



CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES- *proposed*
April 28, 2025

The City Council met to have a Regular Council Meeting at City Hall.
102 Butler St., Saugatuck, MI 49453.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Anderson at 6:30 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Attendance:

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

Absent: Clark, Peterson

Motion by Stanton, second by Muncey to excuse Councilmember Peterson. Via voice vote, motion carried 6-0.

Others Present: City Manager Cummins, DPW Superintendent Herbert, Clerk Wolters, Attorney Witte and Engineer Moxey.

Mayor Comments:

Mayor Anderson noted spring has arrived in Saugatuck, bringing a renewed sense of beauty and activity. A new tree was planted in Cook Park on Friday, followed by additional tree plantings at Oxbow on Saturday. The city is sprucing up—sidewalks are getting painted, and preparations are underway for the upcoming tourist season. With longer daylight hours, there's an added sense of energy and anticipation in the air.

City Manager Comments:

City Manager Cummins informed the council that the draft city budget presentation is now available on the city's website, along with the full meeting video; a shorter clip of just the budget presentation is being prepared. A link will also be included in the community report going out tomorrow. The draft budget remains open for input, with opportunities for individual meetings or additional workshops before final approval later this fiscal year.

Engineering work on Maple Street is underway following the approved cost-share agreement with the township—recent work includes wetland delineation and upcoming soil boring. Frontier has submitted permits to install fiber internet on the west side of the city, with potential expansion to the east side in 2025. This fiber installation could significantly enhance connectivity for residents and has been encouraged by both city officials and community members. The project will require careful coordination but is seen as a major step forward.

Agenda Changes:

Motion by Stanton, second by Dean to amend the agenda, to add proclamation presentation to item #15 on the agenda. Via voice vote, motion carried 6-0.

Guest Speakers:

Tony Schippa – Heartsafe Tri-Community:

Mr. Schippa is a lifelong local and retired paramedic with over 35 years of EMS experience, presented the Tri-Community Heart Safe Initiative—a program aimed at saving lives from sudden cardiac arrest through increased CPR training, AED access, and public awareness. He opened with a call to action: asking how many people knew where the AED in the building was, whether it worked, and who knew CPR—highlighting a need for readiness. Tony requested the City Council’s support through promotion, and by leading by example and taking the free CPR class themselves.

Public Comment on Agenda Item Only: None.

Consent Agenda:

- A. Approval of Workshop Meeting Minutes for April 23, 2025
 - B. Proclamation Honoring Dr. Richard C. Annis, OD
 - C. Projecting Sign Revocable License Agreement – 220 Culver
 - D. Oval Beach Pass Request – Hope College for Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area Research
 - E. Special Event – Pride Community Car Parade
 - F. Special Event – Memorial Day Parade
 - G. Special Event – Jazz for Justice
 - H. Social District Resolution 250428-A Weidman Outdoors, LLC dba Duck Alley
 - I. Social District Resolution 250428-B Marker 14, LLC
 - J. Right of Way Signage – Palette Banner for Spring & Fall Gallery Stroll
- Motion by Stanton, second by Clark to approve the consent agenda. Via roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.*

Staff Reports, Boards, Commissions & Committees:

The City Manager, Treasurer, Clerk, Director of Planning & Zoning, Department of Public Works, Engineer and Police submitted status reports on current activities since the last regular council meeting for their respective departments.

Fire District Administration:

Dan Fox presented a recap from the Saugatuck Township Fire Board’s meeting held on April 21 Meeting:

- The fire district's budget meeting is set for May 19 at 4:00 PM at the firehouse. Formal notice to follow.
- A significant barn fire involved a residence and large propane storage, posing logistical challenges.
- Incident Stats (Through March):
 - Calls decreased year-over-year (from 91 to 73).
 - EMS remains 70% of call volume.
 - Motor vehicle accidents rose 35% in March.
- Response area calls were distributed roughly in proportion to census areas.
- LIFE EMS stats are a slight improvement:
 - Discussions ongoing with Mark Meijer (Life EMS) to transition test-period agreement into a more permanent, cost-effective service model.

- Rental inspections fee increased from \$175 to \$200.
- Cost recovery has generated approx. \$9,000 in one month from highway/fire incidents.
- April 11 Drowning Recovery:
 - Emotionally and physically demanding operation involving multiple agencies.
 - Fire District's ambulance used to provide dignified, private space for grieving family.
- Gas Outage Response:
 - Rare outage affected many buildings except those served by Semco.
 - Third Coast Church used as emergency shelter—found and secured same-day thanks to coordination.
- Upcoming workshop is scheduled for one week later (April 28), focusing on facility expansion.
- Parade attack in Vancouver emphasizes continuous improvement in vehicle barrier planning and public safety.
- "Riding for Ryan" Program:
 - Promotes child cyclist safety after the death of a 7-year-old.
 - Free high-visibility flags available for kids' bikes—encouraged for use in the community.

Interurban Board:

- Awarded a \$6,048 grant for the 2025 summer free weekend parking shuttle (Fri–Sun, 1–9 PM).
- Signage and QR codes will guide people to the park-and-call service when the shuttle isn't running.
- Midwest Construction was selected for design-build services to expand the facility.
 - The design phase is starting soon, with groundbreaking expected shortly.
- Riders can travel to Fennville (post office, Wagoner's, Ladders of Hope) and any Laketown Township.
 - Fennville contract runs for 2 years; Laketown contract runs through October, with potential renewal pending pilot results.
- Director completed a positive performance review.
- Software updated to reflect new service areas.
- Purchased three gas/propane detectors for the building.
 - Nearly all buses are now propane-powered, with another bus on the way.

Kalamazoo Lake Sewer & Water Authority:

Councilmember Clark gave a recap of the last meeting:

Street washing is nearly complete.

Utility Outages:

- Kal-Lake experienced power and gas outages but had no service disruptions.
- Two lift stations recently converted to natural gas performed well during outages.

Some issues remain with generators under warranty; vendor resolution is ongoing.

Still interviewing for system operator positions.

Local high school environmental class toured the facility; special recognition given to Mr. Smit, the teacher.

Kalamazoo Lake Harbor Authority:

City Manager Cummins informed that the Harbor Authority is requesting funding from each municipality—\$4,000 per community—to hire a consultant to help set goals and refocus efforts.

This funding is included in the city's draft budget for next year. Douglas and Saugatuck Township staff are also raising the request with their boards, and support appears strong across all three communities. If funded, the consultant will meet with the Harbor Authority in July to help reset the mission, orient new members, and guide future goal-setting.

Zoning Board of Appeals: None.

Historic District Commission:

Councilmember Gardner said the next meeting is this Thursday.

Planning Commission: None.

Parks and Public Works Committee:

Mayor Pro-Tem Stanton noted the recent meeting was a productive organizational session, assigning tasks to each committee member. Key focus areas include invasive species education, with plans to share information on identification and safe disposal through Jamie to the public. Stanton is personally working on streetscape research, gathering ideas from other communities for potential future improvements. Next meeting is scheduled for May 27.

Tri-Community Non-Motorized Trail Study Committee: None.

Water System Operations Contract Advisory Committee: None.

Wildlife Management Committee, Councilmember Dean:

Councilmember Dean noted ordinances are being drafted.

Approval of Accounts Payable:

Motion by Clark, second by Stanton to approve the accounts payable in the amount of \$66,975.18. Via roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.

Public Hearing: None.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business:

Bid Award for Mt. Baldhead Restroom Replacement:

Motion by Muncy, second by Dean to award the Mount Baldhead restroom replacement bid to Midwest in the amount of \$298,000 with an additional 10% approved for contingency.

Mayor Anderson presented Dr. Richard Annis with his Proclamation.

Public Comment: None.

Correspondence: Nicole Graves commended City Manager Cummins on his updates during the gas outage.

Council Comments:

Councilmember Gardner shared that a new restaurant, *Marker 14*, is opening at the former Mermaid location. The name refers to the buoy outside the site. Gardner expressed excitement

about the addition. On a somber note, the United Methodist Church is closing due to declining attendance, reflecting a broader national trend. Gardner noted his personal family ties to the church and acknowledged its 160-year legacy. He urged the city to begin community conversations—particularly through the Planning Commission—about the future of such properties when churches or similar institutions close. He highlighted the importance of proactively considering how these spaces might be reused in ways that benefit the community.

Mayor Pro-Tem Stanton attended the Arbor Day celebration and thanked Scott Herbert for selecting a beautiful new tree to replace the removed willow. She shared that a community member crafted a bowl from the willow wood, which may be auctioned for a good cause, and noted that other local artists are also interested in repurposing the wood. She expressed appreciation for the event and the meaningful way the old tree's legacy will continue through local art.

Councilmember Dean thanked the Parks and Public Works Committee and the DPW team for organizing a thoughtful Arbor Day event. He praised Superintendent Scott Herbert for his well-explained rationale behind selecting a fast-growing, disease-resistant tree that adds diversity to the local canopy. Dean also expressed support for Councilmember Gardner's comments about the closure of the United Methodist Church and emphasized the importance of discussing the broader implications of losing full-time residents for sustaining essential community institutions like churches and schools.

Councilmember Muncey thanked the City of Douglas for their prompt repair work on the Ferry Street culvert, noting it's expected to reopen by May 9—a benefit for both residents and emergency access. He also mentioned the upcoming Holland Tulip Festival starting Friday, which typically brings overflow visitors to Saugatuck, and again expressed appreciation for Douglas's clear communication throughout the culvert repair process.

Councilmember Clark echoed appreciation for the thoughtful tree selection at the Arbor Day celebration, noting its future shade will be welcomed. He acknowledged the loss of the willow tree and the importance of maintaining the community's character. He also expressed concern over the closure of the United Methodist Church and welcomed conversations about preserving and growing the city's resident population.

Mayor Anderson expressed gratitude to DPW Superintendent Scott Herbert and his team for their thoughtful work on the new tree, playfully suggesting the nickname "Tree Pa." ~~He~~ She acknowledged the closure of the Methodist church and encouraged exploring possibilities like converting such buildings into multi-family housing. ~~He~~ She closed by congratulating City Manager Ryan Cummins and his fiancé Lisa on their upcoming wedding, assuring them the city is in good hands during their absence.

Adjournment:

Motion by Stanton, second by Gardner to adjourn the meeting. Upon voice vote, motion carried 6-0. Mayor Anderson adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Jamie Wolters, City Clerk