

**IRON RIVER CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, June 18, 2025
5:15 PM
Minutes**

Mayor Rodney Dood called the Regular meeting to order at 5:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Iron River City Hall.

Roll Call: Dennis Powell, Anthony Clements, Benjamin Garcia, Ronjo Leonoff and Dood.
Absent: None.

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, John LeClair, David Schumacher, Martha Burdick, Diana Conklin, Timmothy Ballinger, Mark Polley, Dan Schive, Wendy Graham (IC Reporter), and Craig Richardson (WICKWIRE).

PUBLIC COMMENT

David Schumacher stated that he would like to see the trail club expand its trail system in Iron County. He noted that mountain biking can generate money through tourism.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Gacia moved with support from Clements to approve the agenda as presented. All in favor; Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Garcia moved with support from Leonoff to approve:

- May 21, 2025, Public Hearing and Regular Meeting Minutes
- June 4, 2025, Special Meeting Minutes
- June 10, 2025, ZBA Meeting Minutes

All were in favor; Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- May 8, 2025, Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes
- May 19, 2025, DDA Regular Meeting Minutes
- DPW Report
- IRPD Report

All were in favor; Motion carried.

REPORTS:

ICECA

Representative not present.

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

County of Iron

Representative not present.

Attorney Report (verbal)

Land Divisions – Attorney Goodman stated that she is working on creating a standard for land divisions and variances. She noted that a process could help with the records.

Andreski supplied Attorney Goodman with a copy of a Zoning checklist from Michigan State University to help with creating a new checklist to help with variances.

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

UP Championship Rodeo

Gary Olson was not in attendance, so nothing new to report.

Manager's Report

- Clerk Announcement – Clerk Elenbaas stated that Nominating Petitions are available in her office for those interested in running for City Council.
- MDNR Conversion –Andreski reported that her column in *The Reporter* received positive feedback. In response, Glenn Dobson, CFO of Aspirus Iron River Hospital and Clinics, contacted the City and requested a detailed proposal to present to the Real Estate Management Board. She prepared and submitted the request, which was subsequently approved by the Board, contingent upon the City covering the surveying fees and closing costs. The proposal will now proceed to the U.P. Board for consideration on August 18, 2025. If approved at that level, it will move forward to the main Aspirus Board for final approval. We will not need an outside appraiser to appraise the parcel, as Patti Roell already assessed the property, which will save the City money.
- Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS)/Community Project Funding (CPF) Grant - We were notified by Senator Gary Peters' Office that our project will be submitted for the next phase, which is the Appropriations Committee. We should know by August/September if they have accepted our project.
- ZBA- There has been a request for a variance from Todd Johnson regarding the construction of storage units. The ordinance requires 5 acres to build units upon, and Mr. Johnson only has 3 acres. After some discussion it was decided that a ZBA meeting will be held on July 16, 2025, at 4:30 p.m.

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

FINANCIAL REPORTS

City Financial Report – May 2025

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

Roll Call: Ayes – 5: Powell, Clements, Leonoff, Garcia, and Dood. Nays – 0. Motion Carried.

Accounts Payable Report – May 2025

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

Roll Call: Ayes – 5: Powell, Garcia, Clements, Leonoff, and Dood. Nays – 0. Motion Carried.

City Attorney Invoice – May 2025

Clements moved with support from Powell to accept the City Attorney Invoice for May 2025 in the amount of \$1,292.06.

Roll Call: Ayes – 5: Garcia, Leonoff, Powell, Clements and Dood. Nays – 0. Motion Carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Generator – Global Response North Building

Andreski inquired whether Attorney Goodman had received a letter from Steve Tinti indicating that the County has no interest in the generator. Attorney Goodman responded that she has not received any communication on the matter and will contact Mr. Tinti to obtain the necessary letter confirming the County's relinquishment of any claim to the generator.

Dood motioned with the support of Clements, to table the item regarding the Generator – Global Response North Building until Attorney Goodman obtains a letter from the County formally relinquishing all rights to the generator. All in favor; Motion Carried.

Outdoor Warning Siren

Andreski reported that she has been in communication with a representative from West Shore Services, Inc. regarding the relocation of the siren. The company will be providing a formal quote for the project. It was suggested that a utility pole would be an ideal location for relocation, as this is the common approach used by most of their clients.

The representative provided an estimated cost of \$10,000 for the relocation. Andreski noted that if the City can secure the services of a local crane company, it could reduce the overall cost. She also stated that the Fire Board is strongly in favor of keeping the siren operational and relocated.

Clements motioned with support from Leonoff to pursue a 50/50 split on the total cost with the Fire Board for the relocation of the siren.

Roll Call: Ayes – 5: Powell, Garcia, Leonoff, Clements and Dood. Nays – 0. Motion Carried.

Iron County Trail Club Expansion Proposal

Garcia apologized for missing the previous meeting where the proposal was discussed.

Andreski inquired with Attorney Goodman about the license agreement, which was not completed.

Garcia stated that the purpose of the Trail Club is to keep people outdoors and active. He requested that the City move forward with the proposal and give the Trail Club verbal permission to utilize the proposed land.

Powell asked if 906 Adventures would be utilizing the trail system as well and wondered how 906 Adventures is considered a non-profit organization yet charge for services. Garcia stated that the Trail Club and 906 Adventures are two separate entities, and the Trail Club has their own insurance.

Attorney Goodman stated that the public should have an opportunity to speak regarding the trail system.

Dood noted that an agreement needs to be drafted first before the Trail Club can use the land.

Attorney Goodman added that an agreement is being drafted but will not be ready this year. She also noted that there were interested parties who would like to purchase the land.

Garcia asked if the Council would consider letting the Trail Club cut across the DPW lot and place signs. Andreski stated that she didn't see any issues with the Trail Club using the DPW lot but just urged the Club to be cautious.

Dood moved with the support from Clements to allow the Iron County Trail Club to utilize the DPW lot until Attorney Goodman can draft the license agreement.

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

NEW BUSINESS

Budget Amendments Set # 2

Andreski noted that we are coming to the end of the Fiscal year and the amendments listed are nothing out of the ordinary.

Clements moved with support from Garcia to approve the Budget Amendments Set #2 as presented.

Roll Call: Ayes – 5: Powell, Leonoff, Garcia, Clements and Dood. Nays – 0. Motion Carried.

Reporter Building Roof Replacement – Application for Payment No. 1

Craig Richardson (WICKWIRE) stated that this is for roof installation with a 10% withholding for the warranty and for the work completed on the project through June 9, 2025.

Clements motioned with the support from Leonoff to accept the Reporter Building Roof Replacement – Application for Payment No. 1 in the amount of \$26,550.00. Roll Call: Ayes – 5: Powell, Garcia, Leonoff, Clements and Dood. Nays – 0. Motion Carried.

Reporter Building Renovation for Iron River City Hall – Application for Payment No. 3 and Change Order No. 2

Craig Richardson (WICKWIRE) reported that Payment No. 3, in the amount of \$72,881.15, covers work completed through June 8, 2025.

He also presented Change Order No. 2, which reflects a deduction of \$12,263.00 due to cost savings realized from the electrical panel. These savings are being reinvested to upgrade the remaining light fixtures throughout the building to LED which includes:

- Garage area
- Storage room
- Mechanical room
- Restrooms
- Three exterior area lights
- Flagpole light
- Two new lights at the main entrance doors

These enhancements will improve energy efficiency and overall lighting quality throughout the facility, including security measures on the exterior of the building.

Garcia moved with support from Clements to approve Payment No. 3 in the amount of \$72,881.15 and Change Order No. 2 in the amount of -\$6,013.37.

Roll Call: Ayes – 5: Powell, Leonoff, Clements, Garcia and Dood. Nays – 0. Motion Carried.

Amendment of Agreement for Joint Public Building Restoration Administrative Board

Andreski explained that she received the request to amend the agreement for the Joint Public Building Restoration Administrative Board. They would like to change the wording under the

budget and financing section. They would like to erase the section that states: "Other than the initial contribution no future contribution shall be required of any member." It is required that they gain unanimous approval from the City of Iron River, Bates Township, Stambaugh Township, Iron River Township and West Iron County School District.

Garcia motion with the support from Clements to approve the Amendment of Agreement for the Joint Public Building Restoration Administrative Board.

Roll Call: Ayes – 5: Powell, Leonoff, Clements, Garcia and Dood. Nays- 0. Motion Carried.

ZBA Appointment

Andreski stated that she received the first application for the Zoning Board of Appeals from James Dellies. She noted that he is currently on the Planning Commission and is very knowledgeable. He served on Forsyth Township ZBA for 23 Years and has served on numerous other boards.

Garcia motioned with support from Leonoff to appoint James Dellies to the Zoning Board of Appeals. All in favor; Motion Carried.

Civic Plus – Ordinance Codification Proposal

Andreski stated that the final step of the Zoning Rewrite process is to submit the revised ordinances to Civic Plus. Civic Plus will upload the updated ordinance to our website, provide paper copies to us and coordinate with legal counsel to ensure the language is adequate and legally sound. Civic Plus has issued a preliminary quote for \$6,584.00. The amount is subject to change, depending on the length of the Ordinance and other related factors. The estimated timeframe to complete this process is 3 – 5 months.

Clements motioned with the support from Leonoff to approve the proposal from Civic Plus in the amount of \$6,584.00

Roll Call: Ayes – 5: Powell, Garcia, Leonoff, Clements and Dood. Nays – 0. Motion Carried.

Sidewalk Ordinance – Initiation by Owner

Andreski provided the Council with a copy of the current ordinance regarding sidewalks. She noted that two residents recently approached her with requests for sidewalk replacement and inquired whether the City participates in a sidewalk assistance program.

Andreski explained that while the City does currently have a sidewalk program, it has been dormant since the tenure of former City Manager Perry Franzoi. The program was advertised in June 2015, but following Franzoi's resignation later that summer, the initiative stalled. Although Andreski had compiled a list of interested residents at that time, Council tabled the item, and when Thayer became City Manager, he chose not to continue the program.

Andreski mentioned that interest in the program has resurfaced, partially due to a conversation with a concrete contractor from Crystal Falls, who noted that their city has an active sidewalk program.

Andreski spoke with Caspian and Crystal Falls regarding their Sidewalk programs. For Crystal Falls: the residents will enter into an agreement with their preferred contractor, they fill out the permit application and submit it. Once approved, the resident will supply the City with an invoice and proof of payment to the contractor and the City will reimburse the resident for materials on the agreed upon percentage.

Dood stated that he thinks it's a good idea and that there are cost effective ways to implement the program. Garcia asked if we are to consider a 50/50 split on costs. He noted that it might motivate some homeowners to repair the sidewalk if the City contributes money to the overall project. Powell suggested having a limit on how many applications a homeowner/landlord may submit. He

suggested a set amount on how much the City contributes. Leonoff suggested setting a limit on how much the City is willing to spend each year. It would be a first come first serve process.

Garcia suggested putting a cap on applications for the first year, to better gauge the interest of the community. He added that if we compiled all the applications and scheduled for the same time, it would save on mobilization costs.

Attorney Goodman agreed that the program is a great idea and would be a great motivator to the residents. She suggested we brainstorm the terms and conditions of the program. She added that she will investigate other municipalities to see what they have and how they implement their sidewalk program. She also stated that there is no reason to reinvent the wheel.

After some discussion it was decided to table the Sidewalk Ordinance until the next meeting, where the Council can better set terms and conditions for the Sidewalk Ordinance.

POAM - Union Contract Ratification

Andreski reported that last year there was a tentative agreement with the Police Officers Association of Michigan (POAM). However, no formal action was taken to open the contract or amend it, resulting in a zero percent increase in wages for officers during that year.

During this year's contract negotiations, it was agreed that certain contract language would be modified, and the parties reached a new agreement. As part of the updated terms, police officers will receive a 4% wage increase annually for the next three years.

Clements motioned with support from Leonoff to approve the 3-year POAM Union Contract Ratification as presented.

Roll Call: Ayes – 5: Powell, Garcia, Leonoff, Clements and Dood. Nays – 0. Motion Carried.

Junior Lien CWSRF Sewer Revenue Bond Ordinance 25-07

Andreski explained that this is the next step in the process to move forward with the sewer project. She added that if this Ordinance is adopted, it will then be published in the Reporter.

Clements motioned with the support of Powell to adopt the Junior Lien CWSRF Sewer Revenue Bond Ordinance 25-07.

Roll Call: Ayes – 5: Garcia, Leonoff, Powell, Clements and Dood. Nays – 0. Motion Carried.

West Side Veterans Council Sponsorship

Andreski stated the Council received their annual request for sponsorship for the fireworks. The DDA had approved \$2,500 in hopes that the City Council would match their sponsorship. She also provided Council with previous years contributions.

Clements moved with support from Powell to match the DDA's sponsorship of \$2,500 for the West Side Veterans Council fireworks.

Roll Call: Ayes – 5: Garcia, Leonoff, Powell, Clements and Dood. Nays – 0. Motion Carried.

Iron County Fair Association (ICFA) Sponsorship

Andreski noted that last year the City Council was not approached about sponsorship for the Fair. She added that Carrie Nelson, who represents the Fair, had attended the DDA meeting and had requested sponsorship from the DDA and City Council. She noted that sponsorship for the ICFA was not budgeted but the DDA did move forward with a sponsorship in the amount of \$1,000.

Leonoff motioned with support from Powell to sponsor the Iron County Fair Association in the amount of \$1,000.

Roll Call: Ayes – 5: Clements, Garcia, Powell, Leonoff and Dood. Nays – 0. Motion Carried.

Increased Displaced Individuals in Iron County

Diane Conklin addressed the Council regarding the increasing number of displaced individuals in Iron River. She proposed the establishment of a homeless shelter to help meet this growing need, noting that most existing shelters in surrounding areas lack the capacity to accommodate individuals coming from Iron River. As part of her proposal, Conklin requested access to a fixer-upper or any available property that could be repurposed to house displaced individuals. She emphasized that Saint Vincent de Paul, along with area churches, have expressed willingness to cover utility costs and other expenses associated with operating the shelter.

Emily Evanoff from Mac Creek Foundation has obtained some grants for her shelter for the beaten and battered women but was unable to attend tonight's meeting.

Garcia asked what exactly Conklin was looking for. Conklin stated that she would like to provide a place to stay for displaced individuals. Dood noted that the City doesn't own any houses. Conklin stated that they could lease property from the City. Dood reiterated that the City doesn't own any houses.

Powell asked Conklin if she had approached the County with her proposal, noting that they have a bigger budget than the City. Conklin stated that the County directed her to the City Council.

Attorney Goodman explained that the City cannot legally "give away" property and emphasized that, in order for the City to provide support, there must be a formal entity or organization responsible for the initiative. She inquired whether this would fall under the Mac Creek Foundation.

Conklin stated that they have partnered with Mac Creek Foundation, but her goal is different than that of Mac Creek. She is just looking to "get people off the street." She added that she is presenting the idea on her own and that Mac Creek Foundation would provide food. She added that she is just trying to help displaced individuals. She expressed frustration with Emily Evanoff's absence as she was supposed to be present to help present the idea.

Garcia stated once again that the City doesn't have a house that they could lease or give to Conklin.

Andreski noted that Emily Evanoff had previously approached the City regarding a house purchased by the Mac Creek Foundation for the purpose of sheltering victims of domestic violence. To her knowledge, the house remains unoccupied, pending needed renovations. She had not received a recent update from Evanoff.

Dood noted that we are a City and as a councilmember, he has been entrusted to handle taxpayers' money. He stated that it is hard to justify. Conklin stated that people are kicked out of the Mission, and that the Mission is not helping with the issues.

Garcia stated that the City cannot provide direct financial assistance to displaced individuals. He expressed concern that doing so would set a precedent, potentially leading other residents to request similar assistance and create an unsustainable expectation for City resources. Conklin stated that some of the homeless people she has helped own property within the City.

Attorney Goodman stated that a more detailed plan would be required. As a City, there are very few things that money can be allocated to.

Conklin stated that she is not looking for the City to fund the project. Conklin thanked the Council for nothing.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mark Polley thanked and commended Ronjo Leonoff for his efforts related to the Nelson Field lighting project. Polley expressed concern that the roof work on the Reporter Building was not fully completed and stated his belief that additional issues will arise with the building. He criticized the Council for not being careful with taxpayer money, disagreed with the decision to move into the building, and alleged that the Council is not fully informed about the situation. Polley also raised concern about sidewalk conditions, stating that he had previously alerted the City to issues in his area. He believes that the sidewalks are collapsing due to potential problems beneath the roads, and that further investigation may be needed.

Dan Schive thanked Mr. Ronjo Leonoff for his contributions to the Nelson Field Lighting project and his involvement with the Booster Club. He asked whether the City planned to contribute to the lighting project.

Andreski responded that the Parks and Recreation Committee contributed \$13,000 toward the project. She added that the City has been working with WICKWIRE on the electrical components, which will require a full upgrade. An estimate of approximately \$45,000 was provided for the necessary electrical work.

Schive also noted that a tree had been removed from the greenbelt, but a pipe was left behind. He asked whether he could remove the pipe himself or if that would need to be handled by the City. Garcia requested that a DPW worker inspect the pipe first to ensure it is not connected to any infrastructure before removal. Schive then inquired about sidewalk maintenance during the winter, specifically regarding the enforcement of the existing ordinance. Dood noted that in the past two years, snowfall has been minimal, so enforcement has not been a significant issue. However, he added that tickets were issued in prior years when snow accumulation was more substantial. Clements added that there had been resistance from residents when enforcement of the sidewalk ordinance was previously discussed. Schive suggested putting an ad in the newspaper to remind residents of the ordinance.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS

Clements mentioned that the Street Sweeper was a big hit at the Big Truck event at the school.

Garcia commended City staff, stating that the City is doing a fantastic job addressing and fixing issues. However, he emphasized the importance of developing a long-term vision for the City's future. He raised the question of whether Iron River is positioning itself as a tourist destination, an industrial hub, or a business center, and asked what steps are being taken to actively move the City in a defined direction. Garcia stressed the need for intentional growth and strategic planning.

Clements agreed and added that it has been some time since the City Council and the Planning Commission held a joint meeting. He suggested that reconvening both bodies for a joint session could be beneficial in aligning goals and priorities for the City's development.


Dood noted that the City's Master Plan lays out the next steps. Currently we are on step 4 since it was adopted in 2022. The last step completed was the Zoning Ordinance, and now that it is

completed, we are ready to implement the next step. He added that the Zoning Ordinance took two years to complete.

Garcia reiterated that we need to keep moving forward as a City. He agreed that a joint meeting would be beneficial.

ADJOURNMENT

Dood motioned with support from Leonoff to adjourn the meeting at 7:02 p.m. All in favor. Motion carried.



Tyana Elenbaas, City Clerk