

**CITY OF IRON RIVER
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Monday, October 20, 2025
12:15 P.M.**

Vice Chairperson Greg Scott called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Iron River City Hall.

Roll Call: Mark Saigh, Dawn Sageng, Ed Lindwall, Dennis Powell, Terry Tarsi and Scott.

Absent: Jay Aldrich and Kelly Dvorak.

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

Public in Attendance – Zach Hautala, (ICECA) Craig Richardson (WICKWIRE), Chief Harrington and Jeff Dohl (REMAX North Country).

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Saigh moved with support from Tarsi to approve the agenda with the addition of the Visitor Guide as item B in New Business; All in favor. Motion carried. Absent: Aldrich and Dvorak.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Tarsi moved with support from Powell to approve September 15, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. All in favor; Motion carried. Absent: Aldrich and Dvorak.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeff Dohl with REMAX North Country stated that he would like to assume that all the effort and money that the city is putting into the parking lots behind the businesses on Genesee, is for the consumers and customers as well as the owners and operators of the businesses. To that effect, he noted that they are striping the parking lot, he had parked behind the Anderson Building, he added that he is here on behalf of Orv Sieger, who owns the Anderson Building. He stated that he parked behind the building in what he considers a prime spot, with great access to the Anderson Building. One of the contractors asked if Mr. Dohl would move his truck so he could paint lines for the dumpster. Mr. Dohl told the Authority that he declined to move his truck for a dumpster and acknowledged that he would have moved it for a customer. The Contractor showed Mr. Dohl on the plans, that the DDA had selected that specific location for the dumpsters. Mr. Dohl noticed that not all the dumpster locations were in the same area of the parking lots. He indicated that the dumpster should be in the south end of the parking lot, as the consumers and customers should be the priority. He made recommendations as to where he thought the dumpsters should be located and indicated that the dumpsters should not take priority over the consumers.

Tarsi stated that Mr. Dohl made a good case and asked Richardson about the placement of the dumpsters, asking if it was the only location that would work for the dumpsters. Richardson stated that we can dive further into the conversation when we address it on the agenda.

REPORTS

City Manager

- New Member – Andreski began by acknowledging and welcoming new member, Dawn Sageng of Ottawa Trading Co.
- New City Hall – Final inspections were held and everything passed. Parking lot is complete, with the recent rain, some pooling was noticed and will be fixed this week. Andreski noted that there are a couple of other spots that the contractor will come back and fix. Andreski stated that we are waiting on the Occupancy Permit, and tentatively the move in date will be November 7th. She indicated that City Hall will be closed while we make that transition. She stated that she has been working with Zach regarding a ribbon cutting.
- Apple Blossom Boardwalk Project – Construction is complete. Andreski stated that we have received a lot of positive responses to that. She indicated that the Boardwalk will also have a ribbon cutting, she encouraged the Authority members to check their emails, so they don't miss the invite.
- Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) Project Plan – Andreski reported that the project has started. They started up on Truman Avenue and have now worked their way to Amber. She noted that Roustala is a great company to work with. She indicated that like most construction projects, they have come across a few mysteries and are working through them.
- DDA Parking Lot Project – Andreski noted that some of the “bird baths” will be addressed and fixed. The last piece will be the removal of the dirt from the berms, and they will bring in good topsoil to fill them. She indicated that this winter, she will work with the Beautification Committee. She added that there was some talk about utilizing funds to hire a landscape architect, with a good vision. She noted that all those decisions will come before the DDA before anything is set in stone.
- EGLE – Andreski stated that she and Jeff Andreski met with Mike Westra of EGLE who preformed our annual Sanitary Survey of our water system. Mr. Westra was impressed by the proactiveness that the city is taking with our water system. She added that we just had our yearly samples taken and there was no detection of PFAS contrary to what is being spread through the community. She noted that Aspirus is having their Health Fair on Wednesday, and the water operator has a booth and will be available to answer any questions about our drinking water from the public.
- DDA Finance Committee – Andreski noted that the Finance Committee met last Wednesday and discussed the budget. She acknowledged that Treasurer Tukesbrey does a great job and provides a spreadsheet and goes through line by line on all the items.
- Explosion Site – Andreski reported that she has been in contact with a relative of the gentleman who perished in the house explosion on Cayuga. She indicated that they hired a new contractor who will be starting immediately. She noted that they will be getting the work done and noted past issues with the former contractor.
- Parking Lots Improvement Project – Andreski reported that they are fixing some of the “bird baths.” She indicated that this would be a great time to acknowledge Mr. Dohl's concerns regarding the dumpster placement.

Richardson asked Mr. Dohl which corner he would like the dumpsters to be placed in.

Scott interjected asking about a final walkthrough. Richardson stated that all projects will have a final inspection. Richardson stated that they develop like a “punch list” of anything that needs to

be corrected, like the bird bath situation. Richardson added that that is why we hold onto the retainage until the final inspection.

Scott indicated that we could move forward with the dumpster placement, and acknowledged that the DDA did in fact approve the plans. Richardson stated yes, it was over a year ago that the DDA had approved these plans. He noted that this is an easy fix. He showed the DDA the plans and showed where the dumpsters could be relocated and where their initial placement was.

After some discussion, it was decided that the DDA shouldn't make the decision, it should be the business owners. Dohl stated that the southeast corner would be a great spot for the dumpster. Richardson stated that it could go in the southeast or southwest corner. Richardson showed the Authority the plans and indicated the new placement of the dumpsters will be on the southeast corner of the lot.

Richardson gave a description of what the dumpster enclosures will look like, he added that this has been a collaborative effort with GFL as well to make sure the enclosures work. Richardson brought up the dumpster behind Outer Limits, and it was decided that the dumpster will go in the southeast corner as well.

Tarsi moved with support from Saigh to move the dumpsters to the southeast corner of the lots as per the request of Jeff Dohl and Orv Sieger. All in favor; Motion Carried. Absent: Aldrich and Dvorak.

Façade Committee

Tarsi stated that this will be quick and easy because everyone on the committee is present. He asked if anyone on the committee had any questions.

Saigh stated that they did a fantastic job on the building, now that the work is complete, he sees no problems with issuing the check in the full amount.

Tarsi stated that Andreski had provided a nice break down of what the accumulated cost where, although her figures were "a buck and a half" off from what he had come up with. Saigh stated that he would take Andreski's figures over Tarsi's.

Scott started by praising the efforts of the Façade Committee and making sure they thoroughly went through the application.

Sageng moved with support of Powell to approve Old Town Paws application and issue the full grant amount of \$3,500 for the reimbursement.

Roll Call: Ayes – 6: Saigh, Lindwall, Tarsi, Powell, Sageng and Scott. Nays- 0. Absent - 2: Aldrich and Dvorak. Motion Carried.

Iron County Economic Chamber Alliance (ICECA)

- Harvest and Haunt – Hautala stated that there was a good turn out this year, with a record number of sponsors and booths. He noted that there were 39 sponsors and thanked each of them for their continued support. He added thanks to the West Iron County Fire Department for controlling the fire and not allowing the newly finished boardwalk to go up in flames. He stated that around 2,500-3,000 people attended the event.
- BAH – Hautala noted that October marks the return of Business After Hours. He indicated that the first will be held on October 29th at the Alpha MI Brewery. He stated

that December 2nd, they will be at the Museum for their annual Christmas Tree Galleria. He encouraged all the DDA members to attend and stated that it is a good way to network.

- Fast Track Grant – Hautala stated that later this afternoon, they will be releasing the details and information for the 2nd round of their 2025 Fast Track grant program. He gave thanks to Andreski for being a part of the committee, where they go through each individual application, using a rubric to score them. He noted that they do have some money in the budget for the second round, which is great. He is anticipating another round of good applications. He indicated that they would like to go through and evaluate the applications by the middle of November and have the funding distributed to all the businesses by early December. He noted that they have adjusted for this round, and the last few rounds are for businesses who opened in the last 365 days to be eligible for that funding as well. He stated that they don't want a business to delay opening because they are applying for the grant.
- Visitor Guide - Hautala noted that it is time to go over the visitor's guide, he indicated that we could go over it once we get to it on the agenda.
- Apple Blossom Boardwalk – Hautala stated that the Boardwalk is awesome. They see people utilizing it all day and every day. He noted an increase in activity and stated that some have stopped in to compliment the repairs. He gave thanks to the DDA, the City of Iron River, Andreski and her team for getting it done. He said to have something like that to get done completely off grants is hard to do and they did it along with WICKWIRES help.

Beautification Committee

Andreski stated that there was nothing to report as they had not met.

Sageng asked when the Beautification Committee meets, and Andreski stated that they haven't been. She disclosed that there are only two members, herself and Leanne Kirkpatrick. She stated that Kirkpatrick is looking to resign at the end of this year.

Scott asked if Martha Rypstra (TAPROOT COMMUNITY FARM, INC.) was involved with the Beautification Committee. Andreski stated that she consults but is not a member of the Beautification Committee. She also disclosed that she had a meeting with Rypstra and Emily Bieghler to discuss greenery for the berms. Bieghler and Rypstra were going to come up with a plan, and it will be presented to the DDA. Andreski stated that Rypstra likes to do "Edible Landscaping" while Bieghler is into native species.

Scott asked if the intention was to replace the trees that were removed. Andreski stated that it was suggested that we investigate hiring a landscape architect, where they can come in and say what works and what doesn't. Andreski noted that the previous trees had hit their lifespan as the roots were causing the sidewalk to heave and the pinecones and sap were causing a nuisance. She concluded that whatever the plan might be, it will be brought before the DDA for their approval.

Sageng asked if we investigated a historical sculpture? Andreski stated that she is always looking for ideas on how to improve the beautification of our city. She reached out to local fabricators to see if they could build some sort of sculpture for the downtown area, unfortunately no one has reached back out to her. Sageng expressed interest in helping the Beautification Committee, as well as trying to find an artist for a sculpture.

Tarsi stated that he thinks a landscaper would be the way to go, someone that specializes in their field. He believes it would be a better option because the city will hire someone who is specialized in the field and can make a good recommendation to the DDA.

Christmas Lights

Scott stated that the committee needs to get together. Andreski reported that all the snowflakes on Genesee Street are LED and the snowflakes on Stambaugh are non-LED. The DPW has checked all the Christmas lights to make sure they are in working order and all are still functioning. It had been discussed changing up the snowflake by maybe adding colors.

Scott noted that the electric bill to power the snowflakes will come out of the DDA budget. He noted that a way to save would be to convert the remaining snowflakes to LED.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Tarsi moved with support from Lindwall to approve the August 2025 Financial Report as presented.

Roll Call: Ayes – 6: Saigh, Sageng, Powell, Lindwall, Tarsi and Scott. Nays: 0. Absent: 2 – Aldrich and Dvorak. Motion carried.

Saigh moved with support from Powell to approve the September 2025 Financial Report as presented.

Roll Call: Ayes – 6: Sageng, Lindwall, Tarsi, Powell, Saigh and Scott. Nays: 0. Absent: 2 – Aldrich and Dvorak. Motion carried.

Tarsi moved with support from Powell to approve the August 2025 Accounts Payable Report as presented.

Roll Call: Ayes – 6: Saigh, Sageng, Lindwall, Powell, Tarsi and Scott. Nays: 0. Absent: 2 – Aldrich and Dvorak. Motion carried.

Lindwall moved with support from Tarsi to approve the September 2025 Accounts Payable Report as presented.

Roll Call: Ayes – 6: Saigh, Sageng, Powell, Tarsi, Lindwall and Scott. Nays: 0. Absent: 2 – Aldrich and Dvorak. Motion carried.

Saigh moved with support from Powell to accept the 2026 FY Budget.

Roll Call: Ayes – 6: Sageng, Lindwall, Tarsi, Powell, Saigh and Scott. Nays: 0. Absent: 2 – Aldrich and Dvorak. Motion Carried.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

ICECA – Christmas in Lights Sponsorship

Hautala stated that they are looking for the same financial support as previous years. He noted that this event is a little harder to raise funds for.

Saigh moved with support from Powell to accept the Christmas in Lights Sponsorship in the amount of \$2,500.

Roll Call: Ayes – 6: Sageng, Lindwall, Tarsi, Powell, Saigh and Scott. Nays: 0. Absent: 2 – Aldrich and Dvorak. Motion Carried.

ICECA – Visitor Guides

Hautala apologized to the Authority for getting the Visitor Guide request so late, he forgot that the DDA did not meet in November. He noted that on page 36 is the previous full-page ad of the DDAs. He noted that the Visitor Guides are distributed all throughout Iron County. They are put in all 5 welcome centers in the U.P. These will also be placed in truck stops and other visitor centers in Michigan and in Wisconsin.

Scott inquired about how the participating members are listed. Hautala noted that Andreski and her team put together the list.

Tarsi suggested putting the newly restored Apple Blossom Trail on the cover of the Visitor Guidebook. Hautala acknowledged Tarsi's suggestion stating maybe for 2027. Hautala noted that the current cover is from Kevin Zini and is unedited besides a chain-link fence at the bottom.

Scott questioned the accuracy of the events section. Andreski explained that she calls ahead to confirm event dates. Scott then asked if the list provided is a good representation of the events held within the community. Hautala noted that not all events have been confirmed at this time. She added that last year's earlier submission deadline made it difficult for some organizers to provide exact dates. However, businesses are now aware that this request comes earlier in the planning process and are working to confirm their event dates sooner.

Tarsi moved with support from Powell to approve the full-page ad in the Visitor Guide in the amount of \$895.00.

Saigh moved with support from Powell to accept the 2026 FY Budget.

Roll Call: Ayes – 6: Saigh, Sageng, Lindwall, Powell, Tarsi and Scott. Nays: 0. Absent: 2 – Aldrich and Dvorak. Motion Carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chief Harrington began by thanking the DDA for their work on the parking lot, noting that nearly every business along US-2 has made some form of improvement—whether to their façade, parking area, or signage. He emphasized that these collective efforts, including the new parking lots, greatly enhance the overall appearance of the city.

He commended Mr. Dohl for approaching the podium respectfully, setting a positive example of how citizens should address public bodies. Chief Harrington contrasted this with recent behavior at a City Council meeting, where a few individuals were disruptive. While acknowledging the importance of protecting everyone's First Amendment rights, he stressed that complaints and concerns should always be expressed respectfully. He highlighted the productive and courteous exchange between Mr. Dohl and the Authority as a model for how issues can be resolved through mutual respect and open dialogue.

Chief Harrington concluded by reminding everyone that the election is right around the corner. He encouraged all citizens to get out and vote, particularly for candidates who aim to make positive changes within the community.

Hautala also thanked the Authority for the parking lots, noting that those are significant in helping our downtown businesses. He noted that they have been getting calls to their office, asking about who funded the project and stated that it is good exposure for the DDA. He stated that the City of Iron River is doing great things. He stated that Iron River is one of the most aggressive cities when it comes to progression in Iron County.


DDA MEMBER COMMENTS

Scott inquired about a ribbon cutting for the parking lots once they are completed. Andreski stated that she and Hautala have been in discussion regarding it and will get back to the Authority members once something is set. Hautala informed the Authority that he has been working with Andreski on ribbon cuttings for the parking lot, the Apple Blossom Trail and the new City Hall.

Scott also asked for a tour of the City Hall. Andreski stated that we can schedule something.

ADJOURNMENT

Tarsi moved with support from Sageng to adjourn the meeting at 12:56 p.m. All in favor; Motion carried. Absent: Aldrich and Dvorak.



Tyana Elenbaas, City Clerk