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Subject: Notes on Independence Health Department History and Current Status
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Mayor and City Council,

Monday afternoon, I spoke with Zachary Walker, City Manager, City of Independence to learn about their Municipal Public Health Department. He provided the following overview.

- The City of Independence operated an independent Municipal Health Department for many years until 2017. The authorization for the health department was derived from two sources: a) a City Charter provision approved by voters in 1978 and b) a Local Public Health Agency (LPHA) assignment by the Missouri Department of Health approximately the same time of the City Charter provision approval.
- In 2018, the City of Independence identified a duplication of services being offered to their residents through the City of Independence Municipal Health Department and the Jackson County Health Department. Assigning the core functions of the Independence Municipal Health Department to the Jackson County Health Department reduced the operational cost for the City of Independence. Under the revised 2018 structure, the City of Independence retained Animal Control and Food Inspections (Restaurant Licensing). All other functions were being performed by the Jackson County Health Department. Based upon this new operational structure, the State of Missouri Department of Health removed the LPHA assignment from the City of Independence.
- During the recent COVID pandemic activities, the City of Independence regained their LPHA assignment from the State of Missouri Department of Health. Conversations to regain LPHA started with the Independence area State Representatives and Senator. Negotiations were conducted between the City of Independence and the Truman Medical Center (TMC). (TMC is the agency that serves as the Jackson County Health Department.) As a result of this work, the City of Independence was reassigned their LPHA status by the State of Missouri. However, the State assignment of the LPHA included all core functions of a Health Department. The City of Independence does not have the ability to “pick and choose” what Health Department Services it wants to provide to the residents. Independence was given an “all or nothing” option in accepting the LPHA assignment.
- Similar to the City of Lee's Summit, a portion of the Jackson County Property Taxes paid for by Independence tax payers are supporting the Jackson County Health Department. The revenue from those property taxes will remain with Jackson County. The City of Independence is currently seeking new revenue sources to fully fund their Municipal Health Department. The taxpayers of Independence do not benefit from a reduction of property taxes by virtue of the City of Independence having a health department separate from Jackson County.



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