



**CITY OF IONIA**  
**CITY COUNCIL**  
**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
**7:00 PM, March 2, 2021**  
**ELECTRONIC MEETING VIA ZOOM**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Deputy Mayor John Milewski called the regular meeting of City Council to order at 7:02 PM and led with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

Roll call revealed Councilmembers John Milewski, Jeff Winters, Gordon Kelley, Tim Lee, Richard Starr, Janice Gustafson and Troy Waterman. Councilmember Tom Millard was excused. Mayor Dan Balice joined the meeting at 7:04 PM.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Dale Parus, Director of the Ionia Community Library, requested Council's approval to amend the agreement of the sale of library property located on Adams Street.

It was moved by Councilmember Waterman, seconded by Councilmember Starr to amend the transfer of property agreement which eliminates the requirement to tear the existing building down before the sale of the property.

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

Sue Ann Hammersmith of Michigan Independent Redistricting Commission provided information on the statewide redistricting process.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

It was moved by Councilmember Milewski, seconded by Councilmember Waterman to approve the February 2, 2021 regular meeting minutes.

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

**NEW BUSINESS**

### **Approve- Mayoral Appointments**

Mayor Balice requested Council's approval of the following appointments:

#### **Downtown Development Authority –**

Cathy Hoppough to a term expiring December 31, 2021

Olivia Blomstrom to a term expiring December 31, 2023

#### **Board of Review –**

Jason Eppler to a term expiring December 31, 2021

#### **Grand Valley Metro Council**

Precia Garland as the City representative for an indefinite term

It was moved by Councilmember Winters, seconded by Councilmember Kelley to confirm Mayor Balice's appointments as presented.

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

### **Approve – Resolution Appointing Precia Garland as Single Street Administrator**

A resolution to appoint City Manager Precia Garland as Single Street Administrator is an administrative change which will ensure that the City of Ionia continues to receive Act 51 funding for local and major streets.

It was moved by Councilmember Winters, seconded by Councilmember Kelley to appoint City Manager Precia Garland as the Single Street Administrator.

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

### **Approve – Lease Agreement with DDA for Farmers Market Property**

The Downtown Development Authority has been considering an opportunity intended to create additional vitality for the farmers' market. This opportunity involves the DDA stepping away from its past role as the operator of the farmers market and into one in which it licenses the farmers' market to a newly created nonprofit, Ionia Harvest Market Place (IHM). IHM would in turn contract with an experienced market master to manage market operations, including recruiting vendors. IHM is also intending to pursue other related initiatives such as identifying funding sources for improvements to the pavilion and partnering with the Ionia Rotary Club.

Interim City Manager Guestschow recommended entering into a lease agreement for the pavilion location with the DDA for the sum of one dollar. The DDA, in turn, enters into an agreement with IHM, granting the organization an exclusive license to operate the farmers market at that location. In this way, the DDA continues its involvement with farmers market activities and can oversee the use of the pavilion to ensure that it continues to harmonize with other interests in the central business district. In addition, the DDA will be able to arrange for other activities at the pavilion at times when it is not used for the farmers market.

It was moved by Councilmember Winters, seconded by Councilmember Lee to approve the proposed lease agreement for the farmers market pavilion property and authorize the city manager to execute the agreement on behalf of the City.

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

**Approve – Resolution Approving Marihuana Application Form and Annual Fee**

The passage of the adult-use marihuana ordinance necessitates updating the resolution. Per the City Manager, Council approved a resolution approving the application form to be used and setting the annual fee at \$5,000. This fee is the maximum amount authorized under statute.

The following is the proposed language of this resolution:

**BE IT RESOLVED** that pursuant to Section 1289.08 (d) and Section 1290.09 (d) of the Ionia Code of Ordinances, the City Council hereby approves the Combined Application for Medical Marihuana Facilities and Adult Use Establishments to be used in applying for a special land use permit pursuant to chapters 1289 and 1290 of the Ionia Code of Ordinances; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that pursuant to Section 1289.04 (d) and Section 1290.04 (e) of the Ionia Code of Ordinances, the City Council hereby sets the annual fee paid to the City by medical marihuana facility operators and adult use establishment operators at \$5,000.00 per license.

It was moved by Councilmember Milewski, seconded by Councilmember Winters to approve the resolution approving the marihuana facilities and establishments application form and setting the annual fee per license at \$5,000.00.

Roll Call Vote:           Ayes: Milewski, Winters, Kelley, Lee, Starr, Gustafson, Waterman and Mayor Balice

Nays: None  
MOTION CARRIED

**Approve – Resolution Designating City Parks**

City Manager Garland requested that Council table this particular resolution for the purpose of further review.

It was moved by Councilmember Starr, seconded by Councilmember Kelley to table this agenda item until the April meeting, pending review.

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

**Approve – Steele Street Landscaping Bid Award**

Per Interim City Manager Guestschow, one component of the Steele Street reconstruction project is the planting of trees in right-of-way areas along its length. The City’s consultant, RJM Design, prepared and published a bid specification.

The project involves the placement of 51 total trees of six different species from Adams Street to the south terminus at Dexter Street. All trees will be ball and burlap. The majority will have a three-inch caliper trunk except the ginkgo, which will be two-inch caliper. The project includes mulching and restoration of lawn areas. The specifications call for the completion of the project by June 30, 2021.

Bids were solicited from five vendors and two were received and opened. The bid from Horrock’s Nursery Farms was for \$28,525. The bid from Twin Lakes Nursery of Grand Rapids was for \$37,525. The consultant recommends awarding the bid to the low bidder.

It was moved by Councilmember Gustafson, seconded by Councilmember Milewski awarding a contract for the Steele Street Landscaping Project to the low bidder Horrock’s Nursery Farms of Ionia for the lump sum amount of \$28,525 and authorize the city manager to execute contract documents on behalf of the City.

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

**Accept – Park Improvement Grant Applications**

Per Interim City Manager Gregg Guestschow, three resolutions authorizing the submission of grant applications for improvements in Balice Park, Hale Park and on the Fred Thwaites River Trail are necessary. The Balice Park and Hale Park projects are proposed based on the contents of the 2019 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The Fred Thwaites project, which is also supportive of the Master Plan's objectives, is a maintenance project and not specifically identified within the plan.

It is unlikely that the City would be approved for all three grants and, therefore, Finance Director Chris Hyzer and Interim City Manager Guetschow discussed the budget implications of that possibility. Mr. Guestschow and Mr. Hyzer are confident that this can be managed by spreading projects over several fiscal years. This would include funds allocated for park projects in the current fiscal year that will not be expended. The City will have a more complete picture of its fiscal outlook for 2021-22 and beyond by the time a decision must be made to accept any grant awards.

It was moved by Councilmember Winters, seconded by Councilmember Lee to accept all three resolutions authorizing submission of grant applications for improvements in Balice Park, Hale Park and on the Fred Thwaites River Trail.

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

**Adopt- COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan**

City Manager Precia Garland requested Council's approval of a COVID-19 preparedness plan which would put the City in compliance and will require daily health screenings of all employees.

It was moved by Councilmember Starr, seconded by Councilmember Waterman to adopt the COVID-19 Response Plan contingent upon review of the safety committee.

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

**Accept- 2020 Planning Commission Annual Report**

State law and the Ionia Code of Ordinances require the Planning Commission to submit to the City Council a report of its actions during the preceding calendar year. In preparing the 2020 report for Planning Commission consideration, I followed the general format utilized by former City Manager Jason Eppler in preparing the 2019 report. The content of the report, which will be found elsewhere in the agenda packet, summarizes information gleaned from the minutes of Planning Commission meetings.

The Planning Commission approved this report at its February 10 meeting.

It was moved by Councilmember Starr, seconded by Councilmember Kelley to accept the 2020 Planning Commission Annual Report.

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

**Discuss- Granger Annual Report**

Each year the City Council receives a presentation from a representative of Granger regarding its activities during the preceding calendar year, pursuant to the company’s contract with the City.

Council received information and no action was taken.

**Discuss- Budget Assumptions for FY 21-22**

The FY21-22 Budget Timetable calls for the City Manager and Finance Director to review with Council revenue projections for the new fiscal year for key funds.

- 1) Current millage information and discuss the rate for FY21-22.
- 2) Utility rates. Proposed rates for the next several fiscal years have been reviewed and updated. The attached projections for water and sewer revenues reflect the FY21-22 “proposed” rates from the table.
- 3) FY21-22 budgets will reflect year three of the four-year plan to contribute a total of \$1 million to the City’s pension program (per the State approved Corrective Action Plan).

Council received information. No action was taken.

**MAYOR AND COUNCILMEMBER COMMENT:**

Balice: Commented that the Ionia Free Fair did well with fundraising last summer and the board is hopeful to have a fair this summer. Thanked Precia Garland for “hitting the ground running” and facilitating her first Council meeting on her second day on the job. Urged Council and community to take advantage of the vaccination.

Waterman, Gustafson, Starr, Lee, Kelley, Winters and Milewski: Welcomed Precia Garland to the community.

**ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved by Councilmember Lee, seconded by Councilmember Winters to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:40 PM

By Voice Vote: MOTION CARRIED

Respectfully Submitted:

Ally H. Cook, Clerk