



CITY OF IONIA

CITY COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

6:30 PM, Wednesday, April 1, 2026

IONIA CITY HALL - COUNCIL CHAMBERS

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor John Milewski called the meeting of the Ionia City Council to order at 6:31 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, Jeff Winters, Mary Patrick, Troy Waterman, Brenda Cowling, and Mayor John Milewski present.

I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(II.1.) March 4, 2026 – Special Meeting

(II.2.) March 4, 2026 – Regular Meeting

Minutes from the special and regular meetings of March 4, were reviewed. Councilmember Patrick made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Waterman, to approve both the special and regular March 4, 2026, meeting minutes as presented.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

III. PROCLAMATIONS

(III.1.) Arbor Day 2026

Mayor John Milewski read and presented a Proclamation celebrating Arbor Day 2026.

Proclamation Celebrating Arbor Day 2026

WHEREAS, in 1872, J. Sterling Morton encouraged the planting of trees by proposing a special day dedicated to tree planting before the Nebraska Board of Agriculture; and

WHEREAS, the first observance of Arbor Day resulted in the planting of more than one million

trees in Nebraska, beginning a tradition that continues across the United States and around the world; and

WHEREAS, trees are vital to the health and well-being of our communities by improving air quality, reducing soil erosion, conserving energy, moderating temperatures, and providing habitat for wildlife; and

WHEREAS, trees are also an important renewable resource that provides wood products, paper, and other materials used in our everyday lives; and

WHEREAS, a healthy and vibrant tree canopy enhances the beauty of neighborhoods, increases property values, strengthens local business districts, and contributes to the overall quality of life for residents; and

WHEREAS, the City of Ionia has been recognized for 33 years by the Arbor Day Foundation as a Tree City USA community, demonstrating a long-standing commitment to responsible urban forestry and the stewardship of our community's trees.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED that I, John R. Milewski II, Mayor of the City of Ionia, do hereby proclaim Friday, April 24, 2026, as ARBOR DAY in the City of Ionia, in recognition of the 154th National Arbor Day, and encourage all residents to celebrate Arbor Day and take part in efforts to plant, protect, and care for trees throughout our community.

BE IT FURTHER PROCLAIMED that the citizens of Ionia are encouraged to support tree planting and preservation efforts to help ensure a greener, healthier community for present and future generations.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

V. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND ASSOCIATED ACTION

(V.1.) Public Hearing to receive comments on Ordinance 603 - DDA Development and Tax Increment Financing Plan

Mayor Milewski opened the public hearing for comments on Ordinance No. 603 at 6:35 PM.

City Manager Garland explained the ordinance and corresponding Downtown Development Authority Development and Tax Increment Financing Plan.

Mayor Milewski closed the public hearing at 6:38 PM following no comments from the public.

Councilmember Winters made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Millard, to conduct a second reading and approve Ordinance No. 603, an ordinance to repeal Part Eight, Title Four, Chapter 884, entitled "Development and Tax Increment Financing Plan for the Downtown Development Authority" and enact a new Chapter 885 entitled "Downtown Development Authority Development and Tax Increment Financing Plan" of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Ionia to approve and adopt the Development and Tax Increment Financing Plan for the Downtown Development Authority of the City of Ionia.

Roll Call Vote:

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

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

MOTION CARRIED

**CITY OF IONIA
IONIA COUNTY, MICHIGAN
Ordinance No. 603**

AN ORDINANCE TO REPEAL PART EIGHT, TITLE FOUR, CHAPTER 884 ENTITLED “DEVELOPMENT AND TAX INCREMENT FINANCING PLAN FOR THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY” AND ENACT A NEW CHAPTER 885 ENTITLED “DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY DEVELOPMENT AND TAX INCREMENT FINANCING PLAN” OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF IONIA TO APPROVE AND ADOPT THE DEVELOPMENT AND TAX INCREMENT FINANCING PLAN FOR THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF IONIA

At a regular meeting of the City Council for the City of Ionia, Michigan held at Ionia City Hall on April 1, 2026, beginning at 6:30 P.M., City Councilmember Winters made a motion to approve and adopt this Ordinance, which was supported by City Councilmember Millard.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY OF IONIA (the “City”) HEREBY ORDAINS:

Section 1. Repeal Part Eight, Title Four, Chapter 884. Part Eight, Title Four, Chapter 884 entitled “Development and Tax Increment Financing Plan for the Downtown Development Authority,” Sections 884.01 through 884.14, inclusive, of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Ionia is hereby repealed in its entirety.

Section 2. Enactment of Chapter 885. Part Eight, Title Four of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Ionia is hereby amended to enact a new Chapter 885, entitled “Downtown Development Authority Development and Tax Increment Financing Plan” to read in its entirety as follows:

Chapter 885

Downtown Development Authority Development and Tax Increment Financing Plan

<u>885.01</u>	<u>Intent</u>
<u>885.02</u>	<u>Public Purpose</u>
<u>885.03</u>	<u>Findings</u>
<u>885.04</u>	<u>Approval and Adoption</u>
<u>885.05</u>	<u>Duration of the Plan</u>
<u>885.06</u>	<u>Amendments</u>
<u>885.07</u>	<u>Annual Report</u>
<u>885.08</u>	<u>Conflicts of Laws; Severability</u>

885.01 INTENT.

This Chapter is intended to implement the powers granted under the Recodified Tax Increment Financing Act, Public Act 57 of 2018, as amended, (the “Act”) by approving a Development and Tax Increment Financing Plan (the “Plan”) designed to foster economic revitalization, strengthen the downtown commercial core, improve public infrastructure, and enhance property values within the designated Development Area of the Downtown Development Authority District. The Plan authorizes the use of tax increment revenues to support public improvements and development activities that serve a public purpose and benefit the City and its residents.

885.02 PUBLIC PURPOSE.

The Ionia City Council determined that the Plan constitutes a public purpose and that it is in the best interests of the public to proceed with the Plan in order to halt property value deterioration in the Downtown District, to increase property tax valuation, to eliminate the causes of the deterioration in property values, and to promote growth in the Downtown District.

885.03 FINDINGS.

The City Council’s determination on the Plan, was based on the following considerations:

- (a) Despite its best efforts, the established Development Area Citizens Council was unable to provide recommendations to the Downtown Development Authority on the Plan due to a lack of interest by eligible residents within the Development Area.
- (b) The Plan meets the requirements set forth in Sections 217(2) of the Act.
- (c) The proposed method of financing future development is feasible and the City of Ionia Downtown Development Authority (the “Authority”) has the ability to arrange the financing.
- (d) The development is reasonable and necessary to carry out the purposes of the Act.
- (e) The land included within the Development Area to be acquired is reasonably necessary to carry out the purposes of the Act in an efficient and economically satisfactory manner.
- (f) The Development Plan portion of the Plan is in reasonable accord with the Master Plan for the City of Ionia.
- (g) Public services, such as fire and police protection and utilities, are or will be adequate to service the Development Area.
- (h) Changes in zoning, streets, street levels, intersections, and utilities, to the extent required by the Plan, are reasonably necessary for the project and for the City.

885.04 APPROVAL AND ADOPTION.

The Plan is hereby approved and adopted as of the date of this Ordinance. A copy of the Plan and all amendments thereto shall be maintained on file in the City Clerk's Office.

885.05 DURATION OF THE PLAN.

The Plan shall be effective for thirty (30) years from the effective date of this Ordinance.

885.06 AMENDMENTS.

The Plan may be amended by City Council in accordance with the Act and subject to all public notice requirements.

885.07 ANNUAL REPORT.

Annually, the Authority shall submit a report to City Council and other required entities, as required by the Act.

885.08 CONFLICTS OF LAWS; SEVERABILITY.

All ordinances, resolutions, and orders or parts thereof in conflict with the provisions of this chapter are to the extent of such conflict hereby repealed, and each section of this chapter and each subdivision of any section thereof is hereby declared to be independent, and the finding or holding of any section or subdivision thereof to be invalid or void shall not be deemed or held to affect the validity of any other section or subdivision of this chapter.

Section 3. Repealer. All ordinances and parts of ordinances in conflict herewith are repealed to the extent of such conflict.

Section 4. Severability. Should any section, portion or part of this Ordinance be declared to be invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such declaration does not void or render inoperable any other part of this Ordinance.

Section 5. Publication and Effective Date. The City Clerk shall cause a notice of adoption of this Ordinance to be published. This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon publication of a summary thereof as permitted by law, along with the date of its adoption, in the *Daily News*, a newspaper of general circulation in the City.

ORDINANCE NO. 603 DECLARED ADOPTED.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

(VI.1.) I-DART: Plan Presentations:

- **Transportation Development Plan**
- **Move Ionia - A Plan for Countywide Transit Services**

Dan Dalton of KFH Group (Rockville, MD) presented a Transportation Development Plan and a Plan for Countywide Transit Services titled "Move Ionia" on behalf of the City's Dial-A-Ride Transportation Department. Councilmembers asked several questions about the plans.

Councilmember Millard made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Cook, to accept the Ionia Dial-A-Ride Transportation Development Plan and Move Ionia Plan - A Plan for Countywide Transit, as presented.

Roll Call Vote:

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

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

MOTION CARRIED

VII. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

(VII.1.) Electric Service for Steele St. Park

City Manager Garland presented a service agreement and utility easement as requested by Consumers Energy, so that an electrical service could be installed to serve Steele Street Park.

Councilmember Starr made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Winters, to approve the service agreement and utility easement, as requested by Consumers Energy. The motion also authorized City Manager Precia Garland to sign the authorizing documents on the City's behalf.

Roll Call Vote:

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

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

MOTION CARRIED

(VII.2.) Schedule Special Meeting for FY26-27 Budget Work Session

Councilmember Starr made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Cook, to schedule a Special City Council Meeting for 5:30 PM, Wednesday, May 6, 2026, at Ionia City Hall for the purpose of reviewing the proposed FY26-27 budget.

Roll Call Vote:

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

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

MOTION CARRIED

(VII.3.) Wellhead Protection Plan - 2026 Update

Councilmember Starr made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Waterman, to adopt Resolution 2026-07, a Resolution to set forth the City of Ionia's Policy and Administrative Procedures to Protect the Municipal Groundwater Supply, which includes adoption of the 2026 City of Ionia Wellhead Protection Plan.

Roll Call Vote:

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

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

MOTION CARRIED

Resolution 2026-07



COUNTY OF IONIA, MICHIGAN

A RESOLUTION TO SET FORTH THE CITY OF IONIA'S POLICY AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES TO PROTECT THE MUNICIPAL GROUNDWATER SUPPLY

At a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Ionia, held at the Ionia City Hall, 114 North Kidd Street, Ionia, Michigan, on the 1st day of April, 2026, at 6:30 p.m., there were:

PRESENT: Tim Lee, Margot Cook, Tom Millard, Richard Starr, Jeff Winters, Mary Patrick, Troy Waterman, Brenda Cowling, John Milewski
ABSENT: None

The following resolution was offered by Councilmember Starr and seconded by Councilmember Waterman:

WHEREAS, the City of Ionia recognizes the importance of its groundwater supply as a natural resource used for human consumption; and

WHEREAS, it is within the responsibility of the City of Ionia as a public water supplier, to consider the health, safety and welfare of the community and its customers; and

WHEREAS, groundwater contamination can and does occur as a consequence of a variety of land use activities;

WHEREAS, it is desirable to preserve and protect the quality and quantity of our groundwater resources to assure a continued safe, adequate, and useable supply both now and in the future; and

WHEREAS, the protection of current and potential future sources of groundwater used for drinking water is worthwhile from the standpoint of resource protection; and

WHEREAS, state, county, and municipal laws and regulations require certain land uses to obtain permits and approvals for construction and operation; and

WHEREAS, state agencies are not always aware of new development proposals and the owners or developers of proposed new land uses are not always aware of state, county, and municipal permit and approval requirements; and

WHEREAS, local government officials, through adopted zoning ordinances, have the legal authority to review and/or approve land uses for the purposes of meeting the needs of the state's residents for natural resource protection and public services, including public water supplies;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Ionia agrees to take action to protect the immediate Wellhead Protection Area and take steps to determine and update the zone of contribution to the wells or well fields in compliance with the State of Michigan Wellhead Protection Program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Ionia will issue no zoning permit or special land use permit until such time that all required municipal, county, state, or federal environmental permits or approvals have been obtained, and/or there is evidence that proper application to the

responsible municipal, county, state, or federal agencies has been made and significant issues affecting the Wellhead Protection Area have been addressed. An Environmental Permits Checklist and Hazardous Substances Reporting Form are hereby adopted for administrative use when new, changed or expanded land use activities are proposed.

RESOLUTION 2026-07 DECLARED ADOPTED.

(VII.4.) License Agreement for use of City Property for Event Parking

City Manager Garland explained the request from the Ionia Free Fair Association (IFFA) for a license agreement to make improvements this spring and summer to vacant City property on the south side of the Grand River and allow the IFFA to use the property for overflow parking during the planned Ionia Freak Fair event in August.

Councilmember Millard made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Cowling, to approve a license agreement for the vacant City property on the south side of the Grand River to the Ionia Free Fair Association for the 2026 Ionia Freak Fair event, as presented.

Roll Call Vote:

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

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

MOTION CARRIED

VIII. APPOINTMENTS

None.

IX. CITY DEPARTMENT REPORTS AND MINUTES FROM BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

(IX.1.) Accounts Payable

April 2 - Councilmember Winters and/or Councilmember Cook

April 16 - Councilmember Patrick and/or Councilmember Waterman

April 30 - Councilmember Millard and/or Councilmember Cowling

(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 Bowman: (1) Indicated that the month of April is the last chance for people interested in working the 2026-2027 election cycle to submit an application; (2) Highlighted a variety of upcoming community events including a Comedy Show at the Ionia Theatre on April 24, Community Clean Up Day on April 25, and Theatre Fundraiser Concert on April 30.

City Manager Garland: Announced the anticipated City of Ionia budget impact due to the State's decision to demolish the old Michigan Reformatory Correctional Facility located on W. Main Street, which includes a projected revenue loss of \$1,453,528 or 19% of the current FY26 General Fund Budget.

Tom Millard: (1) Reiterated details of the Caitlin Cusack Theatre Fundraiser Concert on April 30 and noted the great coordination for planning the event; (2) Commented that planning for various upcoming community parades and street closures is underway.

Mary Patrick: Mentioned that she will unfortunately be out of town for the upcoming community events and special Council meeting at the end of the month.

Brenda Cowling: Noted her appreciation for having the Council meeting documents available electronically to help save the trees.

Mayor John Milewski: Announced details for the Meander on Main event scheduled for September 26, 2026.

XI. CLOSED SESSION

(XI.1.) Closed session in accordance with MCL 15.268, Sec. 8 (1)(h) To consider material exempt from discussion or disclosure by state or federal statute (simple majority vote required)

Councilmember Patrick made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Cowling, to enter into closed session at 7:36 PM to consider material exempt from discussion or disclosure by state or federal statute in accordance with MCL 15.268, Sec. 8(1)(h).

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

Councilmember Cowling made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Cook, to end closed session and reenter open session at 8:02 PM.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

Mayor Milewski made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Starr, to authorize the City Attorney to file and pursue a declaratory judgment action in the Ionia County Circuit Court to determine whether various provisions in the Contract for Conditional Transfer of Property pursuant to Public Act 425 of 1984 with Ionia Township, dated February 12, 2001, are void against public policy.

Roll Call Vote:

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

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

MOTION CARRIED

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Cook made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Cowling, to adjourn.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jonathan T. Bowman
Ionia City Clerk