



**IONIA CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
7:00 PM, November 1, 2023  
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Dan Balice called the regular meeting of the Ionia City Council to order at 7:00 PM, and led with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

Roll call revealed a Quorum with Councilmembers John Milewski, Jeff Winters, Ryan Videtich, Tim Lee, Rich Starr, Tom Millard, Janice Gustafson, Troy Waterman, and Mayor Dan Balice present.

**I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

City Manager Garland requested to add “Countywide Early Voting Agreement for Election Services” as Agenda Item VI-2. Councilmember Winters made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Waterman, to approve the agenda, as amended with the addition of Item VI-2.

Roll Call Vote: AYES: Milewski, Winters, Videtich, Lee, Starr, Millard, Gustafson, Waterman, and Balice

NAYS: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 4, 2023, Regular Meeting**

Councilmember Milewski made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Millard, to approve the October 4, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes as presented.

Roll Call Vote: AYES: Milewski, Winters, Videtich, Lee, Starr, Millard, Gustafson, Waterman, and Balice

NAYS: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**III. PROCLAMATIONS**

Mayor Balice read the “Proclamation Honoring David Cook”, declaring November 1, 2023, as David Cook Day..

***Proclamation Honoring David Cook  
November 1, 2023***

WHEREAS, David Ora Cook began his life journey on September 25, 1940 with parents Holden and Hope Cook in Ronald Township, Ionia County. On October 13, 1962, he married the love of his life Gloria Annette Smith. Two children later filled their home with joy. Today, David’s family is joined by four granddaughters and the recent addition of twin great grandsons, and

WHEREAS, David began his career with the Michigan Department of Corrections in April 1959, retiring in 1995. Following his retirement, David began serving the State Retirees Association Chapter 6 in 1992 and currently holds the position of Chairperson, and

WHEREAS, David has proudly served as a leader in various areas of the City of Ionia including as its Ionia City Clerk, Ionia Theatre Manager, and board member of the Ionia Downtown Development Authority and City of Ionia Planning Commission, and

WHEREAS, David has further served the Ionia community by lending his leadership skills and talents to several business organizations, including the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and the Michigan One Community Credit Union Board of Directors. As an entrepreneur, David remains active today as a Main Street business and property owner, and

WHEREAS, David has also served numerous non-profit organizations, demonstrating an unparalleled example of community spirit and volunteerism. His dedication and commitment are evidenced by his service as a member of the Ionia County Historical Society, Friends of the Library, Kiwanis Club, Enrich of Ionia County Board of Directors, and the First Christian Church since 1980, and

WHEREAS, David has uniquely enhanced various activities and events in Ionia, such as with his creation of the Fall Festival hosted at Bertha Brock Park and spearheading numerous downtown Ionia special events such as “First Thursday on the Bricks” and the annual “Autumn Celebration,”

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Daniel A. Balice, Mayor of the City of Ionia, hereby proclaim that November 1, 2023 shall be DAVID COOK DAY in the City of Ionia, in recognition of David’s distinguished dedication and commitment to Ionia, and in sincere appreciation for his service to this community.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my  
hand and caused the Seal of the City to be affixed this  
1<sup>st</sup> day of November, 2023.

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Daniel A. Balice, Mayor

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**V. PUBLIC HEARINGS & ASSOCIATED ACTIONS**

None.

## **VI. COMMUNICATIONS**

### **(VI-1) Application for Tree Lighting and Twinkle Town Parade – December 1, 2023**

Council reviewed an application submitted by Ionia Area Chamber of Commerce for the annual Tree Lighting and Twinkle Town Parade to be held on Friday, December 1, 2023. The application requests closure of Main Street within the Central Business District, plus sections of Depot Street from 4 PM to 8 PM, to accommodate various activities and one mobile food vending unit (food truck) as part of the event. City Code requires that any food truck proposing to operate on public land or public right-of-way must first receive a special event food vending permit approved by the City Council.

Councilmember Lee made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Millard, to approve the application for street closure with a mobile food vending unit for December 1, 2023 in conjunction with the Tree Lighting and Twinkle Town Parade event, contingent upon final staff approval.

Roll Call Vote: AYES: Milewski, Winters, Videtich, Lee, Starr, Millard, Gustafson, Waterman, and Balice

NAYS: None

### **MOTION CARRIED**

### **(VI-2) Countywide Early Voting Agreement for Election Services**

Councilmembers reviewed the document, “Countywide Early Voting Agreement for Election Services” received from the Ionia County Clerk. The State requires this agreement be approved by November 9, 2023, in order to satisfy the timing requirements for the first election that will require early voting (i.e., the February/March 2024 Presidential Primary). Recent amendments to the state constitution require nine days of early voting prior to all state and/or federal elections. The City is appreciative of the County’s willingness to coordinate such elections, as doing so represents a much more efficient use of time and resources.

The County has utilized a template provided by the Michigan Secretary of State’s office to define the agreement for providing early election services. Review of the proposed agreement has demonstrated that not all sections of the agreement have been fully flushed out to date.

With consideration that time is of the essence, Councilmember Winters made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Millard, to approve the “Countywide Early Voting Agreement,” in concept, for Election Services, subject to the City Manager and City Attorney negotiating satisfactory and definitive terms in the mutual interest of the City and County, and to approve reimbursement to the County for early election services up to \$1,000 per precinct per year (four precincts x \$1000 = \$4,000).

Roll Call Vote: AYES: Milewski, Winters, Videtich, Lee, Starr, Millard, Gustafson, Waterman, and Balice

NAYS: None

### **MOTION CARRIED**

## **VII. CITY MANAGER’S REPORT**

### **(VII-1) City of Ionia Five-Year Parks & Recreation Plan – Schedule Public Hearing**

The City of Ionia Planning Commission has been working over the past six months to solicit public input and prepare recommended updates to the City’s Five-Year Parks and Recreation Plan. As part of the approval process, the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing at its regular October meeting, then voted to recommend the plan for adoption by the Ionia City Council, following a public hearing at the City Council level. A 30-day review period is also required; it has been posted and is now active. City Council must also conduct a public hearing on the plan prior to taking action to approve it.

Councilmember Starr made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Waterman, to schedule a public hearing for Wednesday, December 6, 2023, at 7 PM to receive comments from the public, prior to taking action on the proposed City of Ionia Five-Year Parks & Recreation Plan (2024-2028.)

Roll Call Vote: AYES: Milewski, Winters, Videtich, Lee, Starr, Millard, Gustafson, Waterman, and Balice

NAYS: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**(VII-2) City of Ionia Master Plan Update Proposal**

State law requires that communities review their master plan every five years and determine whether the plan should be amended or a new plan adopted. The City of Ionia's Master Plan was last updated in 2019, meaning that work to update the plan should start in 2024. To that end, a proposal was recently solicited from our planning consultant of record, Williams and Works (W&W), to undertake a comprehensive update of the current master plan.

Councilmember Winters made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Milewski, to approve the proposal from Williams and Works in the amount of \$49,612 to conduct the Master Plan update, including all community engagement activities as proposed, and to authorize the City Manager to sign a professional services agreement for this purpose and to submit a grant application to the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to receive the \$36,000 technical assistance grant.

Roll Call Vote: AYES: Milewski, Winters, Videtich, Lee, Starr, Millard, Gustafson, Waterman, and Balice

NAYS: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**(VII-3) 316 N. Dexter and 661-663 W. Main Demolition Bid Award**

Specifications were recently prepared to solicit bids for the demolition of two residential structures: 316 N. Dexter Street and 661-663 W. Main Street. Bid proposals were publicly opened on Wednesday, October 25 at 10 AM, and a thorough review of the apparent low bid (Handy Excavating - \$48,900) was conducted and determined to be accurate and complete. Required licensure and insurance was also verified and referenced checked.

The City received a Blight Elimination Grant from the State Land Bank Authority (SLBA) in partnership with the Ionia County Land Bank for \$59,400 to assist with funding this project. Costs will also be incurred separately regarding asbestos/hazardous materials assessment and monitoring.

Councilmember Starr made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Millard, to approve the proposal from Handy Excavating of Quincy, MI in the amount of \$49,800 for the demolition of 316 N. Dexter and 661-663 W. Main Street.

Roll Call Vote: AYES: Milewski, Winters, Videtich, Lee, Starr, Millard, Gustafson, Waterman, and Balice

NAYS: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**(VII-4) Dial-A-Ride Drug & Alcohol Policy Update**

Recently, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) mandated updates to the Drug & Alcohol Policies of local transit agencies, if they plan to use oral fluid specimens as a method of testing. Councilmembers reviewed the policy which incorporates the recommended language updates to permit oral testing and was submitted to MDOT for review, which has determined the draft to be compliant with the Procedures for Transportation Workplace

Drug and Alcohol Testing Programs (Part 40) and Prevention of Alcohol Misuse and Prohibited Drug Use in Transit Operations (Part 655) of Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

Employees subject to this policy will be provided with a copy and required to sign acknowledgement of its receipt. The revised policy will allow both urine and oral fluid specimen testing to be utilized at the discretion of, and as available to, the City.

Councilmember Winters made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Gustafson, to approve the revised Dial-A-Ride Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy, as presented.

Roll Call Vote: AYES: Milewski, Winters, Videtich, Lee, Starr, Millard, Gustafson, Waterman, and Balice

NAYS: None

### **MOTION CARRIED**

#### **(VII-5) Caboose Disposition**

Since the mid-2010's, the City of Ionia has owned a caboose, which is parked at the City DPW Garage. Renovation plans have not been realized and the caboose was recently noticed by an individual affiliated with a railroad in the area, who thought it looked abandoned and in declining condition.

The individual who expressed interest in buying the caboose is associated with a non-profit organization and is actively renovating another caboose in the area. He indicates if his group acquired it, it would be rehabilitated to operating condition and used on an active railway for both freight and passenger service. He further indicated the non-profit with which he is affiliated has an identical sister caboose in operation. Based on the serial number of Ionia's caboose, it was originally constructed for the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railway, but later bought by the Grand Trunk Western Railway to replace their older wooden cabooses. It is not historically significant to the City of Ionia.

Councilmember Winters made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Waterman, to sell the caboose by granting Garland authority to negotiate the price with the individual interesting in acquiring it for rehabilitation and reuse on an active railway.

Roll Call Vote: AYES: Milewski, Winters, Videtich, Lee, Starr, Millard, Gustafson, Waterman, and Balice

NAYS: None

### **MOTION CARRIED**

#### **(VII-6) Fred Thwaites River Trail Redevelopment Project – Contract Change Order**

On April 5, 2023, Ionia City Council awarded the Fred Thwaites River Trail Redevelopment Project to low bidder CL Trucking of Ionia, Michigan in the amount of \$532,316, following a reduction in scope items.

During recent project construction, asphalt and concrete quantities above contract specifications were installed to match field conditions, resulting in an extra cost of \$22,074.76, which increases the overall construction contract value to \$554,390.76. Following a review of this situation with the contractor, all installed quantities of materials were verified and the specific reasons for each were discussed and found to be reasonable and add value to the project. The extra cost of \$22,074.76 represents a materials quantity overage of 2.62% in concrete and 2.96% in asphalt, both of which are well within industry standards.

Councilmember Winters made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Millard, to approve the amended construction contract with CL Trucking of Ionia MI in the amount of \$554,390.76, an increase of \$22,074.76 over the original approved contract amount.

Roll Call Vote: AYES: Milewski, Winters, Videtich, Lee, Starr, Millard, Gustafson, Waterman, and Balice

NAYS: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**VIII. APPOINTMENTS**

Councilmember Winters made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Starr, to appoint the following individuals to the boards and commissions indicated for the terms specified.

Roll Call Vote: AYES: Milewski, Winters, Videtich, Lee, Starr, Millard, Gustafson, Waterman, and Balice

NAYS: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Income Tax Board - (3 year terms)**

Brian Talbot – Term Expires 12/31/23; Reappointment through 12/31/26

**Ionia Housing Commission – (5 year terms)**

Brian Talbot – Term Expires 12/31/23; Reappointment through 12/31/28

**Housing Board of Appeals – (3 year terms)**

Bob O’Mara – Term Expires 12/31/23; Reappointment through 12/31/26

**Ionia Regional Utilities Authority – (4 year terms)**

Delegate: Ryan Videtich – Unexpired Term through 12/31/25

**Planning Commission – (3 year terms)**

Ryan Gregory – Term Expires 12/31/23; Reappointment through 12/31/26

**Zoning Board of Appeals – (3 year terms)**

Amanda Ondersma – Term Expires 12/31/23; Reappointment through 12/31/26

**IX. CITY DEPARTMENT REPORTS & MINUTES FROM BOARDS & COMMISSIONS**

Reports provided to Council.

**X. CITY COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS/GOOD OF THE ORDER**

**Mary Patrick:** Next Tuesday, November 7, Ionia’s local election will be held. Of the 505 Absent Voter ballots sent, 321 have been returned, a rate of 63.56%. Voters have the option of mailing their ballots using the pre-paid postage or dropping it in the new ballot drop box located in front of City Hall. The clerk’s office will be relocated to the Armory on November 6 and 7. Precincts 1 and 2 and Precincts 3 and 4 have been combined. Those who have not yet registered to vote should do so prior to Election Day to avoid potential long wait times. (2) The 9 days of early voting will begin with the Presidential Primary in late February/early March and will be required for all state and federal elections.

**Dan Balice:** The affiliation of Sparrow Health with the University of Michigan Health has been excellent, giving Sparrow patients access to “super specialists.” (2) The Chili-Dawg Challenge was fun with lots of great costumes. (3) Glad to see that the Hall Street project has been completed.

**Tom Millard:** (1) Thank you to Jim Killion and Gary Ferguson for setting up the speaker system for the Chili-Dawg Challenge. (2) The Chamber will be selling alcohol at the Tom Petty Tribute band event.

**XI. CLOSED SESSION**

None

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

Councilmember Starr made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilmember Lee.

**MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.** The meeting was adjourned at 7:54 PM.

Submitted by:

Mary Patrick, Ionia City Clerk