

**IRON RIVER CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
Monday, April 28, 2025
4:30 PM
Minutes**

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

Roll Call: Dennis Powell, Anthony Clements, Ronjo Leonoff and Dood. Absent: Benjamin Garcia
Also, present: City Manager Rachel Andreski, City Clerk Tyana Elenbaas and Interim City Attorney Hannah L. Goodman.

Public attendance: Patti Leonoff and Dawn Palmer.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Nelson Field Lights

Ronjo Leonoff, representing the Booster Club, addressed the Council regarding a proposed upgrade to the lighting at Nelson Field. He presented two quotes for the project and provided copies for Council review. Leonoff emphasized the urgency of the matter, noting that both quotes are valid only until May 2, 2025, after which the cost is expected to double due to tariffs.

The quote from Electreus includes the installation of new LED lighting for both the football field and the tennis courts at Nelson Field. This upgrade would replace all existing lighting infrastructure, with the new LED lights expected to last 30 to 40 years.

Leonoff reported that he had reached out to both Kevin Drier and Westphal's for additional quotes; however, both parties indicated that the scope of the project exceeded their capabilities. He noted that Electreus is prepared to complete the entire project within one week following approval.

Leonoff also informed the Council that he approached the School Board to request financial support for the project. However, he expressed that the School Board has been reluctant to contribute, citing difficulty in obtaining funding from the school for such initiatives.

Council Member Clements referenced the 2010 Contract between the School District and the City concerning Nelson Field. He stated that the agreement clearly assigns responsibility for the football field lighting to the School District. Clements recommended that Mr. Leonoff present the contract to the School Board, suggesting that they may be failing to uphold their contractual obligations.

Clements further noted that the School District currently holds over six million dollars in reserve funds and expressed the view that they are financially capable of contributing to the lighting upgrade project.

Council Member Dood proposed a solution to ensure the City does not miss the May 2, 2025, deadline for the lighting upgrade quotes. He suggested that the City provide a loan to the Booster

Club for the portion of the project they are unable to immediately fund, allowing the project to proceed on time.

Under this proposal, the City would contribute \$25,000 toward the tennis court lighting, and loan the remaining \$98,000 to the Booster Club to cover the cost of the football field lighting. The Booster Club would then be responsible for repaying the loan over time.

Andreski expressed concern over the City's current tight budget, warning that sponsoring the lighting upgrade project could put the City in a difficult financial position. She added that she would have to obtain a legal opinion as she wasn't familiar with municipalities loaning money. She informed the Council that a committee has been formed to revise the existing contract between the City and the School District regarding Nelson Field. Andreski also provided historical context, noting that the Nelson Family originally donated the field to the City with the understanding that the School District would be allowed to use the park. She recalled that during the 1980s, when both the City and the School were facing financial constraints, crowdfunding efforts were used to replace the lights at Nelson Field — highlighting a precedent for community-supported funding.

Andreski asked Mr. Leonoff whether the Booster Club had secured any pledges or crowdfunding commitments to help finance the lighting project. She expressed concern that the City continues to bear a heavy burden of maintaining and financially supporting Nelson Field, while the School District enjoys exclusive use and has previously denied others access to the facility. Andreski acknowledged that while the School pays the electric, water and sewer bills for three months—primarily during football season—the high energy usage during that time causes elevated utility rates to persist for the remaining nine months, with those costs falling entirely on the City. She further emphasized the strain on City resources, noting that the City is responsible for maintaining 16 parks, not including the cemetery, underscoring the importance of equitable financial partnerships for shared-use facilities like Nelson Field.

Leonoff stated that he has not had the chance to do any crowd funding yet but has been in contact with Kelly Butler and Maggie Nelson. Kelly Butler had put on Facebook a post regarding the lights, and she feels confident that she could raise money to help with this project.

Dood inquired about the money from gate sales and utilizing the funds from that account to help pay for the lights. Kevin Schmutzler (Superintendent of West Iron County Public Schools) will find out what the balance of that account is and will allow for those funds to be released to aid in the light fund.

Dood moved with support from Powell to utilize some of the gate fee funds pending the approval of Kevin Schmutzler.

Roll Call: Ayes – 3: Clements, Powell and Dood. Nays – 0. Abstain – 1: Leonoff. Absent -1: Garcia.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dawn Palmer inquired about getting forgiveness on a water bill for her rental property. She explained that her meter had been serviced multiple times beginning in October of 2024. Her renter had not been in communication with her regarding the water issues.

Andreski explained that she had received Ms. Palmer's letter and had begun her investigation. She is in the process of looking over the work orders and notes taken by the Utilities Department. She


explained that she will be in contact with Ms. Palmer once she has had the opportunity to review all the information.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS

Leonoff thanked the Council for hearing his proposal.

ADJOURNMENT

Dood motioned with support from Clements to adjourn the meeting at 6:15 p.m. All in favor. Motion carried. Absent -1: Garcia.



Tyana Elenbaas, City Clerk