

WHEREAS, Andrew LeForge, a member of Boy Scouts of America Troop 71 has through steadfast determination and dedication, completed the requirements of the rank of Eagle Scout, the highest rank attainable in the Boy Scouts of America; and

WHEREAS, Andrew LeForge began scouting at age five and completed his last Board of Review for Eagle rank in May of 2021, at eighteen years old; and

WHEREAS, the Boy Scouts of America encourage Eagle Scout candidates to complete projects to improve their neighborhood, community, or region; and

WHEREAS, Andrew LeForge chose the City of Ionia as his Eagle Scout project beneficiary, constructing two planter benches for the Ionia Parks and Recreation Department; and

WHEREAS, Andrew LeForge has earned twenty-one merit badges and reached the milestone of Eagle Scout, which only four percent of those who join Boy Scouts achieve, now

THEREFORE, I, Daniel A. Balice, Mayor of the City of Ionia, hereby present this Proclamation to Andrew LeForge, recognizing the dedicated and devoted services he has performed as a Boy Scout.

Daniel A. Balice, Mayor
City of Ionia

Proclamation Honoring Ryan LeForge April 12, 2022

WHEREAS, the City of Ionia recognizes the valuable contributions from the Boy Scouts of America to our community; and

WHEREAS, scouting provides the foundation, training, and leadership skills that prepare youth to be our future leaders; and

WHEREAS, Ryan LeForge, a member of Boy Scouts of America Troop 71 has through steadfast determination and dedication, completed the requirements of the rank of Eagle Scout, the highest rank attainable in the Boy Scouts of America; and

WHEREAS, Ryan LeForge began scouting at age five and completed his last Board of Review for Eagle rank in May of 2021, at eighteen years old; and

WHEREAS, the Boy Scouts of America encourage Eagle Scout candidates to complete projects to improve their neighborhood, community, or region; and

WHEREAS, Ryan LeForge chose the City of Ionia as his Eagle Scout project beneficiary, constructing three picnic tables for the Ionia Parks and Recreation Department; and

WHEREAS, Ryan LeForge has earned twenty-one merit badges and reached the milestone of Eagle Scout, which only four percent of those who join Boy Scouts achieve, now

THEREFORE, I, Daniel A. Balice, Mayor of the City of Ionia, hereby present this Proclamation to Ryan LeForge, recognizing the dedicated and devoted services he has performed as a Boy Scout.

Daniel A. Balice, Mayor
City of Ionia

A proclamation was also presented to proclaim Friday, April 29, 2022, as Arbor Day in the City of Ionia, coinciding with the 150th National Arbor Day observation. Balice noted that Ionia has planted over 10,000 trees over a number of years. Garland said that she plans to attend an Arbor Day event at Jefferson Elementary School, and Councilmembers are also invited to attend.

PROCLAMATION CELEBRATING ARBOR DAY 2022

WHEREAS, in 1872, J. Sterling Morton proposed to the Nebraska Board of Agriculture that a special day be set aside for the planting of trees, and

WHEREAS, the holiday, called Arbor Day, was first observed with the planting of more than a million trees in Nebraska, and

WHEREAS, Arbor Day is now observed throughout the nation and the world, and

WHEREAS, trees can reduce the erosion of our precious topsoil by wind and water, lower our heating and cooling costs, moderate the temperature, clean the air, produce oxygen and provide habitat for wildlife, and

WHEREAS, trees are a renewable resource giving us paper, wood for our homes, fuel for our fires and countless other wood products, and

WHEREAS, trees in our city increase property values, enhance the economic vitality of business areas, and beautify our community, and

WHEREAS, trees, wherever they are planted, are a source of joy and spiritual renewal,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that I, Daniel Balice, Mayor of the City of Ionia, do hereby proclaim Friday, April 29, 2022 as ARBOR DAY in the City of Ionia, coinciding with the 150th National Arbor Day observation, and urge all citizens to Celebrate Arbor Day and to support efforts to protect our trees and woodlands, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, I encourage all citizens to plant and care for trees to gladden the heart and promote the well-being of this and future generations.

Daniel A. Balice, Mayor

PUBLIC HEARINGS & ASSOCIATED ACTIONS

Second Reading & Public Comment – Ordinance No. 561 – Chapter 1250: RT Two-Family Residential District (PH#1)

Mayor Balice opened the hearing for comments on Ordinance No. 561 at 7:13 PM. With no comments heard, he closed the hearing at 7:13 PM.

Garland reported that while reviewing the regulations for the RT Two-Family Residential District, it became evident to City Staff that Chapter 1250 does not currently align with its intended purpose. The intent of the district as stated in Section 1250.01, is as follows:

“to afford a transition of land use in existing housing areas by permitted new construction or conversion of existing structures between adjacent residential and commercial, office, thoroughfare or other uses which would affect residential character. This District allows the construction of new two-family residences where slightly greater densities are permitted. This District also recognizes the existence of older residential areas of the City where larger houses have been or can be converted from single-family to two-family residences in order to extend the economic life of these structures and encourage expenditures for repairs and modernization.”

Currently, one-family dwellings are a permitted use by right in the RT District and two-family dwellings require a Special Land Use Permit. Staff believe this contradicts the intent of the zoning district and recommend the chapter be amended to allow two-family dwellings as a permitted use by right.

This ordinance also corrects an existing conflict in the Zoning Code between the Schedule of Regulations (Appendix I) and the RT Two-Family Residential District. The RT District in Section 1250.02 ties the zoning requirements to the R-1 One-Family Residential District. These R-1 requirements state that lots must be a minimum of 8,000 square feet in size and have a minimum lot width of 65 feet. The Schedule of Regulations requires a minimum lot size of 4,000 square feet and a lot width of 35 feet per unit in the RT District. This discrepancy means that if a two-family structure was being constructed in the RT District, 8,000 square feet would be the minimum lot size described in both sections, but the required lot width would be 65 feet based on Section 1250.02 and 70 feet based on the Schedule of Regulations. The small different of 5 feet is being corrected by changing the Schedule of Regulations to list 32.5 feet as the minimum lot size width per unit in the RT District. This proposed change is also the recommended solution outlined in the Master Plan. Another change made by the proposed ordinance is to confirm the ability of property owners to convert single-family homes into two-family structures in the RT Two-Family Residential District as a use by right if the minimum zoning requirements are met. This change is seen in Section 1250.04.

The Planning Commission made a motion to recommend the proposed ordinance to Council at its meeting on February 9. City Staff provide draft Ordinance No. 561 for the Council’s consideration. If approved, by City Council, Ordinance 561 would take effect seven (7) days following publication.

Councilmember Winters made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Waterman, that the Ionia City Council approve Ordinance No. 561 to amend Chapter 1250 – RT Two-Family Residential District, Section 1278.02 – Nonconforming Lots, and Appendix I – Schedule of Regulations – of Title Six: Zoning – of Part Twelve: Planning and Zoning Code – of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Ionia, Michigan.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Gustafson, Kelley, Lee, Milewski, Millard, Starr, Waterman, Winters, and Balice.
Nays: None
MOTION CARRIED

Public Gathering Spaces CDBG Application (PH#2)

Mayor Balice opened the hearing for comments at 7:15 PM. With no comments heard, he closed the hearing at 7:15 PM.

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) recently announced the availability of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding through its “Public Gathering Spaces Initiative.” Projects are expected to increase usability, accessibility, and seasonality within new or existing community spaces on publicly owned property. Eligible units of local government, (which includes the City of Ionia) as listed on the CDBG Low/Mod Income Community Customers and Project Areas list, can request funding for projects between \$200,000 to \$1,000,000. A minimum 10% financial match is required, based on the project’s total cost. Applications are due no later than 5:00 PM on April 15, 2022.

After reviewing its City Master Plan and Parks and Recreation Plan, it was determined a combined project to create a new dog park and downtown sound system would satisfy the CDBG program criteria and score well. The total estimated cost of both projects is \$550,000; of which 20%, or \$110,000 is pledged as a local match from General/DDA funds.

A site plan shows the location of the intended improvements, as well as a detailed concept plan for the dog park. Assuming the CDBG grant is approved, final design of the dog park would require Planning Commission review and approval.

Councilmember Millard made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Milewski, to approve Resolution 2022-05 that authorizes submission of the grant application and local matching funds.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Gustafson, Kelley, Lee, Milewski, Millard, Starr, Waterman, Winters, and Balice.
Nays: None
MOTION CARRIED

PUBLIC COMMENT

Linda Curtis spoke about the needs of the people of Ukraine and requested public support from anyone able to help. She and Public Safety Director Troy Thomas have personally been working with the “Ukrainian American Crises Response Team”, an organization that is directly assisting Ukrainians with donations from the U.S. Specifically, turn-out gear are badly needed as are monetary donations to the Response Team, the Red Cross, or through a program that AirBNB is conducting. She noted that many police and fire departments have “turn-out gear” (tactical vests, etc.) that they no longer use that Ukrainians would be grateful to receive.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Informational – Annual Downtown Development Authority Report (NB#1)

Downtown Development Director Linda Curtis provided an annual report and highlighted recent activities associated with the DDA.

Councilmember Winters made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Kelley, to accept the annual Downtown Development Authority report given by DDA Director Linda Curtis.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Gustafson, Kelley, Lee, Milewski, Millard, Starr, Waterman, Winters, and Balice.
 Nays: None
 MOTION CARRIED

Informational – Annual Housing Commission Report (NB#2)

Housing Commission Executive Director Katie Bennett provided a written report of recent activities associated with the Ionia Housing Commission, and provided highlights.

Councilmember Winters made a motion, seconded by Commission Lee, to accept the annual Housing Commission report given by Executive Director Katie Bennett.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Gustafson, Kelley, Lee, Milewski, Millard, Starr, Waterman, Winters, and Balice.
 Nays: None
 MOTION CARRIED

MERS Service Credit Purchase Requests (NB#3)

The city of Ionia utilizes the Michigan Employees' Retirement System (MERS) to provide defined benefit (DB) and hybrid retirement programs to its employees. An employee from the Public Safety Department, Sgt. Keegan Teitsma, has requested permission to purchase six (6) months of MERS service credit in accordance with the attached estimate. Under the rules of the program, a maximum purchase of five (5) years is permissible. City Council previously approved Keegan's request to purchase 54 months; if approved, this request would complete his maximum service credit purchase eligibility.

Assumptions used by MERS in preparing this estimate include 1) assuming the employee will retire at the earliest date for unreduced retirement benefits and 2) an investment return rate of 6.35%. For all other retirement calculations, some provision is made to assume not all employees will retire at their earliest eligible date and an investment return rate of 7.35% is assumed. Thus, the assumptions used in calculating service credit purchase are favorable to the city of Ionia.

Councilmember Milewski made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Millard, to approve Keegan Teitsma's request for the purchase of MERS Service Credit at the at the quoted rate, at his expense.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Gustafson, Kelley, Lee, Milewski, Millard, Starr, Waterman, Winters, and Balice.
 Nays: None
 MOTION CARRIED

2022 Independence Holiday Fireworks Permit Request (NB#4)

The DDA will be sponsoring the annual Independence Holiday fireworks display on Thursday, June 30, 2022 (with Friday, July 8 as the rain date). The DDA has retained the services of Pyrotecnico Fireworks, Inc., of New Castle PA, which acquired Melrose Pyrotechnics, to provide and launch the display. As in the past the fireworks will be launched from the in-field area at the fairgrounds. Melrose Pyrotechnics, now owned by Pyrotecnico Fireworks, has handled the annual display for many years and we have not had any problems with the practices utilized by the firm in launching the fireworks or the quality of the display. Pyrotecnico has provided us with the necessary insurance endorsements with the City, DDA and Free Fair Association all named as additional insured. We will also make application to the MML for excess fireworks coverage at no additional premium. This coverage will be over the \$5,000,000 liability limit possessed by Pyrotecnico.

Public Act 358 of 1968, as amended, requires a local governmental unit to grant a permit so that the fireworks may be launched.

Councilmember Starr made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Winters, to approve the Permit for Fireworks Display to Pyrotecnico Fireworks, Inc., of New Castle PA for the launching of fireworks on Thursday, June 30, 2022 in the in-field of the Ionia Free Fair Grounds.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Gustafson, Kelley, Lee, Milewski, Millard, Starr, Waterman, Winters, and Balice.
 Nays: None
 MOTION CARRIED

City of Ionia General Policy Manual – Section 2 Update (NB#5)

The Ionia City Council has established a General Policy Manual that governs the operations of the City. It is composed of five sections, as follows:

- 1. Finance Policy
- 2. Public Works Policy
- 3. Miscellaneous Personnel Policy
- 4. Community Development Policy
- 5. General City Policy

It is good practice to review these policy sections and update them from time to time. So far, Section Three – Miscellaneous Personnel Policy and Section Four – Community Development Policy have been updated within the last twelve months. Following this communication is the proposed, revised policies of Section Two – Public Works Policy. To summarize, Section 2 has been revised as follows:

Old – Public Works	New – Public Works (April 12, 2022)
2-001: Lawn Care, Park Property Maintenance (7-2-2002)	2-001: Lawn Care and Park Property Maintenance
2-002: Community Forestry (7-9-2002)	2-002: Community Forestry
2-003: Brush and Leaf Pick-Up (12-1-2015)	2-003: Brush and Leaf Pick-Up
2-004: Street Maintenance and Construction (7-9-2002)	2-004: Street Maintenance and Construction

2-005: Utilities – Others (7-1-2002)	2-005: Utilities – Water, Sanitary, Storm, Cable, Phone, Electric
2-006: Utilities – Sewer Back-Ups (4-1-2008)	2-006: Utilities – Sewer Back-Ups
2-007: Composting (7-9-2002)	Deleted – Covered in revised 2-003: Brush and Leaf Pick-Up
2-008: Garbage and Rubbish (12-1-2002)	2-007: Garbage and Rubbish
2-009: Sanitary Sewer Cleaning (12-1-2002)	2-008: Sanitary Sewer Cleaning
2-010: Water System Maintenance/Flushing (6-3-2008)	2-009: Water System Maintenance and Flushing
2-011: Placing Memorials in City Parks and Open Space(9-7-2021)	2-010: Placing Memorials in City Parks and Open Space
2-012: Oak Hill Cemetery Operations (9-7-2021)	2-011: Oak Hill Cemetery Operations
	2-012: Vertical Light Pole Banner Policy (1-4-22)

Councilmember Winters made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Starr, to approve the revised Section 2 – Public Works, of the City’s General Policy Manual.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Gustafson, Kelley, Lee, Milewski, Millard, Starr, Waterman, Winters, and Balice.
 Nays: None
 MOTION CARRIED

Well and Pump Professional Services Contract (NB#6)

The City has been working with Peerless Midwest, Inc., located at 505 Apple Tree Drive, Ionia since the 1980’s to maintain various components of our public drinking water system. Peerless has proven itself a valuable partner of the City, with detailed water system engineering and wellfield hydrology knowledge. Additionally, Peerless has provided services at both scheduled and unscheduled times of need.

While competitive bidding is not required for the employment of professional services, this contract is unique in that it also involves materials and construction purchases. Generally, purchases or contracts that result in expenditure exceeding \$10,000 (excluding professional services only) require City Council approval, per Section 212.05 of the City of Ionia Codified Ordinances. Expenditures related to well and pump professional services have averaged approximately \$138,000 per year over the past five fiscal years.

The following, proposed agreement provides specific information regarding the professional services to be provided, which include:

- A. Well and pump maintenance service
- B. Well and pump repair service
- C. Well cleaning and rehabilitation
- D. Well Drilling
- E. Wellhead protection
- F. Warranty (minimum two years for materials and workmanship)

Furthermore, the contract term shall run for a five-year period from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2027, with rates as provided in Table 1 of the agreement, which are subject to annual adjustment based on the consumer price index. Other agreement details have been reviewed and are as shown in the proposed contract.

Councilmember Kelley made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Winters, to approve the proposed Well and Pump Maintenance Professional Services Contract as presented for the term July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2027, and further authorize the City Manager to sign all documents related to its execution and invoice approval.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Gustafson, Kelley, Lee, Milewski, Millard, Starr, Waterman, Winters, and Balice.
 Nays: None
 MOTION CARRIED

Ionia Community Bible School – License Agreement for DDA Gateway Plaza Property (NB#7)

The Ionia Community Vacation Bible School (VBS) is planned from August 1-4, 2022, at the Restore Church, 430 W. Main Street. Restore Church lacks a yard area for outdoor children’s games, which prompted the VBS organizers to ask permission to use the DDA Gateway Plaza area (northeast corner of W. Main and Dexter Streets) for this purpose. The following license agreement has been developed to accommodate this request. Main details from the license agreement include:

- Coordinating tent and temporary fencing installation with the Public Works Department to avoid damaging the irrigation system;
- Obtaining \$1,000,000 liability insurance coverage, naming the City as an additional insured; and
- Removing all materials from the site/clean-up following use.

The agreement would run from July 29 through August 5 in order to allow for set-up and take-down/clean-up activities. The proposed fee for this use is \$1.

Councilmember Winters made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Gustafson, to approve the proposed license agreement to allow the Ionia Community VBS organization to use the DDA Gateway Plaza property for VBS, from July 29-August 5, 2022.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Gustafson, Kelley, Lee, Milewski, Millard, Starr, Waterman, Winters, and Balice.
 Nays: None
 MOTION CARRIED

Schedule Special Meeting to Review Proposed Budget (NB#8)

As has been past practice, City Council was requested to schedule a special meeting for the purpose of reviewing the proposed FY23 City budget. It is customary to schedule this meeting prior to the regular May meeting.

Councilmember Winters made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Millard to schedule a Special City Council Meeting for 5:30 PM, Tuesday, May 3, 2022 for the purpose of reviewing the proposed FY23 budget, followed by the regular meeting at 7:00 PM

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Gustafson, Kelley, Lee, Milewski, Millard, Starr, Waterman, Winters, and Balice.
Nays: None
MOTION CARRIED

Informational – FY23 Budget Assumptions & City of Ionia General Fund (NB#8)

City Manager Garland gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding economic assumptions under consideration as the FY22-23 budget is prepared. Particular attention was given to the City’s Special Funds.

CLOSED SESSION

None

MAYOR AND COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS

Waterman: The local JayCees and the Ionia Recreation Department have teamed up to sponsor an Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, 11:00 AM.

Millard: The proposed grant that includes music for downtown is exciting. Since it allows for zones via blue tooth, it will be a vast improvement over the current speakers that are plagued by dead spots due to speaker placement.

Milewski: (1) The grant will allow for excellent private/public partnering, and will alleviate the large discrepancy throughout the county in internet availability. (2) Recently attended a play in Belding and was impressed by the facilities that made it possible. It would be wonderful if Ionia could have its own performing arts center.

Kelley: (1) Agreed with Milewski, and added that if Ionia is missing something, it is a performing arts center. (2) The Court of Honor for Andrew and Ryan LeForge will be held May 7 at Saranac High School. Congratulations to both boys and welcome to the club!

Balice: (1) Theater visitation has gone back up. (2) Having Ionia Sparrow Hospital in Ionia has been a benefit to Ionia that can’t be overestimated. (3) Approval has been received by the State of Michigan to tear down the former Riverside Correctional Facility property, making about 43 acres available for development. Representative Tom Albert was instrumental in securing the \$1.1 million needed for the project.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Starr moved to adjourn the meeting, the motion carried by voice vote, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Submitted by:

Mary Patrick, Ionia City Clerk