



**CITY OF IONIA**  
**CITY COUNCIL**  
**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
**7:00 PM, SEPTEMBER 7, 2021**  
**CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**ROLL CALL**

Roll call revealed Councilmembers John Milewski, Jeff Winters, Gordon Kelley, Tim Lee, Richard Starr, Tom Millard, Janice Gustafson, Troy Waterman and Mayor Dan Balice present.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Mayor Balice opened the public hearing to receive comments on Ordinance No. 555, which would repeal Chapter 1267- Ionia Springs PUD of Title Six- Zoning of Part Twelve- Planning and Zoning Code of the City of Ionia and rezone Lot 7 of Orchard View Industrial Park. No comments were received.

It was moved by Councilmember Milewski, seconded by Councilmember Winters to approve Ordinance No. 555.

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

Mayor Balice opened the public hearing to receive comments on Ordinance No. 556, which would amend Chapter 802- Licensing in General- Title Two, Part Eight- Business Regulation and Tax Code of the City of Ionia. No comments were received.

It was moved by Councilmember Starr, seconded by Councilmember Lee to approve Ordinance No. 556.

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Dianne Grummet of Ionia Community Awareness addressed Council on the upcoming Purple Week event, which it in its 12<sup>th</sup> year. She asked for Council's approval for a fireworks display that will take place on Friday, September 17<sup>th</sup> at the Ionia High School.

It was moved by Councilmember Kelley, seconded by Councilmember Millard to approve the fireworks display on Friday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, subject to administrative approval and with proof of the required licensing and insurance.

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

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

It was moved by Councilmember Millard, seconded by Councilmember Waterman to approve the August 3, 2021 regular meeting minutes.

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

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Appointment of Precia Garland as 2021 Officer Delegate to vote during MERS annual Business Meeting on October 7**

The Municipal Employees' Retirement System of Michigan will conduct its annual conference and business meeting on October 7 – 8, 2021 in Grand Rapids. As City Manager Garland is a MERS board member, she will already be attending the meeting, but in order to vote regarding MERS matters on behalf of the City of Ionia, she must be approved as an Officer Delegate by the City Council.

It was moved by Councilmember Winters, seconded by Councilmember Millard to appoint Precia Garland as the Officer Delegate on behalf of the City of Ionia for purposes of voting during the MERS annual meeting on October 7, 2021.

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

#### **MERS Service Credit Purchase Request – B. Vos**

According to the city manager, 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, Brian Vos, has requested permission to purchase MERS service credit in accordance with the attached estimate. Under the rules of the program, a maximum purchase of 5 years is permissible. The requested service credit purchase is as follows:

Employee	Service Credit Purchase Request	Employee's Cost
Brian Vos	2 years	\$ 46,297

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.

It was moved by Councilmember Winters, seconded by Councilmember Lee to approve the above MERS Service Credit purchase at the quoted rate, at the employee's expense.

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

### **Appointment of City Attorney**

The City of Ionia Charter, Section 4.03(a) states the following regarding the position of City Attorney:

*The Mayor shall appoint and the City Council shall confirm by a majority vote of its total membership a City Attorney who shall serve as chief legal advisor to the Council, the City Manager, and all City departments, offices and agencies, shall represent the City in all legal Proceedings and shall perform any other duties prescribed by this Charter or by ordinance.*

A Request for Proposals was recently issued to solicit proposals for City Attorney legal services. Records show the City Council has not confirmed appointment of a City Attorney in nearly 20 years and the City has been utilizing the services of several different attorneys as need arises. It is desirable to appoint a primary City Attorney to create consistency, as well as compliance with the City Charter. A few specialized legal services, such as labor relations, bond and finance issues and tax tribunal appeals will continue to be handled by outside attorneys already engaged for such purposes. A separate agreement also currently exists for legal services related to the prosecution of City ordinance violations.

Five proposals were received from the following firms to provide City Attorney services, with rates as follows:

Firm	Location	Assigned Attorney	Hourly Rate
Bloom Sluggett, PC	Grand Rapids, MI	Jeffrey Sluggett	\$215
Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes	Okemos, MI	Christopher Patterson	\$240
Foster Swift	Grand Rapids, MI	Mike Homier	\$235
Clark Hill	Lansing, MI	Nancy Mullett	\$275
Duff Chadwick	Ionia, MI	Tom Chadwick	\$300

After a review of the proposals, reference checks and discussion, Mayor Balice indicated he wished to appoint Jeffrey Sluggett of Bloom Sluggett, PC as the City Attorney.

It was moved by Councilmember Starr, seconded by Councilmember Millard to confirm the appointment of Jeffrey Sluggett of Bloom Sluggett, PC as City Attorney, in accordance with Section 4.03(a) of the City Charter.

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

**Purchase of new IRUA Pickup Truck**

In order to keep IRUA equipment operating within its expected useful life, one new vehicle is typically budgeted and purchased per year to replace the oldest vehicle in the fleet. The oldest vehicle currently scheduled for replacement is a 2011 Ford F250 pickup truck with 52,650 miles (as of 8/26/21). The proposed new vehicle purchase will replace the 2011 F250 that is used as the snow plow vehicle. A new vehicle is available through the Macomb County – Contract bid as follows:

Signature Ford, Owosso, MI   \$31,096 (see attached bid specifications)

As in past years, the old truck will be offered for sale on a competitive basis to other municipal units within our area.

It was moved by Councilmember Millard, seconded by Councilmember Milewski to approve the purchase of a 2022 Ford F250 pickup truck through the Macomb County Contract Bid for \$31,096 from Signature Ford of Owosso, Michigan. Funds have been budgeted for this purchase in 598-558.000-980.00.

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

**City of Ionia General Policy Manual – Section 4 Update**

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. The city has begun the process by reviewing and making significant updates to Section Four, Community

Development, which was previously titled Building/Community Development. Section 4 has been revised as follows:

<b>Old – Building/Community Development</b>	<b>New – Community Development (9-7-2021)</b>
4-001: Planning Policies and Forms (3-6-2001)	4-001: Planning Policy and Permit Applications
4-002: Sidewalks (2-5-2008)	4-002: Sidewalk Maintenance and Construction Policy
4-003: Sign Ordinance Appeal Process (2-4-2009)	Deleted – sign variances handled by ZBA and included in 4-001
4-004: Fair Housing & Section 3 Policy (3-4-2014)	4-003: Economic Opportunities Policy for Section 3 Covered Contracts (reflects 2020 updates in federal statute)

It was moved by Councilmember Winters, seconded by Councilmember Kelley to approve the revised Section 4 – Community Development, of the City’s General Policy Manual.

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

**City of Ionia General Policy Manual – Addition of two new policies:  
                                   2-011 – Placing Memorials in City Parks and Open Space  
                                   2-012 – Oak Hill Cemetery Operations**

As stated by the city manager, inquiries have been made to the City regarding the placement of memorials in City parks and other open space areas, as well as operations at the Oak Hill Cemetery. Both of these policies fall under Section 2 of the City of Ionia’s General Policy Manual, regarding Public Works. Eventually, a full review of Section 2 will be performed and brought to City Council for re-adoption.

**Policy 2-011 Placing Memorials in City Parks and Open Space** proposes consistent standards, criteria, and options for the placement of memorials throughout the City. Typical memorial options include plaques, trees and park furnishings.

**Policy 2-012 Oak Hill Cemetery Operations** proposes maintenance and operations standards, information regarding how to access burial records, plus rules for limited interments and general rules for cemetery public access and use.

It was moved by Councilmember Winters, seconded by Councilmember Millard to approve Policies 2-011 and 2-012, which will be added to Section 2 – Department of Public Works, of the City’s General Policy Manual.

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

**Introduction and First Reading – Ordinance No. 557 – Addition of Chapter 1285 – AC Development Planned Unit Development District**

The property at 533 East Washington Street is located in the R-1, One Family Residential District. This address was originally associated with Sparrow Hospital and is the former parking lot/helicopter pad, totaling 5.74 acres. You may recall this area was previously zoned B-1 Neighborhood Business, but was rezoned to R-1 to ensure the site was not used for commercial purposes. The sub-area plan from the City’s Master Plan envisioned this property being used for residential purposes through a Planned Unit Development District, as long as density did not exceed ten units per acre.

AC Development, owned by Ionia residents Dan Avery and Greg Cook, has acquired 533 E. Washington and proposes a Planned Unit Development (PUD) district, which would result in the construction of 12 market-rate apartments (four units in three buildings) intended for occupants 55+ in age.

The Ionia Planning Commission held a public hearing regarding this matter at its August 11 meeting and recommends Ordinance No. 557 to the Ionia City Council, which would add Chapter 1285 – AC Development Planned Unit Development District to the City’s Planning and Zoning Code. The Planning Commission also approved the proposed PUD site plan, contingent upon several required revisions/corrections and approval of Ordinance No. 557.

It was moved by Councilmember Millard, seconded by Councilmember Waterman to approve an introduction and first reading of Ordinance No. 557, an ordinance to add Chapter 1285 – AC Development PUD District of Title Six – Zoning of Part Twelve – Planning and Zoning Code of the City of Ionia, and schedule a Public Hearing regarding the proposed ordinance for 7:00 PM, Tuesday, October 5, 2021 at Ionia City Hall.

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

**MAYOR AND COUNCILMEMBER COMMENT:**

Balice: Commented that Sparrow Main is very happy with its Ionia affiliate and the Sparrow Health System Board recently all met together in person, the first time since before COVID-19.

Gustafson: Mentioned that the Labor Day weekend fireworks show was very enjoyable and well attended.

Millard: Stated that the fireworks were a success and going forward would like to see them continue on Labor Day weekend.

Milewski: Thanked Public Safety and its incredible crew for responding to two separate incidents.

**ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved by Councilmember Lee, seconded by Councilmember Winters to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:10 PM

By Voice Vote: MOTION CARRIED

Respectfully Submitted:

Ally H. Cook, Clerk