Megan E. Lynch, CPA  
B. Jacob Steib, CPA



**JAMES  
LAMBERT RIGGS  
& ASSOCIATES, INC.**  
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS  
www.jlrcpafirm.com

  
Member of  
American Institute of CPAs  
Society of Louisiana CPAs

### **Independent Accountants' Report on Applying Agreed-Up Procedures**

To Honorable Jim Paine, Mayor  
Town of Independence  
Independence, Louisiana and the Louisiana Legislative Auditor

Louisiana Legislative Auditor  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

We have performed the procedures enumerated below on the control and compliance (C/C) areas identified in the Louisiana Legislative Auditor's (LLA's) Statewide Agreed-Up Procedures (SAUPs) for the fiscal period July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023. The Town of Independence (the "Town")'s management is responsible for those C/C areas identified in the SAUPs.

The Town has agreed to and acknowledged that the procedures performed are appropriate to meet the intended purpose of the engagement, which is to perform specified procedures on the C/C areas identified in LLA's SAUPs for the fiscal period July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023. Additionally, LLA has agreed to and acknowledged that the procedures performed are appropriate for its purposes. This report may not be suitable for any other purpose. The procedures performed may not address all the items of interest to a user of this report and may not meet the needs of all users of this report and, as such, users are responsible for determining whether the procedures performed are appropriate for their purposes.

Our procedures and findings are detailed in Schedule "A".

We were engaged by The Town to perform this agreed-upon procedures engagement and conducted our engagement in accordance with attestation standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and applicable standards of *Government Auditing Standards*. We were not engaged to and did not conduct an examination or review engagement, the objective of which would be the expression of an opinion or conclusion, respectively, on those C/C areas identified in the SAUPs. Accordingly, we do not express such an opinion or conclusion. Had we performed additional procedures, other matters might have come to our attention that would have been reported to you.

We are required to be independent of The Town and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements related to our agreed-upon procedures engagement.

This report is intended solely to describe the scope of testing performed on those C/C areas identified in the SAUPs, and the result of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on control or compliance. Accordingly, this report is not suitable for any other purpose. Under Louisiana Revised Statute 24:513, this report is distributed by the LLA as a public document.

*James Lambert Riggs  
& Associates*

James Lambert Riggs & Associates, Inc.  
Hammond, Louisiana  
December 20, 2023

***1) Written Policies and Procedures***

---

A. Obtain and inspect the entity's written policies and procedures and observe whether they address each of the following categories and subcategories if applicable to public funds and the entity's operations:

i. ***Budgeting***, including preparing, adopting, monitoring, and amending the budget.

• **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

ii. ***Purchasing***, including (1) how purchases are initiated; (2) how vendors are added to the vendor list; (3) the preparation and approval process of purchase requisitions and purchase orders; (4) controls to ensure compliance with the Public Bid Law; and (5) documentation required to be maintained for all bids and price quotes.

• **Results:** The Town does have a policy on Purchasing, however, it does not mention (2) how vendors are added to the vendor list.

iii. ***Disbursements***, including processing, reviewing, and approving.

• **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

iv. ***Receipts / Collections***, including receiving, recording, and preparing deposits. Also, policies and procedures should include management's actions to determine the completeness of all collections for each type of revenue or agency fund additions (e.g., periodic confirmation with outside parties, reconciliation to utility billing after cutoff procedures, reconciliation of traffic ticket number sequences, agency fund forfeiture monies confirmation).

• **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

v. ***Payroll / Personnel***, including (1) payroll processing, (2) reviewing and approving time and attendance records, including leave and overtime worked, and (3) approval process for employee rates of pay or approval and maintenance of pay rate schedules.

• **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

vi. ***Contracting***, including (1) types of services requiring written contracts, (2) standard terms and conditions, (3) legal review, (4) approval process, and (5) monitoring process.

• **Results:** The Town does not have a written policy on Contracting.

vii. ***Travel and Expense Reimbursement***, including (1) allowable expenses, (2) dollar thresholds by category of expense, (3) documentation requirements, and (4) required approvers.

• **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

- viii. ***Credit Cards (and debit cards, fuel cards, P-Cards, if applicable)***, including (1) how cards are to be controlled, (2) allowable business uses, (3) documentation requirements, (4) required approvers of statements, and (5) monitoring card usage (e.g., determining the reasonableness of fuel card purchases).

- **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

- ix. ***Ethics***, including (1) the prohibitions as defined in Louisiana Revised Statute (R.S.) 42:1111-1121, (2) actions to be taken if an ethics violation takes place, (3) system to monitor possible ethics violations, and (4) a requirement that documentation is maintained to demonstrate that all employees and officials were notified of any changes to the entity's ethics policy.

- **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

- x. ***Debt Service***, including (1) debt issuance approval, (2) continuing disclosure / EMMA reporting requirements, (3) debt reserve requirements, and (4) debt service requirements.

- **Results:** The Town does have a written policy on Debt Service, however it does not address all items above.

- xi. ***Information Technology Disaster Recovery / Business Continuity***, including (1) identification of critical data and frequency of data backups, (2) storage of backups in a separate physical location isolated from the network, (3) periodic testing / verification that backups can be restored, (4) use of antivirus software on all systems, (5) timely application of all available system and software patches / updates, and (6) identification of personnel, processes, and tools needed to recover operations after a critical event.

- **Results:** The Town does have a written policy on Information Technology Disaster Recovery / Business Continuity, however, it does not address all items above.

- xii. ***Prevention of Sexual Harassment***, including R.S. 42:342-344 requirements for (1) agency responsibilities and prohibitions, (2) annual employee training, and (3) annual reporting.

- **Results:** The Town does have a written policy on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment, however, it does not address items (2) annual employee training and (3) annual reporting.

## **2) Board or Finance Committee**

---

- A. Obtain and inspect the board / finance committee minutes for the fiscal period, as well as the board's enabling legislation, charter, bylaws, or equivalent document in effect during the fiscal period, and:

- i. Observe that the board / finance committee met with a quorum at least monthly, or on a frequency in accordance with the board's enabling legislation, charter, bylaws, or other equivalent document.

- **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

- ii. For those entities reporting on the governmental accounting model, observe whether the minutes referenced or included monthly budget-to-actual comparisons on the general fund, quarterly budget-to-actual, at a minimum, on proprietary funds, and semi-annual budget-to-actual, at a minimum, on all special revenue funds. *Alternately, for those entities reporting on the not-for-profit accounting model, observe that the minutes referenced or included financial activity relating to public funds if those public funds comprised more than 10% of the entity's collections during the fiscal period.*

• **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

- iii. For governmental entities, obtain the prior year audit report and observe the unassigned fund balance in the general fund. If the general fund had a negative ending unassigned fund balance in the prior year audit report, observe that the minutes for at least one meeting during the fiscal period referenced or included a formal plan to eliminate the negative unassigned fund balance in the general fund.

• **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

- iv. Observe whether the board/finance committee received written updates of the progress of resolving audit finding(s), according to management's corrective action plan at each meeting until the findings are considered fully resolved.

• **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

### **3) Bank Reconciliations**

---

- A. Obtain a listing of entity bank accounts for the fiscal period from management and management's representation that the listing is complete. Ask management to identify the entity's main operating account. Select the entity's main operating account and randomly select 4 additional accounts (or all accounts if less than 5). Randomly select one month from the fiscal period, obtain and inspect the corresponding bank statement and reconciliation for each selected account, and observe that:

- i. Bank reconciliations include evidence that they were prepared within 2 months of the related statement closing date (e.g., initialed and dated or electronically logged);

• **Results:** All of the five bank accounts selected did not have evidence that the bank reconciliations were prepared within 2 months of the related statement closing date.

- ii. Bank reconciliations include written evidence that a member of management or a board member who does not handle cash, post ledgers, or issue checks has reviewed each bank reconciliation (e.g., initialed and dated, electronically logged); and

• **Results:** All of the five bank accounts selected did have evidence of review by a board member who does not handle cash, post ledgers, or issue checks but the review signature was not accompanied with the date of the review.

- iii. Management has documentation reflecting it has researched reconciling items that have been outstanding for more than 12 months from the statement closing date, if applicable.

• **Results:** Three of the five selected bank accounts had outstanding items that have been outstanding for more than 12 months, with no evidence or documentation they have been researched.



***4) Collections (excluding electronic funds transfers)***

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- A. Obtain a listing of deposit sites for the fiscal period where deposits for cash / checks / money orders (cash) are prepared and management's representation that the listing is complete. Randomly select 5 deposit sites (or all deposit sites if less than 5).
- B. For each deposit site selected, obtain a listing of collection locations and management's representation that the listing is complete. Randomly select one collection location for each deposit site (i.e., 5 collection locations for 5 deposit sites), obtain and inspect written policies and procedures relating to employee job duties (if there are no written policies or procedures, then inquire of employees about their job duties) at each collection location, and observe that job duties are properly segregated at each collection location such that:
- i. Employees responsible for cash collections do not share cash drawers / registers.
    - **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.
  - ii. Each employee responsible for collecting cash is not responsible for preparing / making bank deposits, unless another employee / official is responsible for reconciling collection documentation (e.g., pre-numbered receipts) to the deposit.
    - **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.
  - iii. Each employee responsible for collecting cash is not also responsible for posting collection entries to the general ledger or subsidiary ledgers, unless another employee / official is responsible for reconciling ledger postings to each other and to the deposit.
    - **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.
  - iv. The employee(s) responsible for reconciling cash collections to the general ledger and / or subsidiary ledgers, by revenue source and / or agency fund additions, are not responsible for collecting cash, unless another employee / official verifies the reconciliation.
    - **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.
- C. Obtain from management a copy of the bond or insurance policy for theft covering all employees who have access to cash. Observe that the bond or insurance policy for theft was in force during the fiscal period.
  - **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.
- D. Randomly select two deposit dates for each of the 5 bank accounts selected for "Bank Reconciliations" procedure #3A (select the next deposit date chronologically if no deposits were made on the dates randomly selected and randomly select a deposit if multiple deposits are made on the same day). *Alternately, the practitioner may use a source document other than bank statements when selecting the deposit dates for testing, such as a cash collection log, daily revenue report, receipt book, etc.* Obtain supporting documentation for each of the 10 deposits and:
- i. Observe that receipts are sequentially pre-numbered.
    - **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

- ii. Trace sequentially pre-numbered receipts, system reports, and other related collection documentation to the deposit slip.

- **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

- iii. Trace the deposit slip total to the actual deposit per the bank statement.

- **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

- iv. Observe the deposit was made within one business day of receipt at the collection location (within one week if the depository is more than 10 miles from the collection location or the deposit is less than \$100 and the cash is stored securely in a locked safe or drawer).

- **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

- v. Trace the actual deposit per the bank statement to the general ledger.

- **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

**5) Non-Payroll Disbursements (excluding card purchases, travel reimbursements, and petty cash purchases)**

- A. Obtain a listing of locations that process payments for the fiscal period and management's representation that the listing is complete. Randomly select 5 locations (or all locations if less than 5).
- B. For each location selected under #8 above, obtain a listing of those employees involved with non-payroll purchasing and payment functions. Obtain written policies and procedures relating to employee job duties (if the agency has no written policies and procedures, then inquire of employees about their job duties), and observe that job duties are properly segregated such that:

- i. At least two employees are involved in initiating a purchase request, approving a purchase, and placing an order or making the purchase.

- **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

- ii. At least two employees are involved in processing and approving payments to vendors.

- **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

- iii. The employee responsible for processing payments is prohibited from adding / modifying vendor files unless another employee is responsible for periodically reviewing changes to vendor files.

- **Results:** The two employees responsible for processing payments are not prohibited from adding or modifying vendor files and there is no system in place to monitor or approve these vendor changes.



- iv. Either the employee / official responsible for signing checks mails the payment or gives the signed checks to an employee to mail who is not responsible for processing payments.

- **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

- v. Only employees / officials authorized to sign checks approve the electronic disbursement (release) of funds, whether through automated clearinghouse (ACH), electronic funds transfer (EFT), wire transfer, or some other electronic means.

- **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

[Note: Findings related to controls that constrain the legal authority of certain public officials (e.g., mayor of a Lawrason Act municipality) should not be reported.]

- C. For each location selected under #8 above, obtain the entity's non-payroll disbursement transaction population (excluding cards and travel reimbursements) and obtain management's representation that the population is complete. Randomly select 5 disbursements for each location, obtain supporting documentation for each transaction, and:

- i. Observe whether the disbursement, whether by paper or electronic means, matched the related original itemized invoice and supporting documentation indicates deliverables included on the invoice were received by the entity.

- **Results:** One of the five selected transactions did not have an invoice or supporting documentation.

- ii. Observe whether the disbursement documentation included evidence (e.g., initial / date, electronic logging) of segregation of duties tested under #9, as applicable.

- **Results:** One of the five selected did not have anything to review for proper segregation of duties.

- D. Using the entity's main operating account and the month selected in Bank Reconciliations procedure #3, randomly select 5 non-payroll-related electronic disbursements (or all electronic disbursements if less than 5) and observe that each electronic disbursement was (a) approved by only those persons authorized to disburse funds (e.g., sign checks) per the entity's policy, and (b) approved by the required number of authorized signers per the entity's policy. Note: If no electronic payments were made from the main operating account during the month selected the practitioner should select an alternative month and/or account for testing that does include electronic disbursements.

- **Results:** All five transactions selected, (a) one did not have approval by authorized personnel and (b) were not approved by the required number of authorized signers.

## **6) Credit Cards / Debit Cards / Fuel Cards / P-Cards**

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- A. Obtain from management a listing of all active credit cards, bank debit cards, fuel cards, and purchase cards (cards) for the fiscal period, including the card numbers and the names of the persons who maintained possession of the cards. Obtain management's representation that the listing is complete.

- **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

- B. Using the listing prepared by management, randomly select 5 cards (or all cards if less than 5) that were used during the fiscal period. Randomly select one monthly statement or combined statement for each card (for a debit card, randomly select one monthly bank statement). Obtain supporting documentation, and:
- i. Observe whether there is evidence that the monthly statement or combined statement and supporting documentation (e.g., original receipts for credit / debit card purchases, exception reports for excessive fuel card usage) were reviewed and approved, in writing (or electronically approved), by someone other than the authorized card holder (those instances requiring such approval that may constrain the legal authority of certain public officials, such as the mayor of a Lawrason Act municipality, should not be reported).
    - **Results:** All five of the selected monthly statements did not have evidence that someone other than the cardholder reviewed the statements.
  - ii. Observe that finance charges and late fees were not assessed on the selected statements.
    - **Results:** One of the five selected cards did not have the monthly statement to be observed for supporting documentation.
- C. Using the monthly statements or combined statements selected under #12 above, excluding fuel cards, randomly select 10 transactions (or all transactions if less than 10) from each statement, and obtain supporting documentation for the transactions (i.e., each card should have 10 transactions subject to testing). For each transaction, observe it is supported by (1) an original itemized receipt that identifies precisely what was purchased, (2) written documentation of the business / public purpose, and (3) documentation of the individuals participating in meals (for meal charges only). For missing receipts, the practitioner should describe the nature of the transaction and observe whether management had a compensating control to address missing receipts, such as a “missing receipt statement” that is subject to increased scrutiny.
- **Results:** One of the five selected cards was unable to be observed for supporting documentation.

**7) Travel and Travel-Related Expense Reimbursements (excluding card transactions)**

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- A. Obtain from management a listing of all travel and travel-related expense reimbursements during the fiscal period and management’s representation that the listing or general ledger is complete. Randomly select 5 reimbursements and obtain the related expense reimbursement forms / prepaid expense documentation of each selected reimbursement, as well as the supporting documentation. For each of the 5 reimbursements selected:
- i. If reimbursed using a per diem, observe the approved reimbursement rate is no more than those rates established either by the State of Louisiana or the U.S. General Services Administration ([www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov)).
    - **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.
  - ii. If reimbursed using actual costs, observe the reimbursement is supported by an original itemized receipt that identifies precisely what was purchased.
    - **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

- iii. Observe each reimbursement is supported by documentation of the business / public purpose (for meal charges, observe that the documentation includes the names of those individuals participating) and other documentation required by Written Policies and Procedures procedure #1h.
  - **Results:** Three of the five selected reimbursements were not calculated with the IRS guidelines as required by the Written Policies and Procedures on Travel-Related Reimbursements.
- iv. Observe each reimbursement was reviewed and approved, in writing, by someone other than the person receiving reimbursement.
  - **Results:** Four of the five selected reimbursements did not have evidence of a supervisor's approval.

## **8) Contracts**

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- A. Obtain from management a listing of all agreements / contracts for professional services, materials and supplies, leases, and construction activities that were initiated or renewed during the fiscal period. *Alternately, the practitioner may use an equivalent selection source, such as an active vendor list.* Obtain management's representation that the listing is complete. Randomly select 5 contracts (or all contracts if less than 5) from the listing, excluding the practitioner's contract, and:
  - i. Observe whether the contract was bid in accordance with the Louisiana Public Bid Law (e.g., solicited quotes or bids, advertised), if required by law.
    - **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.
  - ii. Observe whether the contract was approved by the governing body / board, if required by policy or law (e.g., Lawrason Act, Home Rule Charter).
    - **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.
  - iii. If the contract was amended (e.g., change order), observe that the original contract terms provided for such an amendment and that amendments were made in compliance with the contract terms (e.g., if approval is required for any amendment, the documented approval).
    - **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.
  - iv. Randomly select one payment from the fiscal period for each of the 5 contracts, obtain the supporting invoice, agree the invoice to the contract terms, and observe the invoice and related payment agreed to the terms and conditions of the contract.
    - **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

***9) Payroll and Personnel***

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- A. Obtain a listing of employees and officials employed during the fiscal period and management's representation that the listing is complete. Randomly select 5 employees or officials, obtain related paid salaries and personnel files, and agree paid salaries to authorized salaries / pay rates in the personnel files.
- **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.
- B. Randomly select one pay period during the fiscal period. For the 5 employees or officials selected under procedure #17 above, obtain attendance records and leave documentation for the pay period, and:
- i. Observe that all selected employees or officials documented their daily attendance and leave (e.g., vacation, sick, compensatory).
  - **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.
  - ii. Observe whether supervisors approved the attendance and leave of the selected employees or officials.
  - **Results:** Two of the five selected employees did not have supervisor approval on their attendance and leave for the payroll selected for testing.
  - iii. Observe that any leave accrued or taken during the pay period is reflected in the entity's cumulative leave records.
  - **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.
  - iv. Observe the rate paid to the employees or officials agree to the authorized salary / pay rate found within the personnel file.
  - **Results:** Two of the five selected employees did not have an authorized salary/pay rate in their personnel file.
- C. Obtain a listing of those employees or officials that received termination payments during the fiscal period and management's representation that the list is complete. Randomly select two employees or officials and obtain related documentation of the hours and pay rates used in management's termination payment calculations, and the entity's policy on termination payments. Agree the hours to the employee or officials' cumulative leave records, agree the pay rates to the employee's or official's authorized pay rates in the employee's or official's personnel files, and agree the termination payment to entity policy.
- **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.
- D. Obtain management's representation that employer and employee portions of third-party payroll related amounts (e.g., payroll taxes, retirement contributions, health insurance premiums, garnishments, workers' compensation premiums, etc.) have been paid, and any associated forms have been filed, by required deadlines.
- **Results:** There was one quarter where the Form 941 was filed late.



***10) Ethics***

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- A. Using the 5 randomly selected employees / officials from “Payroll and Personnel” procedure #17 obtain ethics documentation from management, and:
- i. Observe whether the documentation demonstrates that each employee / official completed one hour of ethics training during the calendar year as required by R.S. 42:1170.
    - **Results:** One of the five selected employees did not complete the one hour of ethics training during the calendar year as required by R.S. 42:1170.
  - ii. Observe whether the entity maintains documentation which demonstrates each employee and official were notified of any changes to the entity’s ethics policy during the fiscal period, as applicable.
    - **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures..
- B. Inquire and / or observe whether the agency has appointed an ethics designee as required by R.S. 42:1170.
- **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

***11) Debt Service***

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- A. Obtain a listing of bonds / notes and other debt instruments issued during the fiscal period and management’s representation that the listing is complete. Select all debt instruments on the listing, obtain supporting documentation, and observe that State Bond Commission approval was obtained for each debt instrument issued as required by Article VII, Section 8 of the Louisiana Constitution.
- **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.
- B. Obtain a listing of bonds / notes outstanding at the end of the fiscal period and management’s representation that the listing is complete. Randomly select one bond / note, inspect debt covenants, obtain supporting documentation for the reserve balance and payments, and agree actual reserve balances and payments to those required by debt covenants (including contingency funds, short-lived asset funds, or other funds required by the debt covenants).
- **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

***12) Fraud Notice***

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- A. Obtain a listing of misappropriations of public funds and assets during the fiscal period and management’s representation that the listing is complete. Select all misappropriations on the listing, obtain supporting documentation, and observe that the entity reported the misappropriation(s) to the legislative auditor and the district attorney of the parish in which the entity is domiciled as required by R.S. 24:523.
- **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

- B. Observe the entity has posted, on its premises and website, the notice required by R.S. 24:523.1 concerning the reporting of misappropriation, fraud, waste, or abuse of public funds.

- **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

***13) Information Technology Disaster Recovery / Business Continuity***

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- A. Perform the following procedures, **verbally discuss the results with management, and report “We performed the procedure and discussed the results with management.”**

- i. Obtain and inspect the entity’s most recent documentation that it has backed up its critical data (if there is no written documentation, then inquire of personnel responsible for backing up critical data) and observe evidence that such backup (a) occurred within the past week, (b) was not stored on the government’s local server or network, and (c) was encrypted.

- **Results:** We performed the procedure and discussed the results with management.

- ii. Obtain and inspect the entity’s most recent documentation that it has tested / verified that its backups can be restored (if no written documentation, then inquire of personnel responsible for testing / verifying backup restoration) and observe evidence that the test / verification was successfully performed within the past 3 months.

- **Results:** We performed the procedure and discussed the results with management.

- iii. Obtain a listing of the entity’s computers currently in use and their related locations, and management’s representation that the listing is complete. Randomly select 5 computers and observe while management demonstrates that the selected computers have current and active antivirus software and that the operating system and accounting system software in use are currently supported by the vendor.

- **Results:** We performed the procedure and discussed the results with management.

- B. Randomly select 5 terminated employees (or all terminated employees if less than 5) using the list of terminated employees obtained in procedure #17. Observe evidence that the selected terminated employees have been removed or disabled from the network.

- **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedure.

***14) Prevention of Sexual Harassment***

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- A. Using the 5 randomly selected employees / officials from Payroll and Personnel procedure #17, obtain sexual harassment training documentation from management, and observe that the documentation demonstrates each employee / official completed at least one hour of sexual harassment training during the calendar year as required by R.S. 42:343.

- **Results:** Two of the five selected employees did not complete the training during the calendar year.

B. Observe that the entity has posted its sexual harassment policy and complaint procedure on its website (or in a conspicuous location on the entity's premises if the entity does not have a website).

- **Results:** The entity has not posted its sexual harassment policy and complaint procedure on its website.

C. Obtain the entity's annual sexual harassment report for the current fiscal period, observe that the report was dated on or before February 1, and observe that the report includes the applicable requirements of R.S. 42:344:

i. Number and percentage of public servants in the agency who have completed the training requirements;

- **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

ii. Number of sexual harassment complaints received by the agency;

- **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

iii. Number of complaints which resulted in a finding that sexual harassment occurred;

- **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

iv. Number of complaints in which the finding of sexual harassment resulted in discipline or corrective action; and

- **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

v. Amount of time it took to resolve each complaint.

- **Results:** No exceptions were noted as a result of the above listed procedures.

# Town of Independence

Mayor Jim Paine

JULIE PETERSON  
Town Clerk

LUKE SUAREZ  
Mayor Pro-Tem

GEORGE "PEEWEE" BICKFORD  
Maintenance Supervisor

FRANK EDWARDS III  
Police Chief



Post Office Box 35  
Independence, Louisiana 70443

Aldermen  
LARRY CARDARONELLA  
JIMMY GREGORY  
ERIC COSTA  
JOE GALOFARO

December 20, 2023

James, Lambert, Riggs and Associates, Inc.  
401 E. Thomas Street  
Hammond, LA 70401

Management of the Town of Independence, Louisiana would like to present the following response to the results of the June 30, 2023, Statewide Agreed-Upon Procedures conducted by James, Lambert, Riggs and Associates, Inc.

### ***Written Policies and Procedures***

Agency Response: Management will update the policy and procedures manual to update the deficient areas noted (Vendor list, Contracting, Debt Service, Information Technology Disaster Recovery, and Prevention of Sexual Harassment).

### ***Bank Reconciliations***

Agency Response: Management will work with the town CPA Phil Hebert to make sure that bank statements/reconciliations are returned to the town timely so that we can ensure they are reviewed and signed/dated in the correct time frame. Management will also work with the town CPA Phil Hebert to research any outstanding items.

### ***Non-Payroll Disbursements***

Agency Response: Management will update the policy on Non-Payroll Disbursements to segregate how these items are entered and processed in the accounting system.

City Hall: 985-878-4145

Fax: 985-878-4568



***Credit Cards***

Agency Response: Management will have a second person review the statement for payment can be processed.

***Travel and Travel-Related Expense Reimbursements***

Agency Response: Management will verify the IRS guidelines at the time of the reimburse and have the mayor approve any travel reimbursement before the payment is processed.

***Payroll and Personnel***

Agency Response: Management will review all files on a monthly basis to make sure all payroll updates have been recorded properly. Management will also make sure all time off/sick requests are authorized by a supervisor before the end of the payroll period.

***Ethics***

Agency Response: Management will send out training reminders starting in January so that employees have time to complete the required training. Any new employees will be required to take the training during their first week of hire.

***Prevention of Sexual Harassment***

Agency Response: Management will send out training reminders starting in January so that employees have time to complete the required training. New employees will be required to take the training during their first week of hire. Management will also reach out to the host of the website to make sure that the town's sexual harassment policy is displayed on the website.

Sincerely,



Jim Paine  
Mayor