CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
6:30 PM, Wednesday, April 2, 2025
CITY HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBERS

CALL TO ORDER
Mayor John Milewski called the meeting of the Ionia City Council to order at 6:30 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
Mayor John Milewski led everyone present with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL
Roll call revealed a Quorum with Councilmembers Margot Cook, Brenda Cowling, Dawn Ketchum, Tim Lee, Tom Millard, Richard Starr, Jeff Winters, Troy Waterman, and Mayor John Milewski present.

I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
Councilmember Cowling made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Waterman, to amend the agenda by removing item VII.2 and to approve the agenda as amended.
MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

III. PROCLAMATIONS

(III.1.) Proclamation Celebrating Arbor Day 2025
Mayor John Milewski presented and read a Proclamation celebrating Arbor Day 2025.

Proclamation Celebrating Arbor Day 2025

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, our city has been recognized for 32 years by the Arbor Day Foundation as a Tree City USA, in honor of our commitment to planting, growing, and maintaining, trees; and

WHEREAS, trees can reduce the erosion of our precious topsoil by wind and water, lower energy 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, and boost mental and physical health.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT PROCLAIMED, that I, John R. Milewski II, Mayor of the City of Ionia, do hereby recognize Friday, April 25, 2025, as ARBOR DAY in the City of Ionia, coinciding with the 153rd 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 PROCLAIMED, that I encourage all citizens to plant and care for trees to gladden the heart and promote the well-being of this and future generations.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(II.1.) March 5, 2025 – Work Session Meeting

(II.2.) March 5, 2025 – Regular Meeting

Minutes from the special work session and regular meeting of March 5, 2025, were reviewed. Councilmember Starr made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Millard, to approve the special work session and regular meeting minutes from March 5, 2025, as presented.
MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

V. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND ASSOCIATED ACTION

(V.1.) Public Hearing to receive comments on Ordinance No. 593 - Rezoning of 848 & 850 E. Lincoln Ave. from B-1 Neighborhood Business District to HDR High-Density Residential District

Mayor Milewski opened the public hearing for comments on Ordinance No. 593 at 6:35 PM. Following no public comments, Mayor Milewski closed the public hearing at 6:35 PM.

Councilmember Ketchum made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Cowling, to approve Ordinance No. 593, an ordinance to rezone parcels 34-204-017-000-010-00 (848 E. Lincoln Avenue) and 34-204-017-000-011-00 (850 E. Lincoln Avenue) from the B-1 Neighborhood Business District as identified in Chapter 1256 to the HDR High-Density Residential District as identified in Chapter 1252; and to include the parcels with noted rezoning on the Zoning Map identified in Section 1246.02 Districts Generally and Zoning Map District Boundaries of Chapter 1256 - Title Six - Zoning of Part Twelve - Planning and Zoning Code of the City of Ionia Codified Ordinances.

Roll Call Vote:
Ayes: Margot Cook, Brenda Cowling, Dawn Ketchum, Tim Lee, John Milewski, Tom Millard, Richard Starr, Jeff Winters, Troy Waterman
Nays: None
Abstentions: None

MOTION CARRIED

CITY OF IONIA
IONIA COUNTY, MICHIGAN
Ordinance No. 593

AN ORDINANCE TO REZONE PARCEL 34-204-017-000-010-00 (848 E. LINCOLN AVENUE) AND 34-204-017-000-011-00 (850 E. LINCOLN AVENUE) FROM THE B-1 NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS DISTRICT AS IDENTIFIED IN CHAPTER 1256 TO THE HDR HIGH-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT AS IDENTIFIED IN CHAPTER 1252; AND THE INCLUSION OF THE PARCELS AS DEFINED ON THE ZONING MAP IDENTIFIED IN SECTION 1246.02 DISTRICTS GENERALLY AND ZONING MAP DISTRICT BOUNDARIES OF CHAPTER 1246 - TITLE SIX – ZONING OF PART TWELVE – PLANNING AND ZONING CODE OF SAID CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF IONIA

THE CITY OF IONIA HEREBY ORDAINS:

Section One: Rezoning of Property

That the following described parcels are hereby rezoned from the B-1, Neighborhood Business Zoning District, to the HDR, High-Density Residential Zoning District:

Address	Parcel ID Number
848 E. Lincoln Avenue	34-204-017-000-010-00
850 E. Lincoln Avenue	34-204-017-000-011-00

Section Two: Amendment of Zoning Map

That the official Zoning Map of the City of Ionia, Michigan, referenced in Part Twelve, Title Six, Section 1246.02 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Ionia, shall be amended upon the effective date of this Ordinance to reflect the rezoning of the parcels set forth in Section 1, above.

Section Three: Publication and Effective Date

The City Clerk shall cause a notice of adoption of this ordinance to be published. This ordinance shall take effect seven (7) days after it, or a summary thereof as permitted by law, along with the date of its adoption, is published in the *Daily News*, a newspaper of general circulation in the City, unless otherwise provided by law.

Section Four: Repealer

All ordinances and parts of ordinances in conflict herewith are repealed to the extent of any such conflict.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

(VI.1.) Vertical Pole Banner Application - Ionia Community Awareness
Councilmember Cook made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Lee, to approve the vertical pole banner application submitted by Ionia Community Awareness to display up to 96 banners as specified, from September 1 – September 30, 2025.

Roll Call Vote:
Ayes: Margot Cook, Brenda Cowling, Dawn Ketchum, Tim Lee, John Milewski, Tom Millard, Richard Starr, Jeff Winters, Troy Waterman
Nays: None
Abstentions: None
MOTION CARRIED

(VI.2.) Ionia Theatre Report
Consultant Nate Geinzer of Double Haul Solutions presented to City Council a report summarizing the work accomplished by the Ionia Theatre Ad Hoc Committee. The report included recommendations to bolster Theatre operations and support the long-term viability of the Theatre as a community asset.

Mayor Milewski thanked the members of the Ad Hoc Committee for their service.

Councilmember Starr made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Winters, to accept the Ionia Theatre Report and authorize continued meetings of the Ionia Theatre Ad Hoc Committee as necessary to implement its recommendations, with the ultimate goal of increasing theater attendance and operating revenues to meet or exceed operating costs.
MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

(VI.3.) Recognition of Ionia Harvest Marketplace as a Nonprofit Organization
Councilmember Ketchum made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Winters, to approve Resolution 2025-07, a resolution to recognize a nonprofit organization (Ionia Harvest Marketplace) operating in the community for the purpose of obtaining charitable gaming licenses.

Roll Call Vote:
Ayes: Margot Cook, Brenda Cowling, Dawn Ketchum, Tim Lee, John Milewski, Tom Millard, Richard Starr, Jeff Winters, Troy Waterman
Nays: None
Abstentions: None
MOTION CARRIED

Resolution 2025-07

CITY OF IONIA
COUNTY OF IONIA, MICHIGAN

CITY COUNCIL

A RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION OPERATING IN THE COMMUNITY FOR THE PURPOSE OF OBTAINING CHARITABLE GAMING LICENSES

The following Resolution was offered for adoption by City Council Member Ketchum and was supported by City Council Member Winters:

WHEREAS, the City of Ionia received a request from the Ionia Harvest Marketplace (IHM) requesting recognition as a nonprofit organization operating in the Ionia community; and

WHEREAS, this recognition is required by the Bureau of State Lottery of the State of Michigan for purposes of obtaining future charitable gaming licenses; and

WHEREAS, the City of Ionia has received proof of the IHM's 501(c)(3) non-profit, tax exempt status by its local Ionia representative; and

WHEREAS, the IHM intends to conduct fundraising activities throughout the greater Ionia community;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Ionia hereby recognizes Ionia Harvest Marketplace, of the City of Ionia and County of Ionia, as a nonprofit organization operating in the community for the purpose of obtaining charitable gaming licenses.

RESOLUTION 2025-07 DECLARED ADOPTED.

VII. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

(VII.1.) Payment and Release Agreement
Councilmember Millard made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Cook, to approve the following "Payment and Release Agreement Between the City of Ionia and Ionia Township," subject to final approval by the City Manager and City Attorney regarding any minor adjustments requested by the Township as to form, which would result in the payment of $4,172.26 to Ionia Township to correct for previous net underpayment of tax revenues related to the Valley View 425 Agreement.

Roll Call Vote:
Ayes: Margot Cook, Brenda Cowling, Dawn Ketchum, Tim Lee, John Milewski, Tom Millard, Richard Starr, Jeff Winters, Troy Waterman
Nays: None
Abstentions: None
MOTION CARRIED

PAYMENT AND RELEASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF IONIA AND IONIA TOWNSHIP

This Agreement is made on ________________________, 2025, by and between the City of Ionia (the "City") and Ionia Township (the "Township") (collectively the "Parties"). For and in consideration of the mutual promises and agreements hereinafter set forth, the Parties agree as follows:

RECITALS

Whereas, the parties entered into a "Contract for Conditional Transfer of Property Public Act 425 of 1984," dated June 13, 2002 (the "425 Contract");

Whereas, the parties mutually amended the 425 Contract on November 14, 2006 ("First Amendment");

Whereas, the First Amendment provided that the City would annually pay the Township an amount equal to 2 mills levied against the state taxable valuation of property in the transferred area;

Whereas, the Township discovered that for the tax years from 2018 to 2023 the City failed to pay the Township the 2 mills it was owed under the First Amendment on the following four properties in the transferred area: 643 Crawford, 704 Crawford, 700 N State St, and 672 Morse (collectively the "425 Properties");

Whereas, the City previously adopted an ordinance to subject certain properties used to provide housing for low income persons and families to a service charge for payment in lieu of taxes ("PILOT"), pursuant to Public Act 346 of 1966;

Whereas, some of the PILOT properties are in the transferred area (hereinafter referred to as the "Bellview Property" and the "Valley View Property");

Whereas, the City and the Township previously entered into an agreement regarding how PILOT service charges for the Bellview Property and the Valley View Property would be allocated between the City and the Township;

Whereas the Township discovered that for the tax years from 2018 to 2023 the City failed to pay the Township the amounts the Township was owed for the Belleview Property;

Whereas, the City discovered that for the tax years from 2018 to 2023 it overpaid the Township for the amounts it was owed for the Valley View Property; and

Whereas, the Township is agreeable to receive the total sum of $4,172.26 to resolve any and all disputed claims with the City as to outstanding taxes owed to the Township,

Now therefore, the City and the Township have come to the following agreement to resolve any and all claims related to this matter:

AGREEMENT

1. <u>Payment to the Township</u>. Within five days of the execution of this Agreement by both parties, the City shall pay to the Township the amount of $4,172.26, representing the amount the Township is owed for the 425 Properties and the Bellview Property, minus the amount it was overpaid for the Valley View Property (the "Payment").

2. <u>Release</u>. In exchange for the negotiated Payment, the Township agrees to release and

forever discharge the City from any and all liabilities, actions, suits, debts, sums of money, damages, demands, claims, counterclaims, and/or causes of action of any kind or nature, which were brought or could have been brought against the City related to or pertaining in any way to the overpayments and underpayments described in this Agreement. The Township further agrees that it will not solicit, claim, or pursue in any other manner any money, damages, demands, claims, counterclaims, and/or causes of action, of any kind or nature, against any third party which relate to or pertain in any way to the overpayments and underpayments described in this Agreement.

3. <u>Property Tax Limitation</u>. The Parties acknowledge and agree that the Township is responsible for ensuring that the receipt of the Payment complies with the Township's responsibilities under existing property tax limitation laws.

4. <u>Entire Agreement</u>. This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement among and between the Parties regarding the overpayments and underpayments referred to in this Agreement.

5. <u>Governing Law</u>. This Agreement shall be governed by and construed, interpreted, and enforced according to the laws of the State of Michigan, notwithstanding its choice of law principles or any other rule, regulation, or principle that would result in the application of any other state's law.

6. <u>Binding Nature</u>. The terms and conditions of this Agreement shall be binding upon and inure to the benefit of the heirs, successors, and assigns of the parties hereto and those affected hereby.

7. <u>Counterparts</u>. This Agreement may be executed in duplication, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument which shall represent the agreement of the Parties.

8. <u>Authorization</u>. The undersigned represent and agree that they are authorized by the Party for which they sign to execute this Agreement and that all actions permitted or required by law for such execution and approval have been taken.

The undersigned have read the foregoing Agreement and understand and approve all its terms and conditions and agree to be bound by all its terms and conditions.

CITY OF IONIA

Dated: ___________________, 2025 ________________________________
John R. Milewski, II, Mayor

Dated: ___________________, 2025 ________________________________
Jonathan T. Bowman, City Clerk

IONIA TOWNSHIP

Dated: ___________________, 2025 ________________________________
Jamie Stephens, Township Supervisor

Dated: ___________________, 2025 ________________________________
Sheri Lynn, Township Clerk

(VII.2.) Director of Public Works Recommendation
Councilmember Cook made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Lee, to confirm the appointment of Geoffrey Petersen to the position of Director of Public Works, effective April 17, 2025, due to the impending retirement of DPW Director Gary Cunningham. The motion included allowing Mr. Petersen to remain in the MERS B-4 retirement plan during his continued employment with the City of Ionia.

Roll Call Vote:
Ayes: Margot Cook, Brenda Cowling, Dawn Ketchum, Tim Lee, John Milewski, Tom Millard, Richard Starr, Jeff Winters, Troy Waterman
Nays: None
Abstentions: None
MOTION CARRIED

(VII.3.) TruNarc Handheld Narcotics Analyzer Purchase
Councilmember Ketchum made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Millard, to approve proposal #800-01045-01 in the amount of $41,800.00 to purchase a TruNarc Unlimited Model analyzer with a five-year warranty. Funds were budgeted and available for this purchase in 284-000.000-685.000 - Opioid Settlement Revenue.

Roll Call Vote:
Ayes: Margot Cook, Brenda Cowling, Dawn Ketchum, Tim Lee, John Milewski, Tom Millard, Richard Starr, Jeff Winters, Troy Waterman
Nays: None
Abstentions: None
MOTION CARRIED

(VII.4.) Public Safety Patrol Vehicle Purchase
Mayor Milewski made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Starr, to approve the purchase of a 2025 Chevrolet Tahoe at the MiDEAL price of $53,319 from Berger Chevrolet of Grand Rapids. City Manager Garland indicated that funds will be budgeted for this purchase in 101-345.000-989.000.

Roll Call Vote:
Ayes: Margot Cook, Brenda Cowling, Dawn Ketchum, Tim Lee, John Milewski, Tom Millard, Richard Starr, Jeff Winters, Troy Waterman
Nays: None
Abstentions: None
MOTION CARRIED

(VII.5.) Business Park Land Purchase Agreement
Councilmember Cook made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Ketchum, to approve Resolution 2025-08, which would enable the purchase of up to 80 acres from the west side of the Deerfield Riverside site at the rate of $13,826 per acre, plus closing and due diligence costs, from the SLBA.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Margot Cook, Brenda Cowling, Dawn Ketchum, Tim Lee, John Milewski, Tom Millard, Richard Starr, Jeff Winters, Troy Waterman
Nays: None
Abstentions: None

MOTION CARRIED

Resolution 2025-08

CITY OF IONIA

COUNTY OF IONIA, MICHIGAN
CITY COUNCIL

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF REAL PROPERTY KNOWN AS THE FORMER DEERFIELD AND RIVERSIDE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

The following Resolution was offered for adoption by City Council Member Cook and was supported by City Council Member Ketchum:

WHEREAS, the State of Michigan through the State Land Bank Authority ("SLBA") holds title to approximately 172.14 acres of real property generally east and south of Harwood Road and south of Riverside Drive constituting the former Deerfield and Riverside correctional facilities.

WHEREAS, the City wishes to purchase the westerly 80-acres (the "Property") for development and resale to industrial users.

WHEREAS, the City and SLBA have negotiated a purchase agreement for the Property, which is attached to this resolution as Exhibit A (the "Purchase Agreement").

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that it is in the best interests of the City to approve and execute the Purchase Agreement and make it binding on the City, and to pursue the purchase of the Property on the terms and conditions of the Purchase Agreement.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. The Mayor and City Clerk are authorized and directed, on behalf of the City, in accordance with the terms of this Resolution, to execute the Purchase Agreement and make it binding upon the City.

2. The Mayor and City Clerk are authorized and directed, on behalf of the City, and in consultation with the City Attorney, to enter into any agreements and execute any other documents necessary to effectuate the purchase of the Property.

3. The City Manager and City Attorney are authorized to expend sums and take all actions reasonably necessary to effectuate the Purchase Agreement including undertaking due diligence, and acquiring on behalf of the City the necessary title work, surveys, and similar

matters.

4. The execution of the Purchase Agreement, the execution of any amendments to the Agreement, and any other action taken pursuant to this Resolution, must be consistent substantively and procedurally with all parts of this Resolution.

5. The execution of the Agreement, amendments to the Agreement, and any related documents intended to legally bind the City must be done jointly by the Mayor and the City Clerk.

6. The Mayor, City Clerk, City Manager, and City Attorney are hereby authorized and directed to take all further actions necessary to purchase the Property on terms consistent with this Resolution.

7. All resolutions and parts of resolutions in conflict with this Resolution are, to the extent of such conflicts, repealed.

8. This Resolution takes immediate effect.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all resolutions and parts of resolutions in conflict herewith are, to the extent of such conflict, repealed.

RESOLUTION 2025-08 DECLARED ADOPTED.

(VII.6.) Social Media Policy
City Manager Garland explained that an essential component of managing municipal social media accounts is to establish a social media policy that defines how communications will be provided and monitored. The policy encourages civil and respectful discourse regarding all topics discussed on social media and establishes rules to that end, which all users will be required to adhere to when engaging with the City online.

Councilmember Starr made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Winters, to approve the City of Ionia Social Media Policy as presented.

Roll Call Vote:
Ayes: Margot Cook, Brenda Cowling, Dawn Ketchum, Tim Lee, John Milewski, Tom Millard, Richard Starr, Jeff Winters, Troy Waterman
Nays: None
Abstentions: None
MOTION CARRIED

(VII.7.) Schedule Special Meeting for FY25-26 Budget Work Session
Councilmember Winters made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Cook, to schedule a Special City Council Meeting for 5:30 PM, Wednesday, May 7, 2025, for the purpose of reviewing the proposed FY25-26 budget.

Roll Call Vote:
Ayes: Margot Cook, Brenda Cowling, Dawn Ketchum, Tim Lee, John Milewski, Tom Millard, Richard Starr, Jeff Winters, Troy Waterman
Nays: None

Abstentions: None
MOTION CARRIED

VIII. APPOINTMENTS
None.

IX. CITY DEPARTMENT REPORTS AND MINUTES FROM BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

(IX.1.) Accounts Payable
April 3 - Councilmember Starr and/or Councilmember Lee
April 17 - Councilmember Winters and/or Councilmember Cook
May 1 - Councilmember Ketchum and/or Councilmember Waterman

(IX.2.) March Reports & Minutes
Written department reports and minutes from various City boards and commissions were provided to Council.

X. GOOD OF THE ORDER/ CITY COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS
City Clerk Jonathan Bowman: Announced that there will not be a City election in May.
City Manager Precia Garland: Invited everyone to attend the Grand Opening and Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony for the dog park on April 25 at 1:00 PM.
Tom Millard: Indicated that the Memorial Day program is all set for May 26.
Rich Starr: (1) Thanked the Ad Hoc Theatre Committee; (2) Commented on looking forward to the opening of the dog park.
Troy Waterman: (1) Congratulated Mr. Petersen on his appointment; (2) Commented on looking forward to spring break.
Brenda Cowling: Reported that there was great attendance at the last free movie at the Ionia Theatre.
Mayor John Milewski: (1) Reminded everyone of the upcoming "Dump-Your-Junk Day" on April 12 and Ionia Public Schools Ice Cream Social on April 16; (2) Expressed an early "Happy Birthday" to Councilmember Winters; (3) Unveiled that that Ionia Free Fair Association will be constructing a permanent pavilion for the E!Park; (4) Indicated that the University of Michigan Health-Sparrow Ionia has an upcoming meeting; (5) Requested everyone to vote for Officer Skorka and K-9 Titan in the Daily News' Favorite Police Officer Competition.

XI. CLOSED SESSION
None.

XII. ADJOURNMENT
Councilmember Waterman made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Cook, to adjourn.
MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jonathan T. Bowman
Ionia City Clerk