



# CITY OF IONIA

## CITY COUNCIL

### REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

6:30 PM, Wednesday, December 3, 2025

### IONIA 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 Tim Lee, Margot Cook, Tom Millard, Richard Starr, Mary Patrick, Troy Waterman, Brenda Cowling, and Mayor John Milewski present.

Councilmember Jeff Winters was absent.

Councilmember Patrick made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Millard, to excuse the absence of Councilmember Jeff Winters.

**MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.**

#### **I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

With no changes or additions, Councilmember Waterman made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Starr, to approve the agenda as presented.

**MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.**

#### **II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

##### **(II.1.) November 5, 2025 – Regular Meeting**

Minutes from the regular meeting of November 5, were reviewed. Councilmember Cook made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Cowling, to approve the November 5, 2025, meeting minutes as presented.

**MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.**

#### **III. PROCLAMATIONS**

None.

#### **IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

#### **V. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND ASSOCIATED ACTION**

None.

**VI. COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

**VII. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

**(VII.1.) Introduction and First Reading - Ordinance No. 601 - An ordinance to allow parking as an accessory use**

Ordinance No. 601 was presented to Council by City Manager Garland. The ordinance would allow parking as an accessory use to an adjacent lot.

Councilmember Millard made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Starr, to introduce and conduct a first reading of Ordinance No. 601, an ordinance to amend Chapter 1260, Section 1260.03 and enact a new Section 1274.10 entitled "Parking as an Accessory Use to an Adjacent Lot." The motion also scheduled a Public Hearing regarding the proposed ordinance for 6:30 PM, Wednesday, January 7, 2026, at Ionia City Hall.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Tim Lee, Margot Cook, Tom Millard, Richard Starr, Mary Patrick, Troy Waterman, Brenda Cowling, John Milewski

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**CITY OF IONIA  
IONIA COUNTY, MICHIGAN  
Ordinance No. 601**

At a regular meeting of City Council for the City of Ionia, Michigan held at City Hall on \_\_\_\_\_, 2025, beginning at 6:30 P.M., City Councilmember \_\_\_\_\_ made a motion to adopt this Ordinance, which by motion was supported by Councilmember \_\_\_\_\_.

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 1260, SECTION 1260.03 AND ENACT A NEW SECTION 1274.10 ENTITLED “PARKING AS AN ACCESSORY USE TO AN ADJACENT LOT” OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF IONIA.**

The CITY OF IONIA (the “City”) HEREBY ORDAINS:

**Section 1. Amendment to Part Twelve, Title Six, Chapter 1260, Section 1260.03.** Part Twelve, Title Six, Chapter 1260, Section 1260.03 of the Codified Ordinances is hereby amended as follows:

**1260.03 SPECIAL LAND USES.**

The following uses may be allowed subject as a special land use by the Planning Commission subject to the general and specific requirements of Chapter 1274:

- (a) Business in the character of a drive-in or open front store.
- (b) Indoor and outdoor commercial storage and warehousing facilities.
- (c) Lumber yards, provided they comply with the following conditions:
  - (1) Primary access shall be provided on a major street or highway.
  - (2) The maximum size allowed when considering total land size shall not exceed 2.25 acres.
  - (3) No greater than thirty percent (30%) of the sellable goods shall be stored in the open air.
- (d) Plant materials nursery for the retail sale of plant materials not grown on the site and sales of lawn furniture, playground equipment, and garden supplies, subject to the following conditions:
  - (1) The storage and/or display of any materials and/or products shall meet all structure setback requirements.
  - (2) All loading and parking shall be provided off-street.
  - (3) The storage of any soil, fertilizer, or other loose, unpackaged materials shall be contained to prevent any effects on adjacent use.
- (e) Outdoor theaters and open space venues - because outdoor theaters are unique in that they are used only after dark and since they develop a concentration of vehicular traffic entering and leaving their parking area, they shall be permitted in B-3 and I-1 districts only. Outdoor theaters shall further be subject to the following conditions:
  - (1) The proposed internal design shall receive approval from the Planning Commission and City Engineer regarding the adequacy of drainage, lighting, and other technical aspects based on applicable legal requirements.
  - (2) Outdoor theaters shall abut a major thoroughfare, and points of ingress and egress shall be available only from such major thoroughfares.
  - (3) All vehicles queueing up to enter the facility shall be provided with off-street waiting space. No vehicle shall be permitted to wait or stand within a dedicated right-of-way.
  - (4) The area shall be laid out to prevent the movie screen from being viewed from residential areas or adjacent major thoroughfares. All lighting used to illuminate the area shall be confined within and directed onto the outdoor theater site premises and subject to Section 1286.03.
- (f) Veterinary Hospitals or Veterinary Clinics, provided that all activities are conducted within an enclosed building and provided, further, that all buildings are set back at least 200 feet from abutting residential districts on the same side of the street.

(g) Parking as an accessory use to an adjacent lot, subject to Section 1274.10.

**Section 2. Enactment of Part Twelve, Title Six, Chapter 1274, Section 1274.10.** Part Twelve, Title Six, Chapter 1274 of the Codified Ordinances is hereby amended to enact a new Section 1274.10 to read in its entirety as follows:

**1274.10 PARKING AS AN ACCESSORY USE TO AN ADJACENT LOT.**

- (a) Notwithstanding the general requirement of Section 1240.11(1) that an accessory use be located on the same zoning lot as the principal use to which it is related, the Planning Commission may permit parking as an accessory use to an adjacent lot if the applicant demonstrates that the proposed parking cannot be reasonably placed on the same lot as the principal use due to site constraints or existing development.
- (b) For purposes of the setback requirements under Section 1282.01(a), the barrier-free parking requirements under Section 1282.02(q), and calculating minimum and maximum parking space requirements, the two lots shall be considered one lot.
- (c) All requirements under Chapter 1282 apply to parking approved under this section, provided, however, that if the principal use is on a lot outside of the City, the minimum and maximum parking space requirements shall not apply.
- (d) As part of approval under this section, the Planning Commission may allow a dumpster enclosure or similar accessory structure that serves the principal use on the adjacent lot, subject to all applicable requirements of this Ordinance.
- (e) In addition to any conditions that the Planning Commission may impose under Section 1274.05, the Planning Commission shall impose the following conditions with approval of a special land use under this section:

  - (1) The provision for parking as an accessory use to an adjacent lot shall be set forth in a recordable instrument recorded at the office of the Ionia County Register of Deeds, describing the lands affected by this agreement.
  - (2) The special land use approval shall automatically terminate if;

    - (A) the principal use on the adjacent lot ceases for a period of 18-months resulting in the use being considered abandoned, or;
    - (B) the principal use on the adjacent lot changes in use or expands resulting in significant alterations to site circulation, drainage, landscaping, lighting, and/or other considerations of site plan review that would require a site plan review by Planning Commission, or;
    - (C) the instrument required under Section 1274.10(d)(1) is found to be invalid or void by a court of competent jurisdiction or is terminated.
  - (3) Accessory structures shall not be allowed unless made part of said approval when granted.

**Section 3. Severability.** Should any portion of this Ordinance be declared to be invalid or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, such declaration shall not affect any other portion or provision of this Ordinance, which shall remain valid and in full force and effect.

**Section 4. Effective Date.** This Ordinance shall become effective upon the expiration of seven (7) days after this Ordinance’s adoption, or a summary thereof, appears in the newspaper as provided by law.

**(VII.2.) Sale of Excess City Property - 705 W. Main Street**

City Manager Garland presented to the City Council an offer from Parker Sawdy of Parker's Asphalt and Sealcoating, LLC to purchase excess City property at 705 W. Main Street for \$4,000. She indicated that Mr. Sawdy intends to combine the parcel with adjacent property that he has purchased to construct a commercial pole barn structure for his business.

Councilmember Millard made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Waterman, to approve the offer from Parker Sawdy of Parkers Asphalt and Sealcoating, LLC to purchase the excess City property located at 705 W. Main Street for \$4,000, contingent upon the buyer closing within 60 days of Council approval.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Tim Lee, Margot Cook, Tom Millard, Richard Starr, Mary Patrick, Troy Waterman, Brenda Cowling, John Milewski

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**(VII.3.) Donation Facilitation Agreement**

City Manager Garland explained that a potential naming rights donor for the Steele Park band shell has been in conversation with staff. The donor indicated a preference to donate to a 501(c)(3) organization.

Councilmember Cowling made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Patrick, to approve the Donation Facilitation Agreement between the City and the Ionia Rotary Club to coordinate a potential band shell naming rights donation at the planned Steele Park.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Tim Lee, Margot Cook, Tom Millard, Richard Starr, Mary Patrick, Troy Waterman, Brenda Cowling, John Milewski

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**(VII.4.) Draft Policy 2-015: Downtown Sound System Use Policy**

Garland presented a Downtown Sound System Use Policy to establish rules and procedures for the use of the City's wireless speaker system by members of the public for community events.

Mayor Milewski made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Millard, to approve Policy 2-015: Downtown Sound System Use Policy, as presented.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Tim Lee, Margot Cook, Tom Millard, Richard Starr, Mary Patrick, Troy Waterman, Brenda Cowling, John Milewski

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**(VII.5.) DDA Bylaws Update**

Councilmember Cowling made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Waterman, to approve the amended DDA Bylaws to allow the City Manager to serve on the DDA Board of Directors.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Tim Lee, Margot Cook, Tom Millard, Richard Starr, Mary Patrick, Troy Waterman, Brenda Cowling, John Milewski

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**(VII.6.) 2026 Combined Meeting Schedule**

Councilmember Lee made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Cowling, to approve the 2026 City of Ionia Combined Meeting Schedule.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Tim Lee, Margot Cook, Tom Millard, Richard Starr, Mary Patrick, Troy Waterman, Brenda Cowling, John Milewski

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**VIII. APPOINTMENTS**

**(VIII.1.) Various Boards and Commissions Appointments**

Per Section 2.03 of the City Charter of the City of Ionia, Mayor John Milewski recommended for Council approval the following individuals as appointments to various boards and commissions.

**Board of Review – (3-year term)**

Amanda Schanski – Term through 12/31/28

Jani Millard - Term through 12/31/28

**Downtown Development Authority– (4-year term)**

Tricia Meyers – Term through 12/31/29

**Income Tax Board – (3-year term)**

Mark Jennings – Term through 12/31/28

**Ionia Regional Utilities Authority– (4-year term)**

Delegate: Rich Starr – Term through 12/31/29

Alternate: Brenda Cowling – Term through 12/31/29

Alternate: Mary Patrick - Unexpired term through 12/31/26

**Planning Commission– (3-year term)**

Judy Swartz – Term through 12/31/28

Keturah Kelley – Term through 12/31/28

Councilmember Starr made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Millard, to appoint the provided list of individuals to the City's various boards and commissions, as recommended by the Mayor.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Tim Lee, Margot Cook, Tom Millard, Richard Starr, Mary Patrick, Troy Waterman, Brenda Cowling, John Milewski

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

## **IX. CITY DEPARTMENT REPORTS AND MINUTES FROM BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

### **(IX.1.) Accounts Payable**

**December 4 - Councilmember Winters and/or Councilmember Cook**

**December 18 - Councilmember Patrick and/or Councilmember Waterman**

### **(IX.2.) November 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 Manager Garland:** Thanked City staff for their hard work throughout the year and City Council for their support.

**Tim Lee:** Echoed appreciation to City staff.

**Margot Cook:** Commented on her love for the Christmas tree downtown and the charm it brings to the community.

**Tom Millard:** (1) Reminded everyone of the holiday parade and tree lighting scheduled for Friday, December 5; (2) Indicated that the school programs have been going well at the Theatre and that Cassie is doing a wonderful job.

**Richard Starr:** Wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

**Mary Patrick:** Echoed sentiments for a Merry Christmas.

**Troy Waterman:** Thanked staff.

**Brenda Cowling:** (1) Wished all present a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year; (2) Cautioned everyone to drive safely.

**Mayor John Milewski:** (1) Provided reminders for upcoming Santa visits throughout Ionia, including the Santa Breakfast at the Armory on December 6; (2) Reported on the \$28 million investment from the U of M Health System to the Ionia hospital and commented on how blessed the community is to have this resource.

## **XI. CLOSED SESSION**

None.

## **XII. ADJOURNMENT**

Councilmember Millard made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Waterman, to adjourn.

**MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:01 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jonathan T. Bowman  
Ionia City Clerk