# **An In-Depth Operational and Financial Analysis of the City of Higginsville, Missouri**

## **Section 1: Municipal Governance and Administrative Framework**

The City of Higginsville, Missouri, operates under a governmental structure that concentrates significant administrative authority in an appointed professional, who executes the policy directives of an elected, part-time citizen legislature. This model, common in smaller municipalities, emphasizes professional management for day-to-day operations while retaining democratic oversight. The framework is further supported by a network of citizen-led advisory boards that provide specialized input across various municipal functions.

### **1.1. Leadership and Legislative Body: The Mayor and Board of Aldermen**

The city's legislative and governing body consists of a Mayor and a Board of Aldermen.1 The current Mayor is Donald Knehans.3 The Board of Aldermen is structured to represent three distinct wards within the city, ensuring geographical representation in the legislative process.1 A significant gap in public data transparency was identified during this analysis, as the city's official website and its associated portal were inaccessible, preventing the retrieval of a current list of Aldermen for each ward.1 This technical failure creates a transparency deficit, compelling reliance on less direct methods for identifying current elected officials and hindering routine public and commercial inquiries.

The primary function of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen is to adopt city policy, which is formalized through the passage of ordinances, the approval of resolutions, and the adoption of the annual budget.5 This body holds ultimate responsibility for the management and control of the city and its finances, enacting ordinances deemed expedient for the good government of the city.6 The Board convenes for regular meetings on the first and third Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m., with agendas made available to the public in advance of the meetings.7

The financial allocation for the city's legislative body is modest, reflecting its part-time, civic-duty nature. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-2025 budget appropriates just $19,496 for the "Mayor & Aldermen".9 This low level of funding suggests that these are not full-time, salaried positions but rather roles that receive a small stipend for their service. This structure inherently shifts the locus of full-time operational management away from the elected officials and toward the professional administrative staff.

### **1.2. The Central Administrative Authority: The City Administrator**

At the heart of Higginsville's municipal operations is the City Administrator, a position that functions as the chief executive of the city government. The current City Administrator is Jeanette Dobson, whose name is associated with significant financial and contractual matters, including budget amendments and major infrastructure agreements.10 The City Administrator is appointed by a majority vote of the Board of Aldermen with the Mayor's approval and is required to be a graduate of an accredited university with a major in public or municipal administration, or possess at least five years of experience as a city administrator.12

The City Code grants expansive and clearly defined powers to this office, establishing the City Administrator as the central figure in the city's management.12 The key duties and powers include:

* **Chief Administrative Officer:** The Administrator serves as the chief administrative assistant to the Mayor and Board, coordinating and supervising the operations of all city departments.
* **Budget Officer:** The Administrator is legally designated as the city's Budget Officer, responsible for assembling financial estimates, preparing the annual budget document, and presenting it to the Board of Aldermen.
* **Purchasing Agent:** The Administrator supervises all city purchasing, ensuring adherence to procedures approved by the Board.
* **Personnel Officer:** The Administrator acts as the city's head of personnel, with the authority to appoint and remove subordinate city employees in accordance with the approved personnel system. This includes approving pay increases and advancements.
* **Policy Formulation and Agenda Setting:** The Administrator recommends policy measures to the Board and is responsible for preparing the proposed agenda for each Board meeting.
* **External Relations:** The role includes coordinating federal and state aid programs and serving as the primary official responsible for keeping the public informed through news media.

The concentration of authority over budget, personnel, and procurement in this single, appointed professional role is the defining characteristic of Higginsville's governance. Any entity seeking to engage with the city on substantive matters must recognize that while the Board of Aldermen provides final legislative approval, the City Administrator is the primary strategic and operational leader.

### **1.3. Civic and Advisory Infrastructure: Boards and Commissions**

To support the legislative process and provide specialized oversight, the City of Higginsville utilizes a comprehensive system of boards and commissions.1 These bodies offer a formal channel for citizen expertise and engagement in specific areas of municipal governance. All meetings of these boards are open to the public.13

Key advisory and oversight bodies include 13:

* **Planning and Development:** The Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Adjustment, Historic Preservation Commission, Enhanced Enterprise Zone Board, and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Commission advise the Board of Aldermen on land use, development incentives, and historic preservation.
* **Public Works and Infrastructure:** The Industrial Development Authority works to promote and develop commercial and industrial facilities.
* **Public Welfare and Services:** The Board of Health, Board of Public Safety, Higginsville Housing Authority, Library Board, and Park Board oversee public health, safety, low-income housing, library operations, and city parks, respectively.
* **Community and Appeals:** Other bodies include the Arts Advisory Board, Building Code Board of Appeals, and the Youth Activities Commission.

The functions of these boards are diverse, ranging from quasi-judicial roles like hearing appeals to the zoning ordinance, to financial management, such as the Library Board's exclusive control over library expenditures, to community programming, like the activities planned by the Youth Activities Commission.13 This structure demonstrates a mature governance model that effectively delegates specialized oversight to engaged citizens.

### **1.4. Key City Departments and Contacts**

* **City Hall:** The administrative center is located at 1922 Main Street, P.O. Box 110, Higginsville, MO 64037. The primary phone number is 660-584-2106.1 The City Clerk is officially designated as the custodian of public records.15
* **Economic Development:** This department is directed by Donna Brown, who can be contacted at 660-584-6771 or via email at ecdevdir@ctcis.net.16
* **Emergency Management:** The city's designated Emergency Coordinator is Casey Warren. The Floodplain Administrator is Sandra Stephens.17

## **Section 2: Public Finance and Budgetary Analysis (FY 2024-2025)**

The City of Higginsville's public finances for the 2024-2025 fiscal year reveal a clear strategy of aggressive investment in capital-intensive infrastructure, particularly its municipal airport and utilities, alongside a deep and sustained commitment to funding core public safety services. The total budget reflects significant year-over-year growth, driven largely by these major projects.

### **2.1. Consolidated Budget Overview (FY 2024-2025)**

The City of Higginsville's Board of Aldermen adopted the annual budget for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2024, and ending September 30, 2025, via Bill No. 2024-38. The ordinance appropriates a total of **$25,762,450** for city expenditures.9 This represents a substantial increase of approximately $2.5 million over the FY 2023-2024 budget of $23,265,434.10 This growth continues a trend from the previous year, which saw a $2.4 million budget increase attributed to rising costs in EMS and utility services.10

The legal framework of the budget ordinance grants the Budget Officer, a role filled by the City Administrator, the authority to manage these appropriations. The Administrator has the discretion to reallocate funds between different expense objects within a single department's budget, but any change to the total appropriation for a department requires a formal motion and approval from the Board of Aldermen.9

### **2.2. Detailed Fund Appropriations**

The city's budget is structured across three primary categories: the General Fund for core operations, Other Funds for special revenue and projects, and Municipal Utilities for city-owned enterprise services.

* **General Fund ($3,477,120):** This fund finances the city's essential day-to-day services. An analysis of its allocations demonstrates an overwhelming focus on public safety. The combined appropriations for Police ($1,194,923), Dispatching ($894,144), and Ambulance ($854,718) total $2,943,785. This sum accounts for approximately 84.7% of the entire General Fund budget ($2,943,785 / 3,477,120≈0.847). This profound financial commitment underscores that public safety is the preeminent priority for the city's core operational spending. It also implies that other general government functions, such as Administration, City Hall, and Economic Development, operate on comparatively lean budgets, likely relying on grants and partnerships for new initiatives.
* **Other Funds ($8,678,634):** This category is composed of dedicated revenue streams and major capital projects. The most significant and anomalous line item is the **Industrial Municipal Airport**, with a budget of **$4,557,168**. This single appropriation is larger than the city's entire General Fund and constitutes over 17% of the total city budget. For a city with a population of approximately 5,000 people 3, an airport budget of this magnitude indicates a major, multi-year capital expansion project, likely funded through state and federal grants and dedicated revenue bonds, rather than routine operational costs. Other major allocations in this category include the Insurance Fund ($1,405,648) and combined funding for the Street Fund and Transportation Sales Tax ($1,197,033).9
* **Municipal Utilities ($13,606,696):** As the city owns and operates its electric, water, and wastewater systems, this enterprise fund represents the largest single component of the budget. The Electric Department commands the majority of this funding with an appropriation of $9,291,645, followed by the Water Department at $2,158,209 and the Wastewater Department at $2,156,842.9

The following table provides a detailed breakdown of the FY 2024-2025 budget appropriations.

**Table 1: City of Higginsville FY 2024-2025 Budget Appropriations**

| Fund Category | Department / Line Item | FY 2024-2025 Appropriation ($) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **General Fund** | **Total** | **$3,477,120** |
|  | Police | $1,194,923 |
|  | Dispatching | $894,144 |
|  | Ambulance | $854,718 |
|  | Building Official | $105,575 |
|  | Mapping/GIS Data | $93,343 |
|  | Administration | $62,766 |
|  | Animal Control | $58,727 |
|  | City Hall | $56,605 |
|  | General Expenses | $50,400 |
|  | Cemetery | $44,887 |
|  | Court | $31,518 |
|  | Mayor & Aldermen | $19,496 |
|  | Economic Development | $10,018 |
| **Other Funds** | **Total** | **$8,678,634** |
|  | Industrial Municipal Airport | $4,557,168 |
|  | Insurance Fund | $1,405,648 |
|  | Park Department | $855,503 |
|  | Street Fund | $637,533 |
|  | Transportation Sales Tax | $559,500 |
|  | Gasoline/Fuel Tax 1 Cent | $190,000 |
|  | Capital Improvement Tax | $179,400 |
|  | Public Safety Sales Tax | $115,886 |
|  | Robertson Memorial Library | $106,946 |
|  | Park Recreation | $58,900 |
|  | Cemetery Trust | $12,150 |
| **Municipal Utilities** | **Total** | **$13,606,696** |
|  | Electric Department | $9,291,645 |
|  | Water Department | $2,158,209 |
|  | Wastewater Department | $2,156,842 |
| **Total City Budget** |  | **$25,762,450** |
| Source: Bill No. 2024-38, Ordinance No. 3040 9 |  |  |  |

### **2.3. Capital, Debt, and Personnel Expenditures**

The budget ordinance makes explicit provisions for significant capital investments. Capital Outlay line items are designated for the Police, EMS, Dispatch, Cemetery, Street, IT/Mapping, City Hall, Electric, Water, and Wastewater departments.9 While the summary ordinance does not itemize the specific dollar amounts for these projects, their inclusion across nearly all major departments signals a city-wide focus on asset renewal and improvement.

The budget also formalizes a structured personnel system, referencing "2024-2025 Job Titles and Grades" and "2024-2025 Pay Grades and Steps".9 This indicates a civil service framework managed by the City Administrator, who has the authority to make appointments and approve pay increases within this structure.12

Finally, the budget accounts for "Bond Obligations".9 Although the specific debt service is not detailed in the summary, the city has taken on significant new debt, most notably the $16.6 million loan for the wastewater treatment facility, which will be a major component of its long-term financial obligations.19

### **2.4. Revenue Streams and Tax Base**

To fund these appropriations, the city draws on several key revenue streams. A primary source is revenue from its municipal utilities. To support rising costs and investments, the city implemented a 9.25% utility rate increase in FY2024.21 Utility payments are collected through various means, including a dedicated online portal.14

The city also levies several dedicated taxes that flow into specific funds. These include a Capital Improvement Tax ($179,400), a Public Safety Sales Tax ($115,886), a 1-cent Gasoline/Fuel Tax ($190,000), and a Transportation Sales Tax ($559,500).9 The total combined sales tax rate for consumers in Higginsville is 8.48%.23 Additional revenue is generated through the issuance of various licenses (e.g., Merchant's, Liquor) and permits administered by City Hall.1

## **Section 3: Procurement, Vendor Ecosystem, and Technology Infrastructure**

The City of Higginsville engages in a procurement strategy characterized by formal bidding for major capital projects, strategic partnerships for technological advancement, and a reliance on the broader regional market for specialized services and supplies. The city's commercial relationships indicate a forward-looking approach, particularly in leveraging public assets to acquire modern infrastructure.

### **3.1. Procurement Processes and RFPs**

For significant projects, the city follows a formal public bidding process. This typically involves issuing a "Notice to Bidders" and receiving sealed bids at City Hall by a specified deadline.25 For a 2020 airport expansion project, the city utilized a third-party engineering firm, Crawford, Murphy & Tilly, Inc., to manage the distribution of bid documents. Bids for such projects generally require a bid bond equivalent to five percent of the bid amount. Contracts are awarded to the "lowest responsive and responsible bidder" as determined by the city.25

Recent major Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and bid solicitations include:

* **Wastewater Treatment Plant (2023):** The city solicited bids for the construction of its new wastewater treatment facility. The bid opening took place on December 13, 2023.26
* **Airport Hangar Construction (2020):** An RFP was issued for the construction of a new 6-unit T-Hangar and associated taxilane at the Higginsville Industrial Municipal Airport.25
* **State-Level Bid Opportunity (2025):** A state-managed project for a Fire Sprinkler System Upgrade at the Higginsville Habilitation Center has a bid date of August 7, 2025, indicating ongoing capital investment in state facilities within the city.28

The city utilizes its own website and public notices for some solicitations.25 Opportunities are also listed on state-level platforms, such as the Missouri Office of Administration's procurement site, and regional bid networks like bidnet direct.28

### **3.2. Known Contracts, Vendors, and Service Providers**

Analysis of public records reveals several key vendors and partners providing critical services and technologies to the city. These relationships highlight a pattern of engaging specialized firms for major infrastructure projects and leveraging partnerships for technology solutions.

The city's relationship with **Comcast Cable Communications Management** is particularly noteworthy. In May 2025, the Board of Aldermen approved a "Master Conduit Sale Agreement" that was more than a simple cash transaction. The city sold a section of physical conduit to Comcast for $250,000 while simultaneously securing a 12-count fiber optic line for its city-owned power plants in return.11 This strategic asset swap demonstrates sophisticated deal-making, leveraging an underutilized physical asset to acquire high-value digital infrastructure. This fiber optic line is a foundational element for building a "smart grid," enabling high-speed communication for grid monitoring, remote switching, and advanced metering, thereby enhancing the efficiency and resilience of the city's largest revenue-generating department.

Another example of strategic procurement is the city's agreement with the **Wellington Police Department** for the use of its records management software (RMS).10 Rather than incurring the significant capital and maintenance costs of an independent RMS, Higginsville has opted for a shared-service model. This approach not only saves money but also promotes regional data compatibility, which is beneficial for the collaborative law enforcement efforts the city participates in. This pattern suggests the city is an ideal candidate for regional service models and cooperative purchasing agreements.

The following table summarizes the city's most significant known contracts and service providers.

**Table 2: Known Major Contracts and Service Providers for the City of Higginsville**

| Vendor/Partner Name | Service/Product Provided | Known Contract Value/Terms | Date/Status |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Martin General Contractors LLC** | Construction of new Wastewater Treatment Plant | $17,150,000 | Contract approved Feb. 2024 |
| **Comcast Cable Communications** | Master Conduit Sale Agreement | City received $250,000 and a 12-count fiber line | Agreement approved May 2025 |
| **Crawford, Murphy & Tilly, Inc.** | Project Management/Engineering for Airport Expansion | Fee-based service | 2020 |
| **Wellington Police Department** | Use of Police Records Management Software | Intergovernmental Agreement | Approved Sept. 2023 |
| **Tyler Technologies** | Online Utility and Municipal Payment Portal | Service contract | Ongoing |
| **West Central Electric Cooperative** | Electric utility provider (in addition to city utility) | Service provider | Ongoing |
| **Missouri Intergovernmental Risk Management Association (MIRMA)** | Potential comprehensive insurance provider (property, liability, workers' comp) | Self-insurance pool; city is eligible | Ongoing |
| Sources: 10 |  |  |  |  |

### **3.3. Local Business and Supplier Directory**

The primary public-facing resource for identifying local and regional vendors is the **Higginsville Chamber of Commerce**. The Chamber represents 190 member businesses and maintains a comprehensive online business directory.18 The directory is organized into numerous categories relevant to municipal needs, including Agriculture, Construction, Financial Services, Insurance Services, Legal, Manufacturing, and Printing Services, among others.35 This directory serves as an essential tool for any entity seeking to understand the local commercial landscape or identify potential partners and subcontractors. The Chamber's stated mission includes business development and advocacy, positioning it as a key intermediary for businesses looking to establish a presence or secure contracts in the Higginsville area.18

## **Section 4: Intergovernmental Cooperation and Regional Partnerships**

The City of Higginsville has cultivated an extensive network of formal intergovernmental agreements and mutual aid partnerships. This strategy of regional integration is fundamental to its operational model, allowing the small municipality to provide a range of sophisticated public services that would be financially and logistically unattainable on its own. This collaborative approach is a force multiplier, enhancing capabilities in law enforcement, emergency medical services, fire protection, and dispatch.

### **4.1. Collaboration with Lafayette County**

The city's partnership with Lafayette County is most pronounced in the area of public safety. The Higginsville Police Department is deeply integrated with the Lafayette County Sheriff's Office through participation in specialized, multi-agency units. Officers from the Higginsville PD are members of the county-wide **Crime Scene Unit**, which is activated for major crimes, and the **CAT (Specialized Weapons and Tactics) team**, which handles high-risk warrants and hostage situations.36 This collaboration provides Higginsville with access to highly trained tactical and investigative capabilities without bearing the full cost of maintaining such units independently.

Furthermore, the city participates in a regionalized emergency dispatching system. In September 2023, the Board of Aldermen approved agreements with public entities in Lafayette County for these services.10 The city's FY 2024-2025 budget includes a significant appropriation of $894,144 for "Dispatching," which likely represents Higginsville's financial contribution to this cooperative county-wide or multi-jurisdictional dispatch center.9

### **4.2. Municipal Mutual Aid Network**

Higginsville actively leverages mutual aid agreements with neighboring municipalities and districts, consistent with Missouri state laws that authorize and encourage such arrangements for reciprocal emergency aid.37

* **Emergency Medical Services (EMS):** In May 2025, the city approved a revised mutual aid agreement with the **Johnson County Ambulance District**. This agreement modernizes a partnership that has been in place for nearly two decades, ensuring continued support for emergency medical response.11
* **Fire Services:** A critical mutual aid agreement exists between the city, the **Higginsville Fire Protection District**, and the **City of Warrensburg**. This partnership is specifically designed to share specialized resources. A primary benefit for Higginsville is access to Warrensburg's aerial ladder truck for major fire incidents.39 The terms of the agreement stipulate that the requesting party will reimburse the responding party for any consumable materials used, though general operational expenses are not reimbursed. Crucially, the agreement allows either party to recall its personnel and equipment if a need arises within its own jurisdiction, ensuring that primary service obligations are always met.38
* **Law Enforcement Technology:** As previously noted, the city maintains an agreement with the **Wellington Police Department** for the use of its records management software, another example of leveraging inter-municipal cooperation to access essential technology cost-effectively.10

### **4.3. Integration with State-Level Frameworks**

Higginsville's local and regional agreements are nested within a broader statewide emergency management structure. By virtue of Missouri state law, the city is automatically a participant in the **Missouri Statewide Mutual Aid System (MoSCOPE)** unless it formally opts out.37 This system, administered by the Missouri Department of Public Safety, provides a formal mechanism for requesting and deploying resources during large-scale disasters that overwhelm local and regional capabilities.40 Participation requires the city to adopt and practice the

**National Incident Management System (NIMS)**, which ensures operational protocols are consistent with state and federal emergency response agencies, facilitating seamless integration during a major event.37

The following table summarizes the city's key intergovernmental partnerships.

**Table 3: Summary of Key Intergovernmental and Mutual Aid Agreements**

| Partner Entity | Service Area | Nature of Agreement | Date/Status |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Lafayette County** | Law Enforcement | Shared Specialized Units (Crime Scene, CAT) | Ongoing |
| **Lafayette County** | Emergency Services | Coordinated Emergency Dispatching Services | Approved Sept. 2023 |
| **Johnson County Ambulance District** | Emergency Medical Services | Revised Mutual Aid Agreement | Approved May 2025 |
| **City of Warrensburg** | Fire Services | Mutual Aid for Specialized Equipment (Aerial Ladder Truck) & Personnel | Ongoing |
| **Wellington Police Department** | Law Enforcement (IT) | Shared Use of Records Management Software | Approved Sept. 2023 |
| Sources: 10 |  |  |  |  |

This web of agreements demonstrates that Higginsville's operational model is fundamentally one of regional interdependence. This is a significant strength, providing resilience and access to advanced capabilities. However, it also creates a dependency on these external partners; a disruption in a key relationship, such as the dispatching agreement with the county, could create a critical service vulnerability.

## **Section 5: Strategic Funding and Programmatic Development**

The City of Higginsville has demonstrated a sophisticated and proactive approach to securing external funding and implementing innovative programs, particularly in the high-priority areas of water infrastructure and energy efficiency. The city has a proven ability to navigate complex federal and state grant processes and has positioned itself to be a strong contender for future funding opportunities in cybersecurity, energy, water, and emergency services.

### **5.1. Major Grant-Funded Project: Wastewater Treatment Facility**

The cornerstone of the city's recent capital improvement efforts is the construction of a new wastewater treatment facility, a project with an estimated total cost of $20.9 million and a projected completion date of November 2025.19 The financing for this massive undertaking showcases the city's administrative capacity to assemble a complex, multi-source funding package.

The project is financed through a carefully blended package of loans and grants 19:

* A **$16.6 million loan** from the Missouri Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF).
* A **$3.5 million grant**, also from the CWSRF.
* A **$750,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** secured from the Missouri Department of Economic Development.

This blended financing structure has a direct and substantial positive impact on the city's ratepayers. The Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR), which administers the CWSRF program, estimates that this funding package will save the city **$3.5 million in loan principal and nearly $8.2 million in interest payments** over the 29-year life of the loan.19 The CWSRF is a federal-state partnership, funded in part by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), designed to help communities afford critical water infrastructure projects.19 Higginsville's success in securing this competitive funding demonstrates a high level of financial acumen and grant acquisition capability.

### **5.2. Energy Program Development: PACE Financing**

In a move to stimulate private-sector investment in sustainable energy, the Higginsville Board of Aldermen approved an ordinance on May 6, 2024, to join the **Show Me PACE** program.42 This program, managed by the non-profit Missouri Energy Initiative (MEI), provides a powerful tool for economic and environmental development without the use of taxpayer dollars.

Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing allows commercial property owners to fund 100% of the costs for energy efficiency improvements (such as new HVAC systems, insulation, and high-efficiency lighting) and renewable energy projects (such as solar panel installations). The financing is secured by the property itself and repaid over a period of up to 20 years through a special assessment added to the property's annual tax bill.42 By adopting this program, Higginsville has eliminated the upfront cost barrier that often prevents businesses from investing in clean energy, positioning the city as a community that actively encourages sustainable development and green technology.

### **5.3. Assessment of Future Grant Opportunities**

The city's track record of successful grant acquisition and proactive policy adoption makes it a strong candidate for a variety of additional state and federal funding programs.

* **Cybersecurity:** Higginsville is well-positioned to secure cybersecurity funding. As a "rural" entity with a population under 50,000, it is a prime candidate for the **State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP)**, a DHS/FEMA-funded program administered in Missouri by the Department of Public Safety.43 This program offers grants of up to $200,000 per project for developing cybersecurity plans, purchasing equipment, and conducting training.43 Eligibility requires the city to complete the annual Nationwide Cybersecurity Review (NCSR) and participate in the state's cyber threat information-sharing program.43 Additionally, the U.S. Department of Energy's  
  **Rural and Municipal Utility (RMUC) Advances Cybersecurity Program** offers $250 million in grants specifically for municipal utilities like Higginsville's to deploy advanced cybersecurity technologies.44
* **Energy:** The Missouri DNR administers several relevant energy grant programs. The **Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants (EECBG)** program has $2.36 million available for Missouri cities and counties for projects that reduce energy use, with applications due in December 2024.45 The DNR also offers low-interest energy loans and subgrants from its Grid Resilience Formula Funding.45
* **Water:** Beyond the current wastewater project, the city remains eligible for future funding from both the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund programs for ongoing system improvements.41 Furthermore, the  
  **USDA's Emergency Community Water Assistance Grants** program offers up to $1 million to help rural communities construct new water sources or repair infrastructure in response to emergencies like droughts or floods.48
* **Emergency Services:** The Missouri State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) administers several key grant programs. The **Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG)** provides 50% cost-share reimbursement for a wide range of activities that enhance all-hazard emergency management capabilities, including planning, training, and exercises.49 The  
  **Public Assistance (PA) Program** provides federal grants (with at least a 75% federal share) to repair public infrastructure following a federally-declared disaster.50 For non-federally declared events, the  
  **Missouri Disaster Assistance Grant (MDAG)** offers a 50% state cost-share (up to $200,000) primarily for debris removal.51

The following table provides a strategic overview of the most relevant grant programs for which Higginsville is an eligible and competitive applicant.

**Table 4: Analysis of Relevant Grant Programs for Higginsville**

| Program Name | Service Area | Administering Agency | Key Eligibility/Purpose |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| State & Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP) | Cybersecurity | DHS / FEMA / MO DPS | Rural entities (<50k pop.) for cyber plans, equipment, training. |
| Rural & Municipal Utility Cybersecurity (RMUC) Program | Cybersecurity | U.S. Dept. of Energy | Grants for municipal utilities to deploy advanced cyber tech. |
| Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) | Energy | U.S. DOE / MO DNR | Grants for cities/counties for energy efficiency & conservation projects. |
| Show Me PACE | Energy | Missouri Energy Initiative | Financing mechanism (not a grant) for commercial property energy projects. |
| Emergency Community Water Assistance Grants | Water | USDA Rural Development | Grants for rural areas to prepare for/recover from water emergencies. |
| Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) | Water | U.S. EPA / MO DNR | Low-interest loans & grants for wastewater infrastructure projects. |
| Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) | Emergency Services | FEMA / SEMA | 50% cost-share reimbursement for enhancing EM capabilities. |
| Public Assistance (PA) Program | Emergency Services | FEMA / SEMA | 75%+ federal share for infrastructure repair after federal disasters. |
| Missouri Disaster Assistance Grant (MDAG) | Emergency Services | SEMA | 50% state share for debris removal after non-federal disasters. |
| Sources: 19 |  |  |  |  |

## **Section 6: Synthesis and Strategic Outlook**

The City of Higginsville presents a compelling case study of a small municipality employing sophisticated strategies to achieve a high level of public service and infrastructure modernization. Its governance model, financial priorities, and intergovernmental relationships reveal a clear and consistent operational posture. The city is defined by its reliance on professional administration, its aggressive investment in core infrastructure, its mastery of collaborative governance, and its proven ability to secure external funding.

### **6.1. Identified Strengths and Strategic Opportunities**

* **Aggressive Infrastructure Investment:** The city is not deferring maintenance but is making generational investments in its foundational systems. The $20.9 million wastewater treatment facility project 19 and the strategic acquisition of a fiber optic backbone for its electric utility 11 are testaments to a forward-looking capital strategy. This creates significant long-term value for the community and presents clear opportunities for engineering firms, construction contractors, and technology integrators.
* **Mastery of Collaborative Governance:** Higginsville's extensive use of mutual aid and inter-local agreements is its most effective governance tool. By partnering with Lafayette County, Johnson County, Warrensburg, and Wellington for specialized police units, dispatch, EMS, fire support, and IT systems 10, the city provides a level of public service that far exceeds what its own tax base could support. This model of regionalism as a force multiplier is a core strength.
* **Proven Grant Acquisition Capability:** The successful assembly of the multi-source, $20.1 million funding package for the wastewater project demonstrates a high degree of administrative competence.19 The city has a track record of navigating complex state and federal grant requirements, making it a reliable and attractive partner for future grant-funded initiatives.
* **Pro-Business and Pro-Development Stance:** The city has taken concrete steps to encourage economic activity. The massive, multi-million-dollar investment in the Industrial Municipal Airport 9 and the proactive adoption of the Show Me PACE program to incentivize private-sector energy efficiency projects 42 signal a clear commitment to fostering both industrial and sustainable development.

### **6.2. Potential Risks and Data Gaps**

* **Key Personnel Dependency:** The city's governance structure, which centralizes vast operational authority in the City Administrator 12, is highly efficient but creates a potential "key person" risk. The effectiveness of this model is heavily dependent on the skills and experience of the individual in that role. A future transition in this position could create a temporary operational vacuum or a shift in strategic priorities.
* **Information Transparency Issues:** The inaccessibility of the city's primary website 1 is a significant deficiency. In the digital age, a functional website is the primary portal for public information, transparency, and routine business. This technical failure hinders access to basic data and forces stakeholders to rely on less direct channels of communication.
* **Identified Data Gaps:** This analysis, while comprehensive, was limited by the unavailability of certain public records. Key data gaps include:
  + A definitive, current list of the members of the Board of Aldermen.
  + Detailed accounts payable lists, which would provide a more complete picture of the city's vendor and supplier ecosystem.
  + Specifics on the funding sources and strategic plan behind the $4.56 million budget for the Industrial Municipal Airport.
  + Confirmation of the city's specific municipal insurance provider, although evidence points strongly toward eligibility for the MIRMA self-insurance pool.33

### **6.3. Recommendations for Strategic Engagement**

Based on this analysis, the following recommendations are offered for various entities seeking to engage with the City of Higginsville:

* **For Vendors and Contractors:** Proposals should be framed with a regional mindset. Given the city's deep reliance on shared services, solutions that can be scaled to include neighboring municipalities or Lafayette County will be viewed favorably. The primary point of contact for any significant proposal should be the City Administrator's office, as this individual is the chief administrative, budget, and purchasing officer.12
* **For Technology Providers:** The city is actively modernizing its infrastructure. Key opportunities exist in smart grid technology for the city-owned Electric Department, cybersecurity solutions that can leverage the city's strong eligibility for state and federal grants, and administrative software platforms that offer further opportunities for regional consolidation and efficiency.
* **For Investors and Developers:** The two most prominent areas of opportunity are the Industrial Municipal Airport and the development of commercial properties now eligible for PACE financing. The airport's large budget suggests a major expansion that will require ancillary services and development. The PACE program creates a powerful financial incentive for green retrofits and new construction. Initial engagement should be directed to the Economic Development Director and the City Administrator.
* **For Grant-Writing and Consulting Firms:** Higginsville represents a prime client. The city has a proven track record of managing large, complex grants and is strategically positioned to capture a wide array of future funding, particularly in the federal priority areas of cybersecurity, energy resilience, and water quality. A proposal to partner with the city to identify, apply for, and administer these grants would align perfectly with its demonstrated strategic priorities and administrative capabilities.

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