



CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING August 24, 2026

The City Council met to have a Regular Council Meeting at City Hall at 6:30 p.m.
102 Butler St., Saugatuck, MI 49453.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Councilmember Stanton at 6:30 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Attendance:

Present: Mayor Anderson, Mayor Pro Tem Clark, Councilmembers Dean, Gardner, Muncey, Peterson and Stanton.

Absent: None

Others Present: City Manager Cummins, Zoning Director Moore, Attorney Witte and Clerk Wolters.

Mayor's Comments:

Mayor Holly Anderson opened by highlighting City Manager Ryan Cummins's report on civic engagement and an article titled *"Democracy Is a Skill We May Be Forgetting."* She said the article thoughtfully describes how people may be becoming less connected with neighbors and local community life while engaging more online, which can encourage division and weaken public trust. Anderson noted that local government increasingly depends on a small, recurring group of volunteers and faces difficulty recruiting future leaders. She encouraged residents to seek broader perspectives, avoid divisive or "snarky" social-media exchanges, engage in constructive dialogue, and volunteer for local events, boards, and commissions.

City Manager Comments:

City Manager Ryan Cummins provided updates on several city priorities. He said staff are evaluating deer-management options, including the USDA and a private culling firm, with the private firm potentially available as early as winter; he expects to bring Council a high-level plan at a September workshop. Cummins reported that Maple Street construction is progressing well, with water-valve work tentatively planned for October 19–20—and October 24–25 as a backup—to minimize conflicts with local events and complete any boil-water advisories before Halloween weekend. He also announced a Park Street open house on September 1, from 4–7 p.m. at the Mount Baldhead pavilion, where residents can review and comment on pedestrian and non-motorized improvement concepts.

Agenda Changes: None.

Guest Speakers: None.

Public Comment on Agenda Item Only: None.

Consent Agenda:

- A. Approval of City Council Workshop Minutes – August 19, 2026.
- B. Resolution 260824-A Local Governmental Unit Approval for Social District Permit – Sand Bar Saloon, LTD. dba Sand Bar.
- C. Resolution 260824-B Local Governmental Unit Approval for Social District Permit – Blue Star Partners, LLC dba Panoramic Beverage Company.
- D. Shoreline Technology Managed Service Provider Agreement.
- E. Special Event – 14th Annual Spear Street and Friends Block Party.
- F. Special Event – Saugatuck High School Community Night.
- G. Right of Way Signage (Pallet Sign Banner) Request – Fall Gallery Stroll.
- H. Right of Way Signage (Pallet Sign Banner) Request – Lakeshore Harbor Ride.
- I. Right of Way Signage (Pallet Sign Banner) Request – Saugatuck Film Festival.
- J. Appointments and Reappointments to Boards and Commissions.
 - Parks and Public Works Committee Member: Nancy Kimble with a term ending 8-1-28.
 - Parks and Public Works Committee Member: Kelly Roche with a term ending 8-1-28.
 - Parks and Public Works Committee Member: Keith Charak with a term ending 8-1-28.
 - Parks and Public Works Committee Member: Judy Thiel with a term ending 8-1-28.
 - Parks and Public Works Committee Member: Jennifer Rees with a term ending 8-1-28.

Motion by Stanton, second by Muncey to approve the consent agenda as presented. Via roll call vote, motion carried 6-0. Gardner – Abstain.

Approval of Accounts Payable:

Motion by Peterson, second by Clark to approve the accounts payable in the amount of \$1,124,647.52. Via roll call, motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing: None.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business:Recommended Branding:

Motion by Stanton, second by Muncey to approve the recommended City of Saugatuck brand direction and logo as presented by Concept A Creative Studio. Via roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Right of Way Permit Application - 731 Pleasant Street:

Motion by Muncey, second by Peterson to approve the request for retaining walls, landscaping, hardscaping, driveways, parking, and staircase within the public right-of-way at 731 Pleasant Street, finding that the proposal is appropriate, with the following conditions, and is consistent with the review criteria of §94.34(H), including that unique circumstances justify the proposed improvements due to the dramatic shift in topography; the addition of one parking space will help alleviate parking pressure in an area where additional parking opportunities are limited; and the proposed improvements will address historical site drainage concerns and positively affect stormwater management on the property.

Approval shall be subject to the following conditions:

- 1. The City reserves the right to require immediate removal of the installation if it creates public safety concern or if the City determines, in its sole discretion, that the installation is interfering or will interfere with present or planned public improvements or maintenance activities within the right-of-way.*
- 2. All improvements shall be constructed and maintained in accordance with all applicable zoning, engineering, building, stormwater, and other applicable City*

requirements. Any required plans or details shall be subject to review and approval by the appropriate City staff prior to construction.

3. Drainage shall be reviewed by the City engineer, and construction shall not commence until the City engineer approves the drainage for the installation.

4. Prior to construction, the applicant shall provide evidence of liability insurance in an amount and with coverage acceptable to the City, naming the City as an additional insured. The applicant shall be responsible for any damage, injury, loss, or expense arising from the construction, installation, maintenance, or use of the improvements within the public right-of-way and shall indemnify and hold the City harmless to the extent permitted by law.

5. The property owner shall be responsible for the ongoing maintenance, repair, and upkeep of all approved improvements located within the public right-of-way. If any portion of the improvements are removed or damaged as a result of City work, utility work, or other authorized public improvements, the City shall not be responsible for replacement or restoration unless agreed to in writing by the City.

6. The improvements shall be constructed substantially in accordance with the plans submitted approved by the City. Any material alteration, expansion, or relocation of the improvements within the public right-of-way shall require prior written approval from the City.

7. Approval of the improvements within the public right-of-way does not convey, transfer, or create any ownership interest, easement, permanent right, or other property interest in favor of the property owner.

8. Prior to commencement of construction within the public right-of-way, the applicant shall provide a bond or other financial guarantee acceptable to the City, in an amount determined by the City, sufficient to ensure the proper construction, maintenance, repair, removal, or restoration of the improvements within the right-of-way. The financial guarantee shall remain in effect for the duration required by the City.

Via roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Staff Reports, Boards, Commissions & Committees:

Monthly department activity reports were provided by the City Manager along with the following board and committees:

Fire District Administration Board:

Fire District Board city representative John Mayer reported that the new fire station project is on schedule and within budget, with bids accepted and construction progressing well. Two storage containers were approved—first to hold new furniture and equipment for the station, and later to be reused for secure storage of smoke detectors and other hazmat items between community disposal events. The board discussed educating the public on how to correctly use the new roundabout, especially when emergency vehicles are present, and considered service recovery fees for nuisance calls such as false “iPhone crash” alerts. He showed council examples of hydrant “hydro classification” collars (color-coded flow indicators) that Douglas and the township are installing, suggesting City of Saugatuck follow suit for firefighter safety. Finally, John noted the upcoming 25th anniversary of 9/11 and encouraged public appreciation for firefighters.

Interurban Board:

Councilmember Muncey reported that July was an exceptionally strong month, setting an all-time July ridership record with 16,925 rides, about 1,385 more than the previous July and continuing a three-year trend of steady growth. The system provided 42 Council on Aging rides, expanded late-night service that generates extra revenue, and offered destination trips to wineries in Fennville and the state park, while core demand remained high for trips to Fennville, Lakeside Learning Daycare, Lake Vista Market, Oval Beach, and the drugstore. The seasonal parking shuttle continues to move thousands of visitors and helps ease downtown congestion. Financially, a recent facility project finished \$7,717 under budget, and the Interurban has completed spending

under its 2022 dispatch and office improvement grant and is awaiting state reimbursement. The board has had a productive initial meeting with Saugatuck Public Schools about potential partnership opportunities to support student transportation. Voters strongly supported the 10-year millage renewal and increase, with about 77.6% approval overall which is expected to generate about \$1.078 million in the first year at a time when state and federal funding continue to decline. Thanks to this local support and prudent management, the Interurban maintains over \$1 million in cash and about seven months of operating reserves, has weathered recent funding challenges without drawing down reserves, and is planning to begin door-to-door service in Fennville on January 1, 2027. Fleet expansion is also underway, with the number of buses expected to grow from eight to about 14 by the end of the year, positioning the system to meet rising demand across the service area.

Kalamazoo Lake Sewer & Water Authority:

Mayor Pro Tem Clark noted that they are modernizing internal policies, particularly around billing, under the direction of the new manager. Collections efforts have significantly reduced accounts receivable, improving finances. Traditional postcard bills are being replaced with a trifold letter that combines the bill and a brief newsletter to enhance communication. Discussions continue on extending the wastewater main along Old Allegan Road, with the township indicating it will accept easement language making it responsible for any future main relocation if the plant must be expanded. Notices from EGLE about missed sampling were tied to wells that were temporarily out of service for repair and did not indicate any risk to the public water supply.

Kalamazoo Lake Harbor Authority:

Councilmember Peterson noted that the Harbor Authority did not have a quorum at its last meeting, so no formal actions were taken. Discussion focused on the future structure and role of the Harbor Authority. Douglas suggested—and the managers support—convening all three communities in early October to talk about how best to manage harbor issues going forward. City Manager Cummins is coordinating dates, likely the week of October 5.

Zoning Board of Appeals: None.

Historic District Commission:

Councilmember Dean informed that the Historic District Commission recently denied several fence installations that had been built before approval and did not meet district guidelines. The commission is enforcing standards consistently for retroactive requests. Its next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 3 at 6 p.m.

Planning Commission: Planning Commission

Councilmember Gardner said the Planning Commission meeting was canceled due to lack of quorum. A special meeting was rescheduled for Tuesday, September 8 at 6:30 p.m. to address pending items.

Parks & Public Works Committee:

Councilmember Stanton informed everyone that one of the committee's work groups has already developed a draft list of wayfinding sign locations throughout town, which will support implementation now that the new city logo is approved. The committee reviewed a report from the Outdoor Discovery Center on Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area, including recommendations for new signage, wayfinding, closing and revegetating certain trails, and ensuring adequate and appropriate paths to the beach; PPW requested a closer look at the number and placement of beach access paths. The report also indicated that funding for new Harbor Natural Area signage could come from the site's endowment. PPW unanimously supported the CVB's proposed warming station near the Rose Garden, noting it would add seating and create a more welcoming garden entrance. The group is also looking ahead to the Park Street open house on September 1.

Tri-Community Non-Motorized Trail Study Committee:

Council was informed that there has been visible activity along the trail corridor, including staking work, likely by the project archaeologist and team. This indicates continuing progress on the non-motorized trail linking the three communities.

Water System Operations Contract Advisory Committee:

This committee is scheduled to meet on August 31, with no further report provided yet.

Logo and Branding Advisory Committee:

Mayor Anderson noted that The Logo and Branding Committee's work concluded with Council's approval of a new Saugatuck logo and brand system. Council members praised the committee's composition, community engagement process, and the way the new design coordinates visually with neighboring communities' brands while preserving Saugatuck's distinct identity. The committee emphasized that existing iconic signs (like the pallet sign and North Street sign) will remain as part of the city's visual story, while the new logo guides future materials and wayfinding.

Parking Improvements Task Force:

The Parking Improvements Task Force is nearing completion of its work. The final meeting is scheduled for tomorrow at 3 p.m. at City Hall. The task force will review a draft downtown employee parking plan and Walker Consultants' final deliverable, and will plan Walker's presentation to Council at the September 23 workshop. The group has focused on finding better parking solutions for employees—not imposing penalties—and has relied on a strong local survey response, direct outreach to businesses, and multiple public meetings (all available on the City's YouTube channel) to shape its recommendations.

Public Comment: Jen Rees provide comment.

Closed Session:

Motion by Gardner, second by Stanton to move into a closed session pursuant to MCL 15.268(h) to consider material exempt from discussion or disclosure by state or federal statute. Via Roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Council moved into closed session at 7:14 p.m.

Motion by Muncey, second by Stanton to move into open session. Via roll call vote, motion carried unanimously. Via roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Council moved into open session at 7:31 p.m.

Correspondence: None.

Council Comments:

Councilmember Stanton commented on the upcoming Labor Day period, noting that many local businesses are currently short-staffed because high school and college students have already returned to school. She asked that residents and visitors be patient with businesses during this time, recognizing the staffing challenges they face at the tail end of the summer season.

Councilmember Muncey thanked the Community Heart Safe initiative for their work in identifying locations for automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in Douglas and Saugatuck Township. He expressed support for Saugatuck to "get ahead of the curve" and begin installing AEDs in the downtown area, emphasizing the value of having this lifesaving equipment widely available in public spaces.

Councilmember Dean offered strong praise for the new city logo and branding, reiterating that he views it as a "home run." He thanked the entire team who worked on the branding effort and emphasized how pleased he is with the final result.

Mayor Pro Tem Clark echoed the positive feedback on the branding project, saying he was impressed by the criteria, development process, and overall approach taken by the branding team. He noted that, given the rigor of the process and the way it was carried out, it was no surprise the final product turned out so well, and he asked that thanks be passed along to the full committee.

Councilmember Gardner shared feedback he received from a local walking group about Maple Street. He said people specifically noticed and appreciated that the city made an effort to avoid cutting down trees and instead adjusted the project alignment to maintain the rural character of the street. He highlighted that these design choices do get noticed by residents and are valued by the community.

Councilmember Peterson commended Fire Chief Janik for his thorough letter regarding the proposed warming station near the Rose Garden, particularly the way it outlined safety and security considerations and the steps required. She expressed hope that the necessary information would be provided so the project can move forward, and he requested that, before it does, markers be placed on site to show how far into the space the structure would extend.

Mayor Holly Anderson closed by once again expressing strong enthusiasm for the new city logo and branding. She said that from the moment the presentation was shared she had been showing it to people because she was so excited about it. She praised the work on the project's objectives, audiences, and brand pillars, noting that all of these elements were "nailed" and that she has seen many such efforts over her career, making this one particularly impressive. She concluded by saying she is eager to see the new brand brought to life.

Adjournment:

Motion by Peterson, second by Dean to adjourn the meeting. Upon voice vote, motion carried unanimously. Councilmember Stanton adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Jamie Wolters, City Clerk