

**IRON RIVER CITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING
Wednesday, May 21, 2025
5:15 PM
Minutes**

Mayor Rodney Dood opened the Public Hearing at 5:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Iron River City Hall.

Roll Call: Dennis Powell, Anthony Clements, Ronjo Leonoff and Dood.

Absent: Benjamin Garcia.

Public in attendance: Vicky Powell, Bob Byczek, Jon Zawislak, John LeClair, Theresa Schindler, David Schindler, Melissa Menapace, Zach Goodman, Tina Russell, Dalton Lerew, Emily Evanoff, Diana Conklin, Stephen Ryan, Deanna Mickelson, Timmothy Ballinger, Mark Polley, Adam Polley, Bob Mahin (Michigan Geological Survey), Pete Judd (County of Iron), Wendy Graham (IC Reporter), and John Paramski (WICKWIRE).

The purpose of this Public Hearing is to receive public comments on the Iron County Trail Club's request to access and use City owned property between Plum and Spruce Streets (Parcel ID #055-036-039-00) for the purpose of planning, constructing and maintaining bike and/or foot trails for public recreation and events.

Mark Polley questioned if the City will still maintain ownership of the parcel and who would be liable if something were to happen?

Adam Polley also expressed concerns over liability. He believed that the City should not let the Trail Club use the property.

Paul Eident explained that this will be a single-track mountain biking trail that would connect Mirkwood to the trail at Taproot. He feels that this could increase tourism. He noted that the mountain biker takes on risk because it is a "known hazard."

John LeClair had questions regarding the bidding process and was directed to bring his concerns up in the public comment section regarding issues not on the agenda.

There being no written or oral comments, Mayor Dood adjourned the Public Hearing at 5:30 p.m.

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The purpose of this Public Hearing is to receive public comments on the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget.

Mark Polley asked if DPW will be getting a raise? Mayor Dood replied that they will be getting a raise, which has been negotiated by their union representatives.

There being no written or more oral comments, Mayor Dood adjourned the Public Hearing at 5:30 p.m.

**IRON RIVER CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, May 21, 2025
5:15 PM
Minutes**

Mayor Rodney Dood opened the Regular Meeting at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Iron River City Hall.

Roll Call: Dennis Powell, Anthony Clements, Ronjo Leonoff and Dood.

Absent: Benjamin Garcia.

Also, present: City Manager Rachel Andreski, City Clerk Tyana Elenbaas, Interim City Attorney Hannah L. Goodman, and Officer Caleb Greenough.

Public in attendance: Vicky Powell, Bob Byczek, Jon, Zawislak, John LeClair, Krista Schindler, David Schindler, Melissa Menapace, Zach Goodman, Tina Russell, Dalton Lerew, Emily Evanoff, Diana Conklin, Stephen Ryan, Deanna Mickelson, Timmothy Ballinger, Mark Polley, Adam Polley, Bob Mahin (Michigan Geological Survey), Pete Judd (County of Iron), Wendy Graham (IC Reporter), and John Paramski (WICKWIRE).

PUBLIC COMMENT

Adam Polley stated that there was a time when each department would give a verbal report and wondered if the department heads would give a verbal report.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Powell moved with support from Leonoff to approve the agenda as presented. All in favor; Motion carried. Absent: Garcia.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Clements moved with support from Leonoff to approve:

- April 16, 2025, Public Hearing and Regular Meeting Minutes
- April 28, 2025, Special Meeting Minutes
- May 5, 2025, Budget Work Session Minutes

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

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- DPW Report
- IRPD Report

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

REPORTS:

ICECA

Nothing to add to the written report.

Clements moved with support from Powell to accept the ICECA report as written. All in favor; Motion Carried. Absent: Garcia.

County of Iron

Judd stated that Treasurer Melanie Camps reported a year-over year increase of more than \$285,000 in delinquent taxes, the highest jump she has seen in her 20-year tenure. He also noted that 911 dispatch is having staffing issues and they will look for solutions to help the shortage.

Clements moved with support from Leonoff to accept the County of Iron's report as presented. All in favor; Motion Carried. Absent: Garcia.

Attorney Report (verbal)

Blight - Attorney Goodman stated that she has been busy with blight and the ruling on the Mary Bawyn case.

Bike Path – Attorney Goodman added that she has been working with the ICTC to look over the license agreement the Club supplied for her.

Clements moved with support from Powell to accept the Attorney's Report as presented. All in favor; Motion Carried. Absent: Garcia.

UP Championship Rodeo

Andreski stated that Gary Olson, who represents the parade for the Rodeo, would like to give the Council regular updates. He unfortunately could not attend the meeting today, as something came up, but will be available for the next meeting.

Manager's Report

- MDNR Conversion – Andreski stated that she has been in contact with Mr. Ray Koivunen, who believes he can assist with the conversion issue. He agreed to meet with Glenn Dobson of Aspirus to try and negotiate on behalf of the City's best interest. Glenn Dobson sent an email and stated that he is now on the System Real Estate Management Committee and would add the City's request to their next meetings agenda, which is scheduled for May 27, 2025.
- New City Hall – Andreski updated the Council regarding the renovations, noting that the crew is now drywalling and the IT is ninety percent finished.

- Large Item Clean-up – Andreski informed Council that the City was not awarded the Scrap Tire Grant, which means we will have to find an alternative way to dispose of the tires that were collected during the cleanup. Andreski will gather quotes for disposal of the tires.
- ZBA- There has been a request for a variance regarding two sheds. The owner would like the sheds in the front of his yard and will need approval to do so. After some discussion it was decided that a ZBA meeting will be held on June 4, 2025, at 4:30 p.m.

Leonoff moved with support from Clements to accept the Manager's Report as presents. All in favor; Motion Carried. Absent: Garcia.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

City Financial Report – April 2025

Clements moved with support from Leonoff to accept the City Financial Report for April 2025 as presented.

Roll Call: Ayes – 4: Powell, Leonoff, Clements, and Dood. Nays – 0. Absent - 1: Garcia. Motion Carried.

Accounts Payable Report – April 2025

Clements moved with support from Leonoff to accept the Accounts Payable Report for April 2025 as presented.

Roll Call: Ayes – 4: Powell, Leonoff, Clements, and Dood. Nays – 0. Absent - 1: Garcia. Motion Carried.

City Attorney Invoice – April 2025

Leonoff moved with support from Powell to accept the City Attorney Invoice for April 2025 in the amount of \$1,067.06.

Roll Call: Ayes – 4: Clements, Powell, Leonoff and Dood. Nays – 0. Absent; Garcia. Motion Carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Generator – Global Response North Building

Andreski stated that at this time there is no update. Dood motioned with support from Clements to table the Global Response North Building. All in favor; Motion Carried. Absent: Garcia.

Review Utility Billing Rates

Andreski stated that Bendzinski & Co. performed the utility rate study for the Clean Water SRF project and have provided us with two options for repayment. There is a 20- year and a 30- year repayment option. The taxpayers will save \$540,000 in interest if the 20- year repayment option was chosen. She added that the last rate increase was July 1, 2022. She provided Council with rate studies conducted by EGLE, which showed Iron River is still in the lower end for utility rates even with the proposed increases.

Clements moved with support from Powell to pick the 20 – year repayment plan beginning on the new fiscal year, July 1, 2025, including the proposed rate increase.

Roll Call: Ayes – 4: Leonoff, Powell, Clements and Dood. Nays – 0. Absent - 1: Garcia. Motion Carried.

Outdoor Warning Siren

Andreski stated that she has been in contact with a representative from West Shore Services, Inc. and they will be providing a quote to relocate the siren to a new location. It was suggested that a utility post would be a great spot to relocate, as this is what most of their customers have done.

Dood moved with support from Clements to table the Outdoor Warning Siren pending more information from West Shore Services Inc. All in favor: Motion Carried. Absent: Garcia.

Offer to Purchase Former Homer Mine Railroad Property

Andreski noted that at the last Council meeting, Council requested a land survey be completed at Mr. Swanson's expense. The survey was completed and paid in full. Mr. Swanson would like to proceed with purchasing the property.

Powell moved with support from Leonoff to sell the former Homer Mine Railroad Property to Robert Swanson in the amount of \$3,500 plus the closing costs.

Roll Call: Ayes – 4: Clements, Leonoff, Powell and Dood. Nays – 0. Absent - 1: Garcia. Motion Carried.

Iron County Trail Club Expansion Proposal

Andreski stated that an advertisement was published in the Reporter on May 14, 2025, regarding the proposed expansion and all property owners within 300 feet of the parcel were notified by mail.

Leonoff stated that it would not be wise to use the license agreement supplied by the Iron County Trail Club because it is not specific to our City.

Interim City Attorney Hannah L. Goodman stated that it would be a good idea for policies to be made and followed regarding deadlines for agenda submissions. She noted that having a deadline would also help the Council, as they would have more time to review the information that was submitted and not be blindsided by last-minute additions.

Dood suggested that a deadline would be a great idea, he believes this would allow Attorney Goodman and Manager Andreski time to review information as well. He also suggested that the attorney come up with a generic land use agreement for the City. One that was not specifically for the Iron County Trail Club but to any that would wish to utilize City owned parcels.

Powell moved to table the Iron County Trail Club Expansion Proposal with support from Clements until all information can be submitted and reviewed. All in favor; Motion Carried. Absent: Garcia.

NEW BUSINESS

Michigan Geological Survey

Bob Mahin introduced himself as a geologist who has worked in the U.P. for around 20 years. He and his staff would like permission to enter City property and spend one or two days to survey the waste pile and collect several samples that will be sent to the USGS for detailed chemical analysis and eventually published in a national database.

Attorney Goodman noted that the agreement provided was standard but wanted to know how the samples would be collected. Mahin detailed how the sample collection is done all by hand and rock hammers.

Andreski asked what would happen if a sample came back harmful, would it be the City's responsibility for remediation. Mahin stated that it is unlikely that a sample would come back harmful, but it is a possibility.

Clements moved with support from Leonoff to approve the Researchers' Access Agreement.

Roll Call: Ayes – 4: Powell, Leonoff, Clements and Dood. Nays – 0. Absent - 1: Garcia. Motion Carried.

Reporter Building Renovation Project – Pay Request No. 2

John Paramski (WICKWIRE) stated that this is for work completed on the project through May 10, 2025, and stored materials on site. He noted that the carpentry and electrical is finished as well.

Clements motioned with the support from Leonoff to accept the Reporter Building Renovations Project – Pay Request No. 2 in the amount of \$112,311.85. Roll Call: Ayes – 4: Powell, Leonoff, Clements and Dood. Nays – 0. Absent - 1: Garcia. Motion carried.

MDOT Category B Grant Resolution 25-05

John Paramski (WICKWIRE) stated that this Resolution is a request for funding for the resurfacing of the roadways and will authorize Andreski to act on behalf of the City to request Transportation Economic Development Fund Category B program funding.

Clements moved with support from Leonoff to approve MDOT Category B Grant Resolution 25-05.

Roll Call: Ayes – 4: Powell, Leonoff, Clements and Dood. Nays – 0. Absent - 1: Garcia. Motion Carried.

Adopt FY2025/26 Budget

The City Council received the purposed budget on April 30, 2025, and understands that this is a working budget that can be amended as needed. Clements moved with support from Leonoff to adopt the FY2025-26 Budget as presented. Roll Call: Ayes – 4: Powell, Leonoff, Clements and Dood. Nays- 0. Absent - 1: Garcia. Motion Carried.

Police Academy Sponsorship

Andreski stated that there are currently two candidates that are interested in employment. One the of the potential candidates formerly worked at a Corrections facility and the other is a local who has some experience in corrections as well. MCOLES Public Safety Academy Assistance Program Grant still has funding which could be utilized for both candidates.

Clements moved with support from Leonoff to sponsor both candidates with the MCOLES Public Safety Academy Assistance Program Grant. Roll Call: Ayes – 4: Powell, Leonoff, Clements and Dood. Nays – 0. Absent - 1: Garcia. Motion Carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Adam Polley voiced concerns about the financial investments being directed toward the Reporter Building. He also reported a hit-and-run incident near his residence, alleging that Craig Richardson of WICKWIRE may have been responsible for the damage. Mr. Polley expressed frustration that the IRPD appeared to suspect him rather than investigating Richardson. He further raised concerns about the amount of taxpayer money being allocated to WICKWIRE, given their role as the City's engineering firm.

Mark Polley stated that if he had committed a hit-and-run, he believes he would be in jail. He noted that if the current allegations are accurate, some form of justice should be pursued. Mr. Polley expressed concern that the matter may be ignored or "swept under the rug." He also raised issues

regarding the financial allocations to the Reporter Building, asserting that the project should have been subject to a public vote. Additionally, he voiced concern that new candidates entering the Police Academy may be hesitant to work under the current Chief of Police.

Jon Zawislak expressed concern regarding the status of street sweeping in the City, noting that Ski Brule had already completed road cleanup. He thanked the Council for making changes to the fencing ordinance. Mr. Zawislak also raised concerns about speeding on 5th Street and Cayuga Street and suggested that a traffic study be conducted to determine whether a new stop sign may be necessary in the area.

Dianna Conklin introduced herself as a representative of Saint Vincent de Paul and highlighted the growing issue of homelessness in the community. She stated that Iron River currently lacks any housing options for the homeless, with the nearest facility located at the Barefoot Motel in Crystal Falls. Ms. Conklin shared that she has personally assisted hundreds of displaced individuals, including children and women. She proposed that Camp Gibbs be considered as a potential location to house those experiencing homelessness, noting that it offers sufficient space to accommodate individuals facing hardship.

Emily Evanoff, representing the Max Creek Foundation, stated that the organization is focused on improving the lives of displaced individuals. She expressed interest in partnering with the City to develop a self-sustaining shelter. Ms. Evanoff also supported the idea of utilizing Camp Gibbs as a potential location to house the homeless, echoing the earlier suggestion that it would be a suitable site for such a purpose.

John LeClair expressed concerns about the property bidding process, questioning how he was outbid on a parcel and suggesting that the other party may have been alerted to his bid. He inquired whether the City has established policies governing the bidding process. Mr. LeClair also commented on the lack of industrial growth in Iron River and questioned why new businesses are not coming into the area.

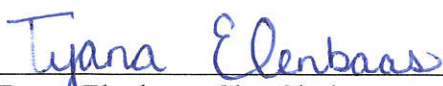
Attorney Goodman stated that the City does have a process regarding bidding on parcels and the process is available on the City's website.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS

Mayor Dood stated for the record that he will not be able to attend the next regular meeting; he will be out of town.

ADJOURNMENT

Dood motioned with support from Powell to adjourn the meeting at 6:38 p.m. All in favor. Motion carried. Absent: Garcia.



Tyana Elenbaas, City Clerk