

City of Iron Mountain
Downtown Development Authority
Monday, October 13, 2025
Regular Meeting Minutes
12:00pm at City Hall

I. Meeting called to order - at 12:01pm. Anthony Miller, Megan Blomquist, Lucas Davidson, David Hendrickson, Sonja Matzke, Jordan Stanchina, Katherine Mentel, and Tim McCauley present.

II. Approval of Agenda - *The agenda was approved on a motion by Miller, seconded by Stanchina, and carried unanimously*

III. Consent Agenda Items - *The consent agenda items were approved on a motion by Hendrickson, seconded by Stanchina, and carried unanimously*

A. Regular Meeting Minutes

I. 09/08/2025

B. Committee Reports

I. Events Committee: 09/30/2025

II. Business Development Committee: *no September meeting*

III. Beautification Committee: 09/02/2025

IV. New Business

A. Treasurer Report August 2025 - *Action on the Treasurer Report was deferred to the November meeting.* McCauley did not provide certain detailed information to the Treasurer prior to the meeting, which was deemed essential for the Board to consider approval.

B. Resignation of Michael Christy from the DDA Board of Directors - McCauley noted that he and all Board members had received Mr. Christy's resignation via email on September 16, 2025. *That resignation was accepted by the Board on a motion by Stanchina, seconded by Hendrickson, and carried unanimously.* Staff was directed to contact three people who applied for Board seats in March 2025 to determine continued interest, post a notice on Facebook and the DDA website, and open up the application process again with a deadline in early November.

V. Old Business

A. No old business

VI. Event Coordinator Updates:

A. September and Upcoming Events Recap

- a. **Farmers & Artisans Market** - McCauley noted that the last Market Saturday was October 11 and distributed a preliminary financial report for the 2025 season. He noted that the "staff time" item on that report included his time for appearances on Saturday mornings, and did not include substantial office time for coordinating vendors, collecting funds, keeping financial records, etc. He also noted that keeping track of all staff time expended for various activities, especially events, would result in more realistic financial analysis of those activities - and provide some key information for strategy and development of budgets. A brief discussion ensued, and the consensus was that DDA staff should keep more detailed track of staff time moving forward, to enable more accurate accounting of financial results for events and other activities.

- b. **Out to Lunch** - Mentel distributed a preliminary financial report for the 2025 season, which included fees paid to all of the various bands who played at Out to Lunch (OTL). The total amount paid was slightly over the budgeted amount - \$5,250 paid versus \$5,000 budgeted - and a discussion ensued regarding fees paid and why the amounts vary. Mentel noted that some bands have more musicians than others, and that compensation is typically related to the number of musicians and the popularity of the band. That generally applies to fees paid to bands for festivals as well. Several members noted that more businesses may want to sponsor OTL, even if the number of dates (9 or 10) remains the same and the event is not extended further into August. The Board also agreed to further discuss the matter of band compensation at subsequent regular Board meetings. The staff will compile a list of all bands utilized during 2025 and fees paid to facilitate that later discussion.
- c. **Brew Fest Alternative** - Mentel and McCauley noted, as they had done in previous Board meetings, that Brew Fest financial results this year were disappointing, and that the event should be moved to the third weekend in June due to weather issues and conflicts with numerous other events in the region. Also as discussed at the last Board meeting, consideration should be given to revamping the event into something that would appeal to a broader audience, since Brew Fest seems to be limited to attracting only 250 people or less. All of those issues had subsequently been discussed with the Events Committee, and the Committee suggested an event less focused on alcoholic beverages and more focused on family-friendly activities.

Miller suggested that having an event with no alcohol sales included might make sponsoring the event amenable to businesses and organizations that would normally opt out because they do not want to be associated with alcohol consumption. This could potentially open up event sponsorship to a significantly larger pool of participants, perhaps replacing or surpassing any gains realized from alcohol sales at an event.

After further discussion, it was agreed that the staff and the Events Committee should explore an event including food trucks, bounce houses, and other activities that would normally be associated with a “block party” type of event. It was also noted that the event could also have a “vendor fair” type of component (with a fee) with a limited number of spots filled on a first come, first served basis. The staff and Board members will also look for examples from other communities to facilitate further discussion.

- d. **Oktoberfest & Fall Events Overview** - Mentel distributed a preliminary financial report for Oktoberfest 2025, which indicated that event attendance and net proceeds were much improved over the past 2 year’s Oktoberfest events. She added that the weather was perfect, the polka band (Dorf Kapelle) during the late afternoon was very well-received, and attendance was probably close to 1000 - compared with about 600 in years past. She and McCauley noted that additional funds spent on entertainment seemed to make a big difference in interest and attendance in the festival, given that weather for the past 3 Oktoberfest events was consistently favorable. Mentel noted that increasing costs for tent rental would be a significant factor in profitability and feasibility of all future events, particularly for something like Brew Fest where it is a larger proportion of expenses.

VII. Program Coordinator Updates:

- A. **DDA Strategic Goals and Action Plan** - McCauley noted that the goal and action to be discussed today would be marketing and advertising (M&A), based on requests and discussion at previous Board meetings. Mentel then distributed a summary of all M&A spending (aside from printed posters) for 2025 events - mostly actual numbers but some also projected for the later 2025 events. From that summary, it was apparent to most Board members that radio consumed too much of the DDA spending on M&A for events, and that amounts spent on both radio and print should be reduced. Some members, including a few who own and run small businesses, and engage in M&A activity for their business, noted they have found that radio and print is much less effective - in terms of both reach and ability to reach target audiences - than social media and digital channels. Thus, based on their experiences and the spending summary, DDA M&A spending for the various channels needs to be reconsidered and adjusted. The consensus was that the Board and staff should collaborate on a more holistic and strategic approach to M&A rather than relying on the piecemeal event-by-event method that seems to have become the current approach.

The discussion also brought to light that other M&A channels need to be considered as well, and YouTube and Spotify were mentioned as specific examples. It was also suggested that the staff be provided with a maximum budget for all M&A spending. Blomquist also noted that the DDA should also be able to specify desired timing (day of week, time of day) for their radio advertising.

- B. **Toro Greenspace Enhancement Grant** - McCauley noted that the Friends of the Iron Mountain DDA (FDDA), the recipient of the grant, had voted recently to authorize spending the remaining \$13,000 in grant funds in accordance with a plan he had discussed with both the DDA Board and the Beautification Committee. That plan includes 7 more replacement trees downtown, greenhouse improvements, and 6-8 new style sidewalk planters. All of the purchases and work will be done before the end of May 2026. He and Matzke agreed to purchase the new sidewalk planters within the next month.
- C. **RRC Essentials progress** - McCauley noted that he continues to work with Stanchina and City Clerk/Treasurer Issac Micheau on submitting documents to the MEDC.
- D. **Downtown/TIF plan progress** - McCauley hopes to resume work on the plan in October, with significant work to be completed over the winter.

VI. Public Comment - There was no public comment at the meeting

VII. Member Privilege - Stanchina noted that he and the Board had received a request from Kenzie Williamsen to install art over the alleyway between First National Bank and Sandstone Terrace during the summer of 2027. The art would consist of 70 to 80 flat, circular crochet pieces created locally by a group at The Cure. Miller noticed the request mentioned that the proposed hanging art project would also serve as a fundraiser, and questioned if the Board and the City should be installing art at public expense under those circumstances. Upon further discussion, it was concluded that the DDA and the City should establish some criteria/rules for hanging and other art installations - to perhaps include provisions for the City uninstalling damaged art, requiring sponsorship and/or fee to offset costs to the City, and whether or not to allow art as a fundraising activity for organizations other than the DDA. The staff was directed to find some examples of agreements from other communities.

VIII. Adjournment - *The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 pm on a motion by Hendrickson, seconded by Stanchina, and carried unanimously.* Next regular meeting: Monday, November 10, 2025.