



CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES

September 3, 2025

The City Council met for a Workshop Meeting at 4:00 p.m.
City Hall
102 Butler St., Saugatuck, MI 49453.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Anderson at 4:00 p.m.

Attendance:

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

Absent: Clark and Peterson.

Motion by Stanton, second by Dean to excuse councilmember Clark. Via voice vote, motion carried 5-0.

Others Present: City Manager Cummins, Attorney Witte, Treasurer Bredeweg and Clerk Wolters.

Agenda Changes: None.

Public Comment on Agenda Items Only: None.

Approval of Minutes:

Regular city council meeting minutes – August 25, 2025.

Closed session city council meeting minutes – August 25, 2025.

Motion by Stanton, second by Muncey to approve the minutes from the regular city council meeting and the closed session city council meeting from August 25, 2025. Via voice vote, motion carried 5-0.

Discussion Items:

Introduction of Director of Planning and Zoning – Grayson Moore:

City Manager Ryan Cummins introduced Grayson Moore as the new zoning administrator to the city council.

Ryan explained that Grayson would be formally appointed at the next council meeting and invited him to share about himself. Grayson Moore stated he has a master's degree in urban planning from Wayne State University and previously worked in consulting. He expressed excitement about starting the Master Plan process in Saugatuck and shared that he and his wife enjoy camping and spending time outdoors in the area. Grayson also mentioned his enthusiasm for city planning. Ryan added that Grayson and his wife are moving to the area. Council members welcomed Grayson, asked about his background, and discussed his interests, including his two dogs and his passion for planning.

Warnock Drain – At Large Assessment:

The council discussed the Warnock drain at large assessment, which involved a recent project to replace a culvert under Ferry Street and related infrastructure work. The city was assessed 15% of the project cost (\$61,875), but council members were surprised by the assessment due to a notice error—proper notification was not received, preventing the city from participating in the review process. Ryan Cummins explained the assessment process, the options for payment (lump sum or over three years with interest), and the legal framework. They emphasized the importance of due diligence and setting a precedent for proper notification. The council discussed that the drain commissioner re-notice the assessment and allow the city to participate in the review process. The discussion also touched on the potential for minimal additional costs if a new notice is issued and the importance of transparency and timely information for budgeting and decision-making.

Councilmember Peterson joined meeting at 4:25 p.m.

Shoulder Season Initiatives/Warming Station:

Lisa Mize, CVB Director, presented a shoulder season initiative idea, which aims to boost activity in Saugatuck during the fall, spring, and winter months. Consultants were brought in to assess the area and recommend ways to attract more visitors outside the busy summer season. One key recommendation was to install warming stations or fire pits in central locations. The Rose Garden was identified as a preferred location for a permanent warming station, with ideas to replace the current fencing with a low brick wall to make the space more inviting and provide additional seating. Other possible locations, such as Wicks Park and Village Park, were also discussed. The majority of funding would come from the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), with potential contributions from the city. Council members expressed the need to respect any restrictions tied to the Rose Garden. Next steps include preparing renderings for multiple locations and presenting the options to the council for input.

Public Comments: None.

Council Comments:

Gregory Muncey hoped everyone had a good holiday weekend and mentioned enjoying the cooler weather. The last "Music in the Park" event would be held that evening, with a backup location at Wicks Park Bar and Grill if the weather was too wet. He thanked Ryan for assisting a local resident with a housing situation. He shared information about the passing of Brett DeMond, a local grocery store owner, and provided details about the upcoming visitation service, acknowledging Brett's contributions to the community and local events.

Scott Dean Expressed gratitude to Ryan for assisting a local resident with a housing situation, noting that community members were appreciative of Ryan's efforts. Thanked volunteers in advance for their work on the upcoming Mount Bald Head Challenge, encouraging participation and volunteering. He will be participating. Sharing his own experience volunteering at the event in the past and looking forward to being involved again, mentioning the fun and unique atmosphere at the event's stations.

Mayor Pro-Tem Stanton shared her excitement for the upcoming Mount Bald Head Challenge, mentioning she will be volunteering at the Red Dock parking lot and highlighting the event's positive atmosphere. Noted that the event provides a boost to local businesses during the shoulder season and mentioning the addition of a band at the after-party in Coughlin Park. Expressed gratitude to the Convention and Visitors Bureau for their long-term vision and to community members who contribute their expertise and ideas to improve the town. Encouraging the community to embrace new ideas, acknowledging that there will be many opinions, but supporting efforts to enhance the town's appeal.

Russ Gardner clarified a rumor that the picnic pavilion at Bald Head is not being torn down and emphasizing its importance to the community. Suggested the city notify the public in case anyone is interested in relocating the building of bathrooms that will be demolished soon. Addressed questions about the legality of buskers (street performers) in town. City Manager Ryan Cummins confirmed that busking is allowed as long as noise ordinances are followed and sidewalks are not blocked. Noted concerns from residents about unauthorized trails being created in city parks (the wilds), emphasizing that private individuals should not make changes to public parkland, and stating that the city is following up on the issue.

Chris Peterson apologized for being late to the meeting and expressing support for the Mt. Bald Head Challenge, noting that while she can't participate as a runner, she appreciates the event. Shared that many residents are excited about the new bathrooms being constructed and expressing her own enthusiasm for the improvement. Stated her fondness for the shoulder season in Saugatuck and reminiscing about the "Taste of Saugatuck" event, expressing hope that it could return in the future.

Adjournment:

Motion by Stanton, second by Dean to adjourn the meeting. Upon voice vote, motion carried 6-0. Mayor Pro-Tem Stanton adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Jamie Wolters, City Clerk