

**CITY OF IRON RIVER  
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Monday, August 18, 2025  
12:15 P.M.**

Chairperson Kelly Dvorak called the meeting to order at 12:13 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Iron River City Hall.

Roll Call: Jay Aldrich, Terry Tarsi, Dennis Powell, Greg Scott and Kelly Dvorak.

Absent: Mark Saigh and Ed Lindwall.

Also Present: City Manager Rachel Andreski and City Clerk Tyana Elenbaas.

Public in Attendance – Zach Hautala (ICECA) and Caroline Person.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Tarsi moved with support from Lindwall to approve the agenda as presented; All in favor.

Motion carried. Absent: Saigh and Lindwall.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Lindwall moved with support from Aldrich to approve May 19, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. All in favor; Motion carried. Absent: Saigh and Lindwall.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**REPORTS**

**City Manager**

- Parking Lot Project – Andreski stated that she will begin notifying the public about the construction so there is no confusion. She added that construction will begin after Labor Day.
- Planning Commission – The Planning Commission has begun working on an ordinance for food trucks as we currently don't have one. There has been an increase in food truck traffic, so this is needed.
- MDNR Conversion Issue – Andreski reported that the proposal is scheduled to go before the U.P. Board on August 18, 2025, for consideration. She has been in communication with Rae Kaare, CAO of Aspirus, who expressed confidence that the proposal will be approved at that level. If successful, the proposal will then proceed to the main Aspirus Board for final approval.
- Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) Project Plan – Andreski reported that despite encountering significant red tape, progress is being made with the assistance from WICKWIRE. We will be receiving the Bond Purchase contract on August 18, 2025, there will be a pre-construction meeting on August 27, and the final closing date on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Roustala Construction has expressed interest in beginning construction this fall, pending final approvals.
- The MDNR and DTE Foundation have partnered to form a foundation called ReLeaf Michigan offering \$100,000 in grant funding for their DTE Foundation Tree Planting Grant Program. Applicants can request up to \$4,000 with a 1-to-1 matching requirement.

Applications are due September 15<sup>th</sup>. If awarded the grant, we will use the funds to purchase trees for our tree beds in our parking lots. Grant award will be announced in October with a completion date of September 1, 2026

- Apple Blossom Boardwalk Project – Construction has started and progressing quickly. The piles have been driven and leveled, anchors installed, and Alliance is finishing up with the cross beams to hold the span of the boards for the walk.
- DPW Superintendent position: Steve Saunders started on August 11<sup>th</sup> and is doing very well. He is very knowledgeable with water systems and has already contacted EGLE regarding taking his water test to be licensed possibly in November.
- New Construction- There has been interest by seven different parties to build on vacant properties within the City. One would like to break ground this year before the snow flies.
- New Businesses – There are a few new businesses that are looking to open in the city, two being in the DDA district. One is located at the old Town Hall and will be repurposed into a dog grooming facility. The other is a possible candy shop. Also, possible storage units may be erected in the City. Andreski has been working with all to help with façade grant information, zoning information and advertising.

Scott questioned if all the painted sewers were a part of the sewage project. Andreski confirmed that sewers have been painted for the project.

Tarsi inquired about the “Do not mow” signs at Nanaimo Park and if they can be removed. Andreski informed Tarsi that they are required by the DNR, and they cannot be removed.

#### **Façade Committee**

Did not meet.

#### **Iron County Economic Chamber Alliance (ICECA)**

- Fast Track Grant – Hautala stated that three business have been awarded the Fast Track Grant and all three are in the DDA district. He noted that all three are promising businesses.
- Rural Prosperity Rural Readiness Grant – Hautala informed the Authority that, unfortunately, the project was not selected to participate in the grant program and will no longer require a letter of support. Alternative funding options are currently being explored to support the mapping project.
- Rodeo – Hautala noted that 4,726 people attended the rodeo over the two days, which was a slight increase from previous years.
- Humongous Fungus Fest – Hautala reported another successful year for the event, aided by favorable weather conditions. A highlight of the fest was the creation of a 10’ x 10’ pizza, made to support the Locker Lunch Program of Iron County. The pizza proved to be extremely popular, selling out in approximately an hour and a half.

#### **Beautification Committee**

Nothing to Report.

### **Christmas Lights**

Scott and Andreski agreed that the Committee needs to schedule a time to meet to further discuss a budget and move forward with upgrading the Christmas Lights. Scott noted that he will be in touch with Andreski to set something up.

### **FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Aldrich moved with support from Tarsi to approve the June and July's 2025 Financial Report as presented.

Roll Call: Ayes – 5: Powell, Scott, Tarsi, Aldrich and Dvorak. Nays: 0. Absent: 2 – Saigh and Lindwall. Motion carried.

Tarsi moved with support from Powell to approve the June and July's 2025 Accounts Payable Report as presented.

Roll Call: Ayes – 5: Aldrich, Scott, Powell, Tarsi and Dvorak. Nays: 0. Absent: 2 – Saigh and Lindwall. Motion carried.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **DDA Authority Plan Update – Miller Canfield**

Andreski noted that Miller Canfield has requested an update to the DDA Plan, asking if the Authority would like to include any additional projects and determine the desired duration of the updated plan—20 or 30 years.

Tarsi suggested including blight remediation and cleaning up the Iron River as new projects. He emphasized that not many cities have a river running through them as Iron River does and shared that the City used to host a Yellow Duck Contest on the river. However, due to current debris and poor conditions, such events are no longer feasible. He believes revitalizing the river should be a priority.

Andreski expanded on the issue of blight, noting that the current judge does not enforce blight-related ordinances. She shared that the Planning Commission is currently reviewing a stronger blight ordinance. Scott asked for clarification on what constitutes "blight." Andreski explained that blight can take several forms, such as overgrown noxious weeds or violations of the property maintenance code. She acknowledged that the code has not been enforced consistently in the past. Scott pointed out that the cost and limited options for garbage disposal can be barriers for residents. Andreski responded that the City is willing to work with property owners to achieve compliance, emphasizing that the goal is not to penalize but to improve conditions.

Tarsi moved with support from Scott to extend the DDA Authority Plan to a 20-year plan and to include blight remediation and the cleanup of the Iron River as new projects. All in favor; Motion Carried. Absent: 2 – Saigh and Lindwall.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Harvest and Haunt Fall Festival Sponsorship**

Hautala asked if the DDA would be interested in once again serving as the Headline Sponsor for the Harvest and Haunt festival, as they did last year. He noted that the event has been profitable for several years and continues to grow in success.

Scott moved with the support of Dvorak to become the headline sponsor of the Harvest and Haunt Festival in the amount of \$500.00. Roll Call: Ayes – 5: Aldrich, Powell, Tarsi, Scott and Dvorak. Nays: 0. Absent: 2 – Saigh and Lindwall. Motion carried.

### **Letter of Support – ICECA’s Office of Rural Prosperity Rural Readiness Grant**

Hautala informed the Authority that the grant is no longer a consideration, as they were notified that they are not a candidate for funding. He added that alternative funding options will be pursued to support the mapping project.

### **Classic Farm Machinery Club of Iron County Cruise Night**

Andreski stated that we received a “thank you” from Fred and Linda Hauser regarding the Father’s Day Cruise. She added that Fred and Linda Hauser requested funding for the purchase of new signs to replace the deteriorating ones for the Cruise Night. Since the DDA didn’t meet in July, the request was made in front of the City Council, who approved the funding but would like to see if the DDA would be willing to share the cost.

Tarsi thanked the City of Iron River for the purchase of the signs.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Caroline Person spoke regarding the flowers downtown and the pocket park. She asked what kind of funding is available to help clean up the pocket park. She noted that the wall at the pocket park is incomplete. Person inquired about a Façade Grant and the Mural Program. Andreski stated that the Mural Program has never kicked off but that the DDA would have to approve a design for the mural and would pay for the supplies. She also noted that usually one grant or the other. Person asked if there is more funding beside the Façade Grant. Andreski stated that there isn’t more funding.


Tarsi noted that the pocket park was a promising initiative that ultimately fell through when COVID hit. Although funding had been secured through a grant, the grant was withdrawn due to the pandemic.

### **DDA MEMBER COMMENTS**

Tarsi expressed interest in re-creating the Finance Committee. This committee in the past, would meet with Amanda Tukesbrey and the City Manager and go line by line over the budget. He explained that in the past, it would help the DDA members understand how the budget works. Jay Aldrich, Greg Scott, Kelly Dvorak and Terry Tarsi volunteered to sit on the Finance Committee.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Tarsi moved with support from Dvorak to adjourn the meeting at 1:10 p.m. All in favor; Motion carried. Absent: Saigh and Lindwall.

  
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Tyana Elenbaas, City Clerk