

IRON RIVER CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, November 8, 2023
4:30 PM
Minutes

Mayor Dennis Powell called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m., in the Council Chambers of Iron River City Hall. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call –Anthony Clements, Rodney Dood, Benjamin Garcia, and Powell.

Absent – Ronjo Leonoff.

Also Present – City Manager Rachel Andreski, Attorney Mark Tousignant, City Clerk Bernadette Coates, Officer Connor Kezerle, and Craig Richardson (WICKWIRE).

Public in Attendance – Vicky Powell, Wendy Graham (IC Reporter), Zach Hautala (ICECA), Robert Byczek Jr., Abigail Garcia, Jennifer Schulist, Geri Wendt, Marth Rypstra (Taproot Community Farm) Alisa Porier (IC Little League), Michael Ochampaugh, Ryan Morgan, Jeremy Johnson (WIKB), Bret Berge and Shawn Phenow (Microbros LLC) and Lisa Karwoski.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bob Byczek said the property he was proposing to purchase is the beginning of more than one business. The funds created from the food court concessions would roll into what he is calling, Iron River River Front Adventures.

APPROVE AGENDA

Garcia moved with support from Clements to accept the agenda as presented. All in favor. Motion carried. Absent: Leonoff.

APPROVE MINUTES

Dood moved with support from Clements to approve

- October 18, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes

All were in favor; Motion carried. Absent: Leonoff.

CONSENT AGENDA

Garcia moved with support from Dood to receive and file the Consent Agenda items which included the following:

- a) October 16, 2023 DDA Regular Meeting Minutes (Draft)
- b) October 17, 2023 Election Commission Regular Meeting Minutes (Draft)

All were in favor; Motion carried. Absent: Leonoff.

Dood moved with support from Clements to receive and file the Consent Agenda items which included the following:

- c) DPW Report

All were in favor; Motion carried. Absent: Leonoff.

Clements moved with support from Dood to receive and file the Consent Agenda items which included the following:

d) IRPD Report

All were in favor; Motion carried. Absent: Leonoff.

REPORTS

ICECA

Hautala reported the Christmas in Lights parade would be taking place on December 2nd along with other scheduled events for the weekend. The event will coincide with the Iron County Museum's Christmas Tree Galleria. He thanked the DDA for sponsoring the event again.

Clements moved with support from Dood to accept the ICECA Report as presented. All in favor; Motion carried. Absent: Leonoff.

County of Iron Report

None.

Attorney Report

Tousignant explained why the three marijuana stores in Menominee had to temporarily close because of a court order. He spent time working on existing items regarding the zoning ordinance and land use and property questions that he thought was due to an increase in economic activity in the City.

Clements moved with support from Dood to accept the Attorney Report as presented. All in favor; Motion carried. Absent: Leonoff.

Manager's Report

Andreski congratulated the newly elected candidates. The voter turnout was only 18.11 percent.

The City submitted the final paperwork for the Blight Elimination Grant and should be reimbursed approximately \$151,000 for those expenses.

The new holder and broom were delivered on November 2nd. Minimal training was offered because the equipment was like the one the City had prior.

Discussions were had with a new developer regarding a new store in town. The Phase 1 Environmental Assessment has been completed. A site plan has been submitted to their client and if approved, will be presented to the City. Andreski will review and if necessary, present to the Planning Commission for their review.

Four seasonal plowing applications have been received for the DPW. One applicant had backed out, one is returning, and one will be going through the pre-employment screening process. There has been no interest in the Superintendent position.

Andreski and Harrington met with representatives from the West Iron County Volunteer Fire Department regarding the U.P. Firefighter's Tournament that will be held in Iron River on July 27, 28 and 29, 2024.

The John Deere 410 backhoe has been ordered and estimated delivery is the beginning of February.

Council determined Andreski's evaluation will take place in December at the regular meeting in closed session.

Garcia moved with support from Dood to accept the Manager's Report as presented. All in favor; Motion carried. Absent: Leonoff.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

City Financial Report – October 2023

Dood moved with support from Garcia to accept the City Financial Report for October 2023 as presented.

Roll call: Ayes – 4: Clements, Dood, Garcia, and Powell. Nays – 0: Absent – 1: Leonoff. Motion carried.

Accounts Payable Report – October 2023

Dood moved with support from Clements to accept the Accounts Payable Report for October 2023 as presented.

Roll call: Ayes – 4: Clements, Dood, Garcia, and Powell. Nays – 0: Absent – 1: Leonoff. Motion carried.

City Attorney Invoice – October 2023

Dood moved with support from Clements to approve the Attorney Invoice for October 2023 in the amount of \$2,916.25.

Roll call: Ayes – 4: Clements, Dood, Garcia, and Powell. Nays – 0: Absent – 1: Leonoff. Motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Review Utility Billing Rates

Andreski said she would like to discuss this more under item c).

Clements moved with support from Dood to table and discuss under item c). All were in favor. Motion carried. Absent: Leonoff.

Sale of City Property – Parcels #054-311-004-00 and #054-311-005-00

Andreski and Tousignant said the DDA participated in the acquisition and demolition of the properties and that they should have a say in the matter. Tousignant also said he is aware of what is happening to the real estate values of properties along the US 2 corridor and these parcels are valued at \$.5M. He warned Council to keep that in mind as they proceed.

Dood moved with support from Clements to table the item and hold a joint meeting in early December with the DDA regarding the sale of these parcels. All were in favor. Motion carried. Absent: Leonoff.

Sanitary Sewer – Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) Project Plan (\$4.977M)

Andreski said the City applied for but was not selected for the grant or low interest loan. The City received notice that they are now eligible for a low interest loan of 2 percent. With the Intent to Apply, the City can apply for the grant next year. If the City were to get this loan, sewer rates would need to be increased by approximately \$13.50 per EDU to repay the loan.

Dood moved with support from Clements to pass on the low interest loan and wait until next year to re-apply. All in favor. Motion carried. Absent: Leonoff.

Taproot Community Farm – Purchase Request

Andreski said she and Tousignant met with Rypstra and other Taproot Community Farm representatives to discuss zoning questions that were brought up at the last Council meeting. Another handout was provided to each Council Member. Andreski said this is a unique opportunity and it would fill a void that is needed in the community.

Tousignant said a reverter clause will be included in the event the business were to go defunct. He also said the tract of land was reduced by approximately 200 feet along the south property line because of a cave-in and the recreation trail. Tousignant also added that the group is a charitable nonprofit organization.

Mayor Powell said he had a problem selling that large a parcel of land for only \$1 and the property belongs to the people.

Rypstra said she put out a call to residents that support the idea and within the last 24 hours she had received 135 signatures in support.

Dood moved with support from Garcia to sell the property to Taproot Community Farm in the amount of \$1 including all applicable legal and survey fees.

Roll call: Ayes – 4: Clements, Dood, Garcia, and Powell. Nays – 0: Absent – 1: Leonoff. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Transfer Noxious Weed Debt to Property Taxes

Dood moved with support from Garcia to approve the Transfer of Noxious Weed Debt to Property Taxes.

Roll call: Ayes – 4: Clements, Dood, Garcia, and Powell. Nays – 0: Absent – 1: Leonoff. Motion carried.

West Iron District Library Appointment

Mayor Powell appointed Jen Schive, with support from Dood, to another 4 year term to the West Iron District Library Board.

Roll call: Ayes – 4: Clements, Dood, Garcia, and Powell. Nays – 0: Absent – 1: Leonoff. Motion carried.

5th Avenue Storm Water

Andreski said there are three homes that are utilizing sump pumps to discharge ground water from their basements onto the edge of their yards along the alley in between 5th and 6th Streets. The City updated the ordinance to not allow storm water to enter the sanitary sewer and all these pumps had to be disconnected. The draining water creates a safety issue when freezing.

Garcia moved with support from Dood to allow WICKWIRE to proceed with the bidding process for this project.

Roll call: Ayes – 4: Clements, Dood, Garcia, and Powell. Nays – 0: Absent – 1: Leonoff. Motion carried.

Iron County Little League - Resolution

The Iron County Little League was selected for the CoVantage Cares Grant. They are looking to create a new backstop at the ball field in Gaastra. Alisa Porier, (ICLL President) said they are looking to hold raffles during a spaghetti dinner.

Clements moved with support from Dood to approve the Local Governing Body Resolution for Charitable Gaming Licenses for the Iron County Little League.

Roll call: Ayes – 4: Clements, Dood, Garcia, and Powell. Nays – 0: Absent – 1: Leonoff. Motion carried.

Application for Micro Business Cannabis License

Dood moved with support from Clements to grant the application for a Micro Business Cannabis License to Microbros, LLC.

Roll call: Ayes – 3: Clements, Dood, and Powell. Nays – 1: Garcia. Absent – 1: Leonoff. Motion carried.

2023 RV Park Culverts, Storm Sewer, and Sewer Lateral – Application for Payment No. 1 and Change Order No. 1

Richardson said the paving did not get done due to seasonal weather. Payment of \$18,078.60 will be withheld until spring when it can be completed.

Dood moved with support from Garcia to approve the 2023 RV Park Culverts, Storm Sewer, and Sewer Lateral – Application for Payment No. 1 and Change Order No. 1 in the amount of \$115,493.38 payable to Associated Constructors, LLC.

Roll call: Ayes – 4: Clements, Dood, Garcia, and Powell. Nays – 0: Absent – 1: Leonoff. Motion carried.

Commercial Facilities Exemption Request – Krist Oil/KSK

Krist Oil has applied for a Commercial Facilities Exemption which would grant a 12-year freeze for a portion of their property taxes. The first step would be to hold a public hearing on the matter.

Garcia moved with support from Dood to set a public hearing prior to the December regular meeting. All were in favor. Motion carried. Absent – Leonoff.

Possible Purchase of a Pickup Truck

Dood moved with support from Clements to purchase the 2010 Chevy 2500 4x4 pickup truck and Boss plow from Kris Hughes in the amount of \$26,500.

Roll call: Ayes – 4: Clements, Dood, Garcia, and Powell. Nays – 0: Absent – 1: Leonoff. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT


Bob Byczek handed out information regarding the potential purchase of 15 parcels in the City of Iron River. He said that would create Iron River River Front Adventures. The layout provided what each parcel would be like with a 10-year growth plan. The funds from the Riverside property would be utilized to pay for the parcels. He said the property would be tourist oriented and would utilize the Iron River from Homer Road to Spruce Avenue with zip lines, tiny houses, campgrounds, walking trails etc.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS

None.

ADJOURN

Dood moved with support from Powell to adjourn the meeting at 5:43 p.m.


Bernadette Coates, City Clerk