

**IRON RIVER CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, November 12, 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, Benjamin Garcia and Ronjo Leonoff and Dood.

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

Public in attendance: Vicky Powell, Kathy Stevens, Patty Smith, Patti Leonoff, Martha Burdick, Timmothy Ballinger, Erik Ballinger, Zach Elenbaas, Kyle Kuenn, Christie Olson, Mark Polley, Adam Polley, Pete Judd, Michael Hoinowski, Dawn Sageng, Nicole Desentz, Josh Desentz, Dave Sankey, Jeff Andreski, Grace Barbee, Carley Ekberg, Steven Saunders (DPW), Chief Curt Harrington (IRPD), Officer Jason Wicklund (IRPD), Wendy Graham (The Reporter), and Seth Miatech (WICKWIRE).

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Garcia moved with support from Leonoff to approve the agenda with the addition of item O, Reporter Building Parking Lot to New Business. All in favor; Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Leonoff moved with support from Garcia to approve:

- October 15, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes

All were in favor; Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dave Sankey of K&D Service Inc. expressed his agreement that an E-Bike policy is needed. He explained that throughout the summer, there have been numerous close calls involving E-Bikes traveling on the sidewalks near his shop. He also reported issues with mopeds and unregistered dirt bikes being operated by children. Referring to the ATV Ordinance, he stated that these young riders are not being properly monitored to ensure they are operating safely. Mr. Sankey emphasized that action is needed for the sake of public safety. He noted that he cannot see behind him when backing out of his garage and worries that one day he may collide with a child speeding down the sidewalk or road.

CONSENT AGENDA

- IRPD Report

Chief Harrington stated that Halloween was a good turnout. He noted that no crime was reported in the city that night. He added that December 6th is the Christmas holiday parade, he encouraged more to come out. Garcia moved with support from Leonoff to receive and file the Consent Agenda IRPD Report. All were in favor; Motion carried.

REPORTS:

DPW

Steven Saunders introduced himself as the new Superintendent of the Department of Public Works and provided an overview of the department's activities over the past month. He reported that the DPW has been focused on winterizing, leaf pickup, hydrant flushing, and installing snowplows. He noted that the monthly water samples were completed and the results for October came back clean. Mr. Saunders added that all City parks have been closed for the season and that Christmas lights are beginning to be installed in the DDA district. He also mentioned that the DPW assisted the City of Gaastra with storm drain issues and supported the City of Caspian by cleaning out several manholes.

Garcia moved with support from Leonoff to accept the DPW Report as presented. All in favor, Motion Carried.

ICECA

- Harvest and Haunt – Hautala reported that approximately 2,500 to 3,000 people attended the festivities, a turnout he credited to the favorable weather. He noted that this year saw a record number of sponsors and booths, with 39 sponsors and 43 booths participating.
- Christmas in Lights – Hautala stated that the Christmas parade will be on the first Saturday of December, which is the 6th. He added that the theme this year is “Jingle all the Way.” Following the parade, the City Christmas tree will be lit, and a fireworks display will conclude the event. He also expressed his appreciation to the West Iron County Fire Department for their continued support with the fireworks.
- Small Business Saturday – Hautala stated that the Saturday after Thanksgiving, is small business Saturday. He added that the ICECA will be compiling a list of businesses that will be offering discounts, deals or promotions and publish and promote it around Iron County before that Saturday. He noted that this is a great way to support local businesses.
- Business After Hours – Hautala noted the success of the pervious BAH. He stated that around 70 attendees showed up in Alpha. He noted that the next Business After Hours will be at the Christmas Tree Galleria at the Iron County Museum on December 2nd, 2025.
- Visitor Guides – Hautala noted that around 20,000 guides will be published and distributed around Iron County, the UP, Northern and Central Wisconsin. He thanked the DDA for their continued support and their purchase of a full-page ad, which detail the DDA districts business and upcoming events within the County.

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

County of Iron

Pete Judd provided an update on Central Dispatch, reporting that three new hires are currently in training. The department now has three full-time dispatchers, one part-time dispatcher, and another part-time employee scheduled to return in January. He noted that the board approved a \$2.00-per-hour wage increase to help incentivize and retain staff. Judd also mentioned that two contracted dispatchers have been assisting, allowing the regular staff some much-needed time off. While acknowledging that it will take time for the department to fully recover, he emphasized that progress is being made in the right direction.

Garcia motioned with support from Leonoff to accept the County of Iron report as presented. All in favor; Motion Carried.

Attorney Report (verbal)

- Bylaws – She noted that the current Planning Commission bylaws are vague and doesn't encompass all that needs to be included. She noted that there are some concerns when it comes to a quorum and participation on the Commission. She noted that it is difficult to be progressive without a valid quorum and make changes.
- FOIA/OMA – Goodman stated that there has been a reduction in FOIAs. She noted that some were regarding Open Meeting Act and staying compliant with that.
- Blight – She detailed that the courts did issue an order to have the fine paid. She noted failure to pay the fine will result in a show cause hearing. Goodman added that with hunting season underway, court activity typically slows down, but proceedings are expected to pick back up once the season ends.

Powell asked who gets the money from the fines being paid? Goodman stated if it gets paid, she has been working with Christine Valesano on how they can come up with line items to kick it out to the municipality. She stated that Ms. Valesano is retiring in about a month, so there is a transition period, working with the new person who will be replacing Ms. Valesano. She stated that she has had conversations with the District Court and the magistrate on how they can get the fines back to the municipality. She noted that Crystal Falls is looking to mimic our policy regarding blight.

Dood asked if the fines go to the County. Goodman stated what should be happening is, the fines should be coming back to the local municipality. She stated that if there is a misdemeanor ticket, that money might stay with the County.

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

Manager's Report

- MDOT Category B – Andreski noted that her and WICKWIRE were on a zoom call with the State of Michigan regarding the grant. She noted that it is a 50% grant match and we utilized the 2026 Street Improvements out of the Capital Improvements Plan for the project scope. She noted that they are getting ready with the design and engineering. She gave thanks to WICKWIRE for their assistance with the grant submittal, which was provided free of charge.
 - Steward Award – Andreski congratulated Clerk Elenbaas as she was awarded the Vigilant Steward Sunlight Award from the Michigan Fair Elections Institute. It was to honor her commitment to preserving election integrity for maintaining clean and accurate voter rolls.
 - Code of Ordinances – Supplement number Four has now been codified. These are for Ordinances from 2023-2025 that had not been updated. They are now online. They will now be working on Supplement number Five, which is all the Zoning rewrites.
 - Storm Sewer Project – Andreski stated that this is the project that we are working with the Chippewa Sno Kats to fix trail 16. Work will tentatively start on November 17th. She is hopeful that it will be completed by the time snow falls and will help with the Spring runoff.
 - Vacation – Andreski humbly requested her annual vacation. She asked for November 17 to the 26th. She noted that she will be available by phone as she is not leaving the County.
- Leonoff motion with the support of Garcia to accept Andreski's request for vacation. All in Favor; Motion Carried.

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

Windsor Center/ Joint Public Building Report

Leonoff stated that they are busy working on bylaws.

Garcia moved with support from Powell to accept the Windsor Center/Joint Public Building Reports as presented. All in favor; Motion Carried.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

City Financial Report – October 2025

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

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

Accounts Payable Report – October 2025

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

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

City Attorney Invoice – October 2025

Garcia moved with support from Leonoff to accept the City Attorney Invoice for October 2025 in the amount of \$2,387.44.

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

OLD BUSINESS

E-Bike Ordinance/Policy

Garcia apologized because he had not heard back from the Cycling community. He stated that unfortunately he has nothing new to present but stated once he receives any correspondence, he will forward it on to Council.

Dood asked Andreski if once this is adopted, if there would be a need for a public hearing. Andreski stated yes, this would have to go through the process for an ordinance change.

Garcia stated that he sees some adjustments that need to be made to the policy. He noted that E-Bikes have three different categories and they are not necessarily speed levels. He stated that multiuse paths are made for that kind of traffic, but he worries about enforcement. He asked who would enforce speed limits. He again apologized for not providing more information regarding E-bikes in other municipalities and stated that the Council could wait to make a decision until that information becomes available. He noted that we do not have bike lanes and that would put the E-bikes in the road, and would that be better? He suggested asking Chief Harrington for his input on creating the policy.

Clements suggested having a work session with the Chief of Police, Interim City Attorney Goodman and any other interested parties.

Dood suggested creating an ordinance that would prohibit E-Bikes from being operated on sidewalks altogether, allowing other related issues to be handled as they currently are. He added that this approach would avoid requiring the police department to patrol the Apple Blossom Trail. He noted that users of the trail already expect to encounter pedal bikes there and are aware of their presence. Dood emphasized that his primary concern aligns with the concerns raised by Mr. Sankey and Ronjo specifically, E-Bikes being ridden on sidewalks. He asked whether there was a way to simplify the policy to address this issue directly.

Goodman acknowledged that we can always simplify. She stated that the biggest concern is making sure our definitional terms are well understood and not conflicting anywhere. She continued that if it's decided to prohibit use on sidewalk, then the sidewalk needs to be outlined clear.

Dood outlined the multiuse paths, as of currently the policy has only Class one, he suggested allowing all paths. He added that the speed limit should remain the same.

Garcia stated that an E-Bike may be used in the same manner as a regular bicycle. He read an excerpt from the policy regarding the required use of lights on E-Bikes. Garcia cautioned that adding too many parameters to the policy increases the City's responsibility to enforce them. He noted that the policy already contains a significant amount of detail. Dood noted that regular bikes are also required to have lighting, if being used at night. Dood cautioned against riding a bike at night, stating it is dangerous.

Garcia agreed with Clements stating that going line by line through the ordinance would be the best.

Powell suggested getting three guys together to go through the policy, he added that he will not be one of them as he is "too old."

Garcia moved with support from Clements to hold a work session to go over the E-Bike Ordinance/Policy on December 2nd at 4 p.m. All in favor; Motion Carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Letter of Intent to Purchase Current City Hall

Powell stated that his only concerns were the price being cheap and the possibility that, if something were to happen and the new owner walked away, taxpayers would be left responsible for the cost of demolishing the building. Leonoff agreed, noting that the price is far too low and suggesting that the City make a counteroffer.

Dood noted that holding onto the building could ultimately cost the City more in the long run.

Garcia also expressed disappointment with the price but pointed out that Mr. Denha has a reputation for being thoughtful and not entering projects impulsively.

Powell asked whether the sale would be made to Mr. Denha personally or to his corporation, and Dood clarified that the buyer would be his corporation. Powell stated that he would like the building to be bonded to ensure taxpayers are not liable if something happens. Leonoff agreed with this suggestion. Dood cautioned against adding such stipulations, warning that doing so might cause the buyer to walk away. Powell responded that his concern is protecting taxpayers should anything happen to Mr. Denha. Leonoff added that the Council should have required bonding from the beginning.

Dood countered that the Council initially attempted to include stipulations, but doing so pushed the buyer away. As a result, instead of receiving the stronger original offer, the City is now faced with a significantly lower one. Leonoff stated that this is because the buyer knows he can now offer less.

Goodman stated that it is not uncommon for a request of bonding. She noted that there are a variety of ways they can do that but stated there is no guarantee that he wouldn't walk away from. She

reiterated that this is a fairly common practice, and it can be explained to him. She added that Mr. Denha has expressed his commitment to the City and not wanting to see it fail.

Dood noted that in the initial request, it did state that the Council would like the building to be bonded.

Powell reiterated that he would like it to be bonded to protect the taxpayers. He added that he believes that Mr. Denha will do what he said he will do but he wants to make sure the taxpayers are not going to be liable if something happens to Mr. Denha.

Dood noted that Mr. Denha has previously done this kind of work, renovated similar buildings and restored them into new, usable spaces.

Powell motioned that building be bonded for \$300,000 and accept the \$10,000 purchase price.

Due to the lack of support the motion failed.

Leonoff motioned with support from Powell to counter the \$10,000 offer with a \$30,000 sale price and for the building to be bonded for \$300,000.00. Roll Call: Ayes – 5: Clements, Garcia, Powell, Leonoff and Dood. Nays – 0. Motion Carried.

Robert Langdon Alley Abandonment Request

Andreski noted that this is located up in the Forbes location. Mr. Langdon initially wanted to purchase the alley but that is not legal. She noted that there is a City sewer main that runs down the alley. Mr. Langdon purchased a shed before he completed the survey, and once the survey was completed it was found that part of the shed was placed upon City property.

Garcia asked whether the proposed easement would still allow the City access to the sewer line. Dood stated that the shed sits directly over the sewer main and noted that the Council has never approved abandoning an alley that contains active utilities.

Dood expressed his reluctance to accept the abandonment request. Clements agreed questioning what would happen if they granted the request and ten years down the road, there is an issue with the sewer and the DPW needed to gain access to the lines and the shed has sunk into the ground and is unmovable.

Goodman stated that she feels like we are dancing around a variance request, which she felt was appropriate. She suggested Mr. Langdon apply for the variance request and then it can be determined from there.

Garcia stated that Council should follow suite with what they have done in the past and if they have denied request previously, he believes they should follow the precedence they set in the past.

Clements motioned with support from Leonoff to deny the alley abandonment request by Robert Langdon.

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

Transfer Noxious Weeds Debt to Property Taxes

Garcia motioned with the support from Powell to transfer the noxious weeds debt to property taxes.

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

Reporter Building Roof Replacement – Final Application for Payment No. 2

Miatech stated the work has been completed for a while but the City was waiting for the warranty, which has been received.

Garcia motioned with the support Leonoff to accept the Reporter Building Roof Replacement – Final Application for Payment No. 2 for the release of the retainage in the amount of \$2,950.00.

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

1998 Kenworth Quad Haul Truck

Saunders stated that he and another DPW worker went and inspected the hauler. He added that the owner supplied the City with a detailed maintenance list. Saundar brought in a few comparisons that he had obtained from auction sites, noting that this is a tremendous deal.

Leonoff asked Saunders if he had investigated the issues they had previously discussed. Saunders stated that in the maintenance records, it shows the radiator was fixed and no leak was present. Saundar stated that there is a minor oil leak with the timer cover and stated it doesn't seem super significant. Saunders stated that there were leaks at the windshield, but he also feels that it is not a big issue as they can seal it.

Saunders added that anything 2010 or newer has DEF systems. He stated that he has worked with DEF systems at waste management, and he believes 99 percent of the time, DEF systems were the reason for their down time. He said they are a pain in the neck to deal with and the current people he has, they do not know how to deal with a DEF system.

Garcia stated if the DPW says that they need it, then we need to provide the equipment they need to do their jobs.

Leonoff moved with support from Garcia to purchase the 1998 Kenworth Quad Haul Truck in the amount of \$45,000.00.

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

Winter Blade Purchase

Garcia motioned with the support from Powell to purchase winter blades in the amount of \$6,269.00

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

Planning Commission Appointment

Dood motioned with the support of Powell to appoint Jacob Pietrzak to the Planning Commission for a term set to expire on December 31, 2028. All in favor; Motion Carried.

Renewal for Marihuana Establishment License – Rocky North, LLC

Dood explained that this is an annual process to renew their license.

Powell moved with support from Clements to renew the marihuana license for Rocky North, LLC.

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

2025 Street Improvements – Payment Request No. 2 and Final Change Order No. 1

Garcia motioned with the support from Leonoff to approve the 2025 Street Improvements – Payment Request No. 2 and Final Change Order No. 1 in the amount of \$143,086.17.

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

2024 DDA Parking Lot Reconstruction – Application for Payment No. 2

Garcia motioned with the support from Leonoff to approve the 2024 DDA Parking Lot Reconstruction – Application for Payment No. 2 in the amount of \$397,574.38

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

Reporter Building Renovations for Iron River City Hall – Final Application for Payment No.

7

Miatech informed the Council that the project did come in under budget.

Garcia motioned with the support from Clements to approve the Reporter Building Renovations for Iron River City Hall – Final Application for Payment No. 7 in the amount of \$13,195.44

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

2026 CWSRF Sanitary Sewer Improvements – Application for Payment No. 1

Garcia motioned with the support from Leonoff to approve the 2026 CWSRF Sanitary Sewer Improvements – Application for Payment No. 1 in the amount of \$688,659.85

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

Proposal for Professional Design Engineering Service for the 2026 Street Improvements Project

Garcia motioned with the support from Leonoff to approve the Proposal for Professional Design Engineering Service for the 2026 Street Improvements Project in the amount of \$16,500.00

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

Proposal for Professional Engineering Services for the Cemetery Plat Survey and Mapping

Clements moved with the support of Powell to approve WICKWIRE's Proposal for Professional Engineering Services for the Cemetery Plat Survey and Mapping in the amount of \$3,500.00.

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

City Hall Parking Lot – Application for Final Payment and Final Change Order

Miatech stated that while the parking lot ended up coming in over budget, the project is still under budget.

Garcia motioned with the support from Leonoff to approve the City Hall Parking Lot – Application for Final Payment in the amount of \$19,909.75 and the Final Change Order in the amount of \$3,763.25.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kyle Kuenn stated that he wrote a letter to the Reporter which stated: "Over the past two months, I've had the privilege of attending several city council meetings. I've witnessed passionate debates, heartfelt concerns, and a deep desire from many to see Iron River thrive. These moments reflect the strength of our community's spirit. But I've also seen frustration spill over into personal attacks-directed at our City Council members, the city manager, the chief of police, the county clerk and the city attorney. While these reactions may stem from pain or disappointment, they do not reflect the respectful discourse our community deserves. We all have the right to speak freely. The First Amendment of the United States Constitution and Article I, Section 5 of the Michigan Constitution both protect our freedom on speech-cornerstones of our democracy. But it's important to remember that these rights don't cover hate speech or slander. Slander means saying things that aren't true about someone in a way that hurts their reputation. We all have the right to speak up – but that

doesn't mean it's okay to spread lies or be cruel. Our words should help build each other up, even when we disagree. Let's speak honestly, but also kindly. I've lived in Iron River from 1998 to 2012, and again in 2024 and 2025. I've seen this town evolve – sometimes in ways that felt like loss, and other times in ways that sparked hope. I remember the bowling alley burning down, Angeli Foods being sold to Super One, and the transformation of community spaces. The movie theater and concession stand gave way to a cellphone store and liquor sales. Pamida became Shopko, then Tractor Supply. Beef-A-Roo turned into a dispensary. The old school at 211 W. Cayuga Street, once abandoned, now houses apartments. Some of these changes have sparked nostalgia or concern, while others have brought new opportunities. But together, they reflect a town that refuses to stand still. Years ago, many buildings stood empty. Today, they are being bought, restored, and filled with new life. That's progress. It may not always look the way we imagined, but it's movement forward. Changes is never easy. It stirs discomfort, resistance, and fear. Yet as President John F. Kennedy once said, "Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future." Progress requires courage – not just from our leaders, but from all of us. So I encourage our community; let us meet change with grace, patience, and prayer. Let us support those working to improve our City, even when we disagree. Let us speak with respect, listen with open hearts, and remember that unity is built not through uniformity, but through understanding. Iron River is changing. Respectfully Kyle"

Patty Smith asked Council to explain New Business, item C Transfer Noxious Weeds to Property Taxes. Dood acknowledged Ms. Smith and stated that he will address it in Council Member Comments.

Dave Sankey stated that the City plow trucks need to be out on time. He noted that our winter parking ban signs. He added that very rarely are they out by 5 a.m. and they should be out 2:30 or 3 a.m. He stated that the City could get a lot more "bang for their buck" if they are out plowing while people are still asleep in their beds and the DPW workers are not dodging cars. He respectfully requested that the City take down the parking signs because the City is not living up to what they are requesting the citizens to do, which is stay out of the way of the plows. He added that he would appreciate advance notice when the DPW is pushing snow, noting that he is an early riser and would be willing to assist.

Mark Polley began by apologizing for his behavior at the previous meeting, stating that the only thing he is guilty of is caring about the City. He explained that he attempted to show respect to the Mayor, but when he raised concerns about the cost of the new City Hall, the Mayor gaveled him and had him removed. He noted that this week's paper lists the cost at nearly \$600,000, even though the City only borrowed \$500,000, and he claimed that interest was not included in the original calculation. Polley stated that Mr. Leonoff's information regarding the bond for demolishing the building is inaccurate. He said that during his time on the Windsor Board, the insured amount to tear down the building was \$1.3 million, and that figure, based on a quote from 15 years ago for an open building, would likely be even higher for City Hall.

Polley also stated that he does not trust the Chief of Police. Mayor Dood asked him to stop, but Polley responded that he was telling the truth and that his comments were not slander. He asked whether he was permitted to speak the truth, and Mayor Dood replied that he could, as long as it was truthful and not slanderous. Polley continued, stating that the Chief of Police had been involved in a shooting that resulted in the death of an American veteran from Iron River, and that the Chief is involved in a multimillion-dollar lawsuit still pending in federal court. He further stated that the Chief and Rachel Andreski were recently in court again due to another lawsuit. Polley concluded by

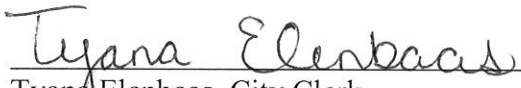
saying that he believes the Chief is dangerous and that he does not trust him. He acknowledged that the Council likes the Chief but warned them that if “it” happens again, the Council will be liable for the Chief’s actions.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS

Mayor Dood stated that if a resident doesn’t cut the grass, they will get a letter from the city asking them to. If the resident doesn’t comply, the City will come in and cut the grass and at that point the City will send the fee for that to the resident. If the resident fails to pay the fee, it will be put on their property taxes.

ADJOURNMENT

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



Tyana Elenbaas, City Clerk