

**CITY OF ITHACA
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
July 15, 2025
5:30 PM**

The regular meeting of the City of Ithaca City Council was called to order by Mayor Brett Baublitz at 5:30pm. and followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Present were Mayor Brett Baublitz, Councilpersons James Andrew, Rob Endter, Clark Hubbard, Rick Koppleberger, Alison Lombardi and Kristyn Roethlisberger. Staff present was City Manager Jamey Conn and City Clerk Cathy Cameron.

Additional staff present was City Treasurer Luke Klifman, Lt. Eric Leonard and Sheriff Tom Clark.

Audience in attendance was Jerry Hansen and Brook Vernon.

Moved by Hubbard, second by Koppleberger to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held July 1, 2025. Motion carried.

Mayor Baublitz asked for approval of the agenda and for any items to be removed from the Consent Agenda.

Moved by Andrew, second by Lombardi to approve the Agenda including the Consent Agenda. Motion carried.

Public Comment

Mayor Baublitz asked for public comment. Resident, Jerry Hansen shared his thoughts on the current policing services provided.

Consent Agenda

Moved by Hubbard, second by Andrew to approve the consent agenda items as listed:

- City Manager's written report included updates and information on Policing Estimates, ACO Agreement, Old Decorative Brick, Meet Up Eat Up, Audit Consultation, Speed Radar Sign and Steam Railroading Institute.
- Claims submitted to the Ways and Means Committee by City Treasurer Klifman and recommended for payment: Accounts Payable Checks #50765-50798, #1035(A) and Payroll Checks #17101-17106, DD #3337-3363, EFT #2027-2031 as listed in the Check Register Book.
- Correspondence received was none.

Motion carried by Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: (7) Andrew, Endter, Hubbard, Koppleberger, Lombardi, Roethlisberger, Baublitz

Nos: (0) None

Absent: (0) None

Committee/Department Reports

Lt. Leonard reported on the quarterly activity of the Ithaca Unit covering April through June 2025. The monthly activity report for June was provided.

Moved by Koppleberger, second by Lombardi to receive the Ithaca Unit 2nd Quarter 2025 verbal report and the June 2025 written report. Motion carried.

Manager Conn reported that, at councils' request, he invited Sheriff Clark to attend the meeting to have a conversation regarding the policing services. Sheriff Clark began by asking council what they wanted for a police force in Ithaca, to help guide him with the services. Councilperson Koppleberger stated that he thought that was made clear in the initial meeting with him back in April. Further stating that the council wanted to have more of a police presence and that did not mean more traffic stops. Sheriff Clark defended the 23 stops that were made during the six-day time frame and that the infractions were justified. Manager Conn stated that the city pays for one deputy per shift and that multiple deputies were making traffic stops in the city limits. Sheriff Clark acknowledged that did occur and that his deputies patrol countywide, but if the city did not want the extra patrols in the city, he would put a stop to it. Manager Conn agreed with Councilperson Koppleberger that having more patrols and making more stops was not part of what was discussed in that initial meeting.

Mayor Baublitz stated that community policing is what was discussed in that meeting. He then shared what that means to him; "Deputies to be seen, active in the community, in the schools, visible to the public." Further stating that visibility is important, because cars will slow down if they see a patrol car does not mean you have to stop them, but if you are seen hence people will obey the law. Sheriff Clark stated that they are in the process of hiring a deputy that will serve as a school resource officer for Ithaca, Breckenridge, Ashley and Fulton Public Schools.

Councilperson Clark stated community policing to him is the nuance of enforcing speed limits when it becomes a safety issue, deputies being seen, the influence of an officer. Further stating what it is used to be like, having officers that are regulars in the community, and they get to know everybody. Code enforcement component to our contract, we need assistance in compliance to the ordinances we have. Part of the community policing is during down time, having the deputies driving down all the streets, not just Center or other busier streets. Concerns about parents in a hurry getting kids to schools, during the school year every morning and afternoon there are twelve spots a deputy could be at to be visible and continually rotate those locations. Councilperson Hubbard stated that he understands the component of the contract is that the Sherriff operates the department and his deputies. This is a suggestion that he feels is important to pursue.

Councilperson Koppleberger stated that he wants to see the deputies out in the community more, communicate with business owners. Walking down the sidewalks and introduce themselves.

Mayor Baublitz stated that he would like to see some continuity of who we have in town, so that there is an opportunity for that deputy to learn more about the surroundings, for example, that car belongs in that driveway, that garage door is never open, why is it open at 3am, that type of city policing instead of just driving around waiting for a call from dispatch. These are things that can be done that are not happening. Mayor Baublitz reported that he has seen deputies sleeping in their patrol cars parked out at the soccer fields while out on his morning runs, another instance of a night patrol car parked at the high school while the deputy is walking the track. We are paying for that.

Councilperson Lombardi stated that she agrees with everything Councilperson Hubbard said. Really focusing on police presence on Union Street is needed, as she has noticed the speeding that occurs during morning and afternoon commutes to the high school.

Councilperson Roethlisberger stated that she wants to see them understanding city ordinances and enforcement. Having police presence in the evening as there are off road vehicles going up and down the streets sometimes driven by children with no parental guidance.

Councilperson Endter agreed with everything the other councilmembers have brought up. As far as how many tickets were issued, again that is not what the council was looking for. It is the presence that deters the need for tickets being issued. He would like to see more direct communication between Lt. Leonard, the deputies and the city code enforcement officer. Sheriff Clark was on board assisting with code enforcement and offered their assistance in serving citations and providing direct communications with Code Officer Foster.

Councilperson Andrew stated that the presence of the deputies is important and appreciated. He stated that there is concern about having deputies stay in the city, as union shift picks lead to rotations on a regular basis. He inquired how many road deputies live within Gratiot County. Sheriff Clark replied 2 or 3. Councilperson Andrew feels that this fact is reflective of the deputies not having an allegiance other than the paycheck. If they were from here, they would give it their all. He believes that there can be a happy medium. The deputy needs to be in the mindset that city patrol is about learning the community. If they are patrolling down a street at 1:30 in the morning and notice that an elderly resident's car's dome light is on and the door is open, then they need to investigate that. To be watchful for the unusual instead of just driving up and down the street because they must. As far as a non-community policing presence, from what he heard at the town hall, a lot of residents appreciate a fair amount of traffic stops. There is a lot that can be done, if treated appropriately. For instance, the other night he saw a side by side going down the street with six people in it with two kids hanging off the back of it. That is an instance of unsafe behavior that deserves to be addressed. Every stop does not have to be a ticket though; warnings can be given. Sheriff Clark did follow up by stating that during the police presence time frame, the deputies did give 36 warnings, so there were more warnings than citations.

Manager Conn inquired about where the Ithaca Unit goes when leaving the city. Lt. Leonard replied that they go out to the animal control building, mental health person transport to the hospital, or follow up on a case that may require travel are among a few.

Councilperson Hubbard suggested having Lt. Leonard attend meetings monthly instead of quarterly.

Mayor Baublitz thanked Sheriff Clark for attending the meeting.

Treasurer Klifman reported on the state of finances for the 4th Quarter of Fiscal Year 2024/2025.

Moved by Andrew, second by Hubbard to receive the Financial Report for the 4th Quarter of Fiscal Year 2024/2025 and place on file. Motion carried.

City Manager Comments

Manager Conn provided a status update on EGLE's ACO agreement. He has been in discussion with other City Managers who are experiencing the same hurdles with EGLE recently and are joining forces to provide some pushback by getting our legislators involved.

Unfinished Business

Manager Conn reported that he received notice that the speed radar signs cannot show over 20 miles per hour on an MDOT roadway. Our signs do not have that ability without expensive software and updates. Our option will be to spend another \$3,500 on purchasing two mobile trailers to mount the signs on to move them around between the schools during the school year. Discussion was held.

Moved by Kopplesberger, second by Hubbard to approve the purchase of two mobile trailers up to \$3,500. Motion carried.

New Business

There was none.

Public Comment

Mayor Baublitz asked for public comments. There was none.

Announcements

There was none.

Moved by Hubbard, second by Andrew to adjourn. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 6:22pm.

Approved 6-3-2025

Cathy Cameron Cathy Cameron, City Clerk