

1. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Ishpeming City Council was held on Wednesday, April 16, 2025 in the Ishpeming City Hall Council Chambers. Mayor Pat Scanlon called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Pat Scanlon, Council Members Ben Argall, Brett Argall, Jason Chapman, and Kurt Kipling (5).
Absent: None (0). Also present was City Manager Randy Scholz and City Attorney Caroline Bridges.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Councilmember Jason Chapman, seconded by Councilmember Brett Argall and carried unanimously to approve the agenda incorporating the following changes: Items 11(k) and 11(l) should read "First Reading of Amendment to Ordinance 7-400 and 7-500...".

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Carrie Plummer, 566 Bluff Street in Negaunee, expressed her concerns with fluoridation in the drinking water in both Ishpeming and Negaunee; she quoted from several studies related to the negative effects of fluoride in the drinking water; toxicity levels; and the mounting data against fluoride. She asked the Council to consider holding a public hearing on this issue.

Valerie Olson, 116 Hillcrest Trail in Marquette, expressed her concerns with fluoride in the drinking water and cited several materials related to the dangers of fluoride; had concerns over misinformation being presented from the American Dental Association; and asked Council to consider holding a public hearing on this issue.

Sara Johnson, 901 N. Third Street, Executive Director of Partridge Creek Farm (PCF), announced their 2025 CSA program was now open with pick up on Wednesday evenings during the summer; beds were available for rent in their newly acquired community garden; the Farm to School Summer Camp was now back and they would be hosting a three-week long sessions this year; PCF has been recommended for another MDARD grant; and she encouraged the public to visit their website for additional information on PCF. She also announced at the end of the month she would be stepping down as executive director and stated it was a privilege to serve PCF and a pleasure to work with the talented people working there, and she would continue to be living in the City and would continue to support PCF.

Don Pennala, 104 New York Street, asked if an additional traffic control sign could be placed at the intersection of 6th and New York Street because of a blind spot when backing out of his driveway.

Jeff DeGabriele, 413 Vine Street, stated he would like the City Charter to be placed on the website.

Jeff Plummer, 566 Bluff Street in Negaunee, explained his concerns with fluoride in the drinking water. He would like for the public to be informed of the effects of fluoride in the water and urged Council to hold a public hearing.

Amanda Ghanavati, 519 County Road, and a business owner in Ishpeming, would like fluoridation in the drinking water to be stopped and she urged Council to hold a public hearing on this issue.

Ron Elberth, 106 High Excelsior Street, talked about his concerns with the lighting by the school and pointed out a safety issue with a vehicle that is parked near the cross walk to the parking lot on Division Street creating a blind spot for the students when crossing the street. He also asked if the City would consider having a drop off for glass recycling.

Kris Wainio, 109 Alice Street, Negaunee, asked the City Council to hold a public hearing so residents are made aware of fluoride in the drinking water and could then make their own choice.

Dr. Frank Jeffries, holistic chiropractor in Marquette County, expressed his concerns with fluoride in the drinking water. He urged Council to review the science and thought the inclusion of fluoride in the water should be stopped.

6. MANAGER OFFER OF INFORMATION - There was no additional information.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Councilmember Jason Chapman, seconded by Councilmember Brett Argall and carried unanimously to approve the consent agenda as presented.

- a. Minutes of Previous Meeting (March 19th, March 26th, April 2nd, Closed Session March 19th)
- b. Approval of Disbursements

8. MONTHLY REPORTS FROM DEPARTMENTS

a. Financial Statement Report

Finance Director Grant Getschow reviewed the unaudited balance sheet including the General Fund, Major and Local Streets, Sewer and Garbage Fund, DDA, and Police and Fire Retirement Fund for the period ending March 31, 2025. There was some brief discussion on the market losses in the Police and Fire Retirement Fund.

A motion was made by Councilmember Jason Chapman, seconded by Councilmember Brett Argall and carried unanimously to accept the unaudited financial report as presented.

b. DPW Update

DPW General Foreman Bill Anderson advised staff was working towards determining the go live date for the Aqua Hawk system; DPW staff has prepared the plow vehicles for storage; staff would be painting parking spots downtown this year; and also noted 4-5 large trees around the City will be cut down this year due to deterioration.

c. Library Update

i. Carnegie Library 2024 Annual Report

Library Director Jesse Shirtz explained in March of every year the annual report was prepared and she shared some of the highlights of the report.

9. PUBLIC HEARING – There were none.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – There was none.

11. NEW BUSINESS

a. Lake Superior Community Partnership (LSCP) Quarterly Report – Chris Germain

Chris Germain, Director of the Lake Superior Community Partnership, provided an update on the work done in the first quarter which was covered under the current contract which included the Match on Main grant in which three application were received; two workshops were held at the West End Hub and both were very well attended; assisted with promoting the Façade grants for the DDA; continue to be in touch with the MEDC Main Street Program; prepared and disbursed many flyers for the meet and greets for new City Manager Randy Scholz; established a west end newsletter; and they were developing a new social media page. The LSCP would also be assisting with the winter market to be held in Ishpeming; they were launching a childcare provider grant program; announced the direct flight to Minneapolis was very popular; there would be two more rounds of small business grants; and they have received payments from the former GINCC and funds would be isolated so these funds would only be used for the West End Hub.

b. Special Event Application: Cal's Journey 5K and 1 Mile: August 15 and 16, 2025

A motion was made by Councilmember Kurt Kipling, seconded by Councilmember Jason Chapman and carried unanimously to approved Cal's Journey 5K and 1 Mile on August 15 and 16, 2025 as requested.

c. 2025 Construction Project Update – Chris Holmes, UP Engineers and Architects (UPEA)

Chris Holmes, UPEA, reported Lindberg and Sons would begin work on May 5th and would be starting on Deer Lake Avenue continuing on the north side of US 41 and moving south. Payne and Dolan were also planning on starting May 5th and would be beginning on Stone Street and Houghton Street.

Payne and Dolan would also be continuing with the CWSRF – Sewer project but he was not sure if they would begin that part of the project at the same time. When this sewer works begins, Payne and Dolan would begin on Stone Street and Houghton Street. The river crossing project, on Washington Street, would most likely begin in August.

d. Design options for Third Street – UP Engineers and Architects (UPEA)

Chris Holmes, UPEA, explained the road width would be reduced to match with the north part of Third Street which included the green space. He also noted, the intersection of Hematite and Third Street would be reconfigured to be a more standard intersection.

There was discussion related to the project; property owner retaining walls on a portion of Third Street; the cost of the project; and designs.

It was the consensus of Council to forward the plans for the Third Street storm sewer and design to Lindberg and Sons.

e. Confirmation of Negaunee Ishpeming Water Authority Well Location at Al Quaal

A motion was made by Councilmember Kurt Kipling, seconded by Councilmember Jason Chapman and carried unanimously to confirm the location of the production well at Al Quaal as proposed on the map presented by the Negaunee Ishpeming Water Authority.

f. MSHDA – Michigan Neighborhood Letter of Intent: 216 W. Division Street

Brice Sturmer, 367 County Road in Negaunee, developer for the Loeffler Block (old Rollie's Furniture Building) provided some background information related to his proposed development. He was working on various funding possibilities including the MSHDA Michigan Neighborhood CDBG grant which he was asking for Council to authorize a Letter of Intent. He further explained the proposed project would create five (5) new dwelling units and rehabilitate two (2) vacant spaces to create downtown housing; adding this would address housing shortage needs in the City.

There was discussion related to the project; the total investment for the project; and the housing shortage needs.

A motion was made by Councilmember Jason Chapman, seconded by Councilmember Kurt Kipling and carried unanimously to authorize staff to submit the Letter of Intent to MSHDA for the Michigan Neighborhood CDBG grant for the Loeffler Block as requested.

g. 2025 Quarter 1 Budget Amendments

Finance Director Getschow reviewed the 2025 first quarter budget amendment which included the increases in the general fund with the elimination of the motor pool fund.

A motion was made by Councilmember Jason Chapman, seconded by Councilmember Ben Argall and carried unanimously to approve the 2025 first quarter budget amendments as presented.

h. Recommendation to increase the DPW Part-Time Laborer Wage

General Foreman Anderson advised the Cemetery Board recommended the wage for the summer laborers be increased to \$15.00/hour to coincide with the wage paid the part-time winter tube slide laborers. He added the Downtown Development Authority also support the wage increase to coincide with the Beautification Caretakers wage.

A motion was made by Councilmember Kurt Kipling, seconded by Councilmember Jason Chapman and carried unanimously to approve the recommended wage increase for the part-time laborer position to \$15.00/hour.

i. DPW request to purchase sewer flow meters

General Foreman Anderson explained the benefits of using the meters to monitor flows during various times of the year.

A motion was made by Councilmember Jason Chapman, seconded by Councilmember Ben Argall and carried unanimously to authorize the purchase of four (4) flow meters and mounting bands from USA Bluebook in the amount of \$30,313.34 with funding from the Sewer Fund and to waive competitive bidding as recommended by staff.

j. Cooperative Mutual Aid Fire Control Agreement with the Department of Natural Resources

Fire Chief Jason Annala explained this was a standard agreement updated which occurs every five years.

A motion was made by Councilmember Jason Chapman, seconded by Councilmember Brett Argall and carried unanimously to approve the Mutual Aid Fire Control Agreement with the DNR, pending City Attorney review, and authorize the mayor and fire chief to sign.

k. First Reading of Amendment to Ordinance 7-400, Rental Registration

l. First Reading of Amendment to Ordinance 7-500, Rental Inspections

Both proposed ordinance amendments were discussed together.

Attorney Caroline Bridges explained the two ordinance amendments. She reviewed some of the proposed amendments to the rental registration ordinance and noted there was language included to require registration of short-term rentals. She also reviewed some of the proposed amendments to the Rental Inspection ordinance and noted rental inspections were not listed for short term rentals and the language clarified that copies of other agencies rental inspection could be accepted. She further suggested the attachments to each ordinance be removed so both ordinances would end after the effective date.

There was some discussion regarding the proposed amendments; short term rentals in the City; and enforcement. The Planning Commission would still be working towards development of a short-term rental ordinance and the only change in the proposed amendments was to require registration of short-term rentals. Most of the amendments relate to the current rental inspection program.

A motion was made by Councilmember Jason Chapman, seconded by Councilmember Ben Argall and carried unanimously to approve the first reading of amendment to Ordinance 7-400 and 7-500 as presented, including the removal of the attachments to each ordinance.

m. Request to purchase City property from U.P. Propane

Dan Harrington, owner of U.P. Propane, was requesting to purchase property from the City on Malton Road near Malton Electric, to place a propane tank fill station. He has spoken to the Zoning Administrator regarding zoning of the proposed site. This would be similar to the U.P. Propane property on M-95 in Humboldt Township. If possible, he would like to complete the project before next year's heating season.

There was discussion related to the parcel; Planning Commission discussions related to property and/or development on Malton Road; and the need for a property description and an appraisal.

It was the consensus of Council to forward this request to the Planning Commission and to get the necessary legal descriptions for the requested parcel.

12. MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilmember Ben Argall advised he attend the ribbon cutting for the Nicolet Bank which was very nice and well attended.

Councilmember Kurt Kipling announced Karl Bohnak would be at the Senior Center next week and reminded everyone to stop in and say hello to their Representatives.

Councilmember Jason Chapman encouraged residents to support the House Bills as they were critical to Cleveland Cliffs; and attended the soft opening for the Milano Meats Café.

Councilmember Brett Argall attended the DDA meeting; announced the Farmer's Market would be starting on Sunday, May 25th; the West End Craft Show will be held on May 3rd from 10-3 pm at the bowling alley.; he attended the City Manager Meet and Greet held by the LSCP; and he attended the ribbon cutting for Nicolet Bank noting the project turned out wonderful.

Mayor Pat Scanlon attended many meetings regarding the Waste Water Treatment Plant; attended the tour of Third Street; and toured the City with Manager Scholz.

13. MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Scholz reported he met with CUPPAD; MSU Extension and the Lake Superior Community Partnership; he would like to request permission to attend the Marquette County Ambassadors Conference in Lansing next week; and noted the City has great employees and a lot of great people in the community.

A motion was made by Councilmember Jason Chapman, seconded by Councilmember Brett Argall and carried unanimously to authorize the City Manager to attend the Marquette County Ambassadors Conference in Lansing, April 29th-May 1st with a not to exceed amount of \$800.00 for travel.

a. Draft format for Monthly City Manager Report

It was the consensus of Council to start with this format for the monthly report.

14. CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO MCL 15.268(c) TO CONSIDER STRATEGY AND NEGOTIATIONS CONNECTED WITH A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT

A motion was made by Councilmember Jason Chapman, seconded by Councilmember Brett Argall to go into closed session pursuant to MCL 15.268(c) to consider strategy and negotiations connected with a collective bargaining agreement at 8:27pm. Ayes: Mayor Pat Scanlon, Councilmembers, Ben Argall, Brett Argall, Jason Chapman, and Kurt Kipling. (5). Nays: None (0). Motion passed 5-0.

Returned to open session at 8:43 p.m.

15. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:44 p.m., a motion was made by Councilmember Kurt Kipling, seconded by Mayor Pat Scanlon and carried unanimously to adjourn.



Cathy Smith, City Clerk