



CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
September 22, 2025

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 Mayor Anderson at 6:30 p.m.

Attendance:

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

Absent: None.

Others Present: City Manager Cummins, Attorney Witte, Treasurer Bredeweg, DPW Superintendent Herbert, and Deputy Clerk Williams.

Mayor's Comments:

Mayor Anderson highlighted the importance of the master plan survey, noted good community response so far, thanked the Planning Commission for their efforts, and encouraged everyone to keep promoting the survey to ensure strong participation.

City Manager Comments:

City Manager Ryan Cummins thanked the mayor for highlighting the master plan survey and reminded everyone about the upcoming community open house on September 30, encouraging broad participation. He provided an update on the Mt. Baldhead restroom project, noting that the old building was relocated and construction is progressing on schedule, with completion expected by year-end. He also mentioned ongoing work with the parking improvements task force, including recent meetings with consultants and plans to bring a recommendation to the council at the October 8th workshop.

Agenda Changes:

Councilmember Garnder moved 9e (*Special Event – Dark Skies at Oval Beach*) from consent agenda to new business.

Guest Speakers:

Allegan County Commissioner Brad Lubbers reported that Confluence Hydro is set to purchase 13 hydroelectric dams from Consumers Energy, with sale proceeds returning to ratepayers. He mentioned a new county tourism post card promotion features local restaurants, shared details about the proposed county budget and upcoming public hearing and explained a shift to more frequent (every 3 years) satellite mapping for property assessments, with local municipalities

expected to share costs. He also noted recent positive publicity for local attractions from Drew Barrymore and announced a new county-wide emergency alert system that will send notifications to residents' phones, replacing outdated tornado sirens.

Public Comment on Agenda Item Only: None.

Consent Agenda:

- A. Approval of City Council Workshop Meeting Minutes for September 17, 2025.
- B. Agreement for removal of Mt. Baldhead Bathroom Structure.
- C. Change Order #2 to TMF Water Service Material Verification Agreement with Compton.
- D. Special Event – Flower World Activation.
- F. Special Event – Family & Pet Halloween Parade & Party.
- G. Special Event – SHS Homecoming Parade.

Motion by Stanton, second by Gardner to approve tonight's consent agenda contingent on the applicants providing a Certificate of Insurance to the City Clerk for Special Events, Items D, F, & G. Via roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Staff Reports, Boards, Commissions & Committees:

Reports provided by city staff and board, commission & committee members.

Fire District Administration:

Dan Fox reported that the recent Saugatuck Fire District meeting was very brief, mainly covering bill payments, as the chief was away. He noted that the township board is supportive of bonding for construction and renovation work at both the South Station and the main station, with the project moving forward. Reviewing August statistics, he highlighted that most calls (about 60%) were EMS related, not fire, and that response times averaged 11-12 minutes, though fire district personnel typically arrive much sooner than ambulances. He also explained some details about how the data is presented and mapped.

Interurban Board:

Councilmember Muncey reported record-breaking Interurban ridership in August, with 16,352 riders. Operational improvements include a new employee vacation structure, extended Friday and Saturday hours, and a pilot for new dispatch software with an app expected by next spring or summer. Despite increased ridership, the budget is tight due to reduced federal funding, but expenses remain on track. Fares are kept low to support veterans, seniors, and underserved residents, though a millage increase may be needed next year to sustain growth. Overall, the service is running well and continues to benefit the community. He explained that Laketown currently pays for Interurban service based on the number of riders (\$7 per rider), while Fennville provided a lump sum to cover its riders. Both communities plan to put continued funding for the service on their local ballots next year, allowing voters to decide whether to maintain their participation.

Kalamazoo Lake Sewer & Water Authority:

Councilmember Clark reported storm-related damage on August 17th that caused expensive repairs at a pumping station, with efforts underway to seek insurance coverage. He noted positive feedback about county crews helping at the sewage plant, freeing up staff. The OIC violation

issue appears resolved, and the search for a licensed operations manager continues, with some employees pursuing certification. That advisory committee is active, the budget is on track, and there were no surprises in the recent audit. Lastly, employees have unionized, but negotiations have not yet started.

Kalamazoo Lake Harbor Authority:

Councilmember Peterson reported on the most recent meeting, where consultant Greg WeyKamp reviewed options for managing sedimentation, but noted that most strategies remain unfeasible. Environmental concerns, such as endangered sturgeon and contaminants, continue to impact dredging plans, though recent sturgeon releases and low water may help. Funding for dredging is limited, but grants and state programs are being explored. Administrative duties for the harbor authority are shifting from Douglas and Saugatuck Township to the City of Saugatuck, with City Manager Cummins agreeing to take on more responsibilities.

Zoning Board of Appeals: None.

Historic District Commission:

Councilmember Gardner reported that the next meeting is Thursday, October 2, at 6pm, at Saugatuck City Hall.

Planning Commission:

Councilmember Clark reported that 209 survey responses have been received so far, with participation now evenly split between residents and non-residents. He described plans for the upcoming Master Plan event at Saugatuck High School, which will feature interactive stations for the community feedback on priorities, mobility, small town character, and budget allocation. The goal is to gather meaningful input from stakeholders to help guide future planning decisions.

Parks & Public Works Committee:

Mayor Pro-Tem Lauren Stanton said that the next meeting will be held September 3rd, at 10 am, at Saugatuck City Hall.

Tri-Community Non-Motorized Trail Study Committee:

City Manager Cummins said they are preparing follow-up items to send to the tribal nations and MDOT after a recent walk-through assessment. He was pleased to receive a meeting invite with them sooner than expected, allowing for timely discussion and feedback on the assessment.

Water Systems Operations Contract Advisory Committee:

Councilmember Gardner reported on the most recent meeting with representatives from Saugatuck Township, Douglas, and a consultant to discuss the authority's future following leadership changes. They explored various approaches to asset management and organizational structure, noting that this transitional period presents opportunities for positive changes. Further updates will follow as discussions continue.

Wildlife Management Committee: None.

Approval of Accounts Payable:

Motion by Stanton, second by Peterson to approve the accounts payable in the amount of \$4,306,129.63. Via roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing: None.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business:**A. City Elevator Repairs:**

Motion by Peterson, second by Muncey, to approve the work proposal submitted by McNally Elevator to repair and modernize the City Hall elevator in the amount of \$42,982 or a price not to exceed \$47,000. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

B. Warnock Drain – At Large Assessment:

Motion by Dean, second by Clark, to pay the at large assessment for the Warnock Drain in the full amount of \$56,875. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

C. Special Event – Dark Skies at Oval Beach:

Motion by Dean, second by Stanton, to approve the Dark Sky Night at Oval Beach event to take place on October 21, 2025. There was no vote, and the Council continued their discussion.

Amendment–

Motion by Dean, Muncey to make an amendment to the motion, to approve the Dark Sky event at Oval Beach that will take place on October 21, 2025, pending an updated application clarifying the sponsor. Upon voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment:

Diana Decker commented on various subjects.

Correspondence: None.

Council Comments:

Chris Peterson commented on the quieter, seasonal changes in town, thanked Councilmember Dean for recent negotiating efforts, and expressed appreciation to City Manager Cummins for taking on additional responsibilities with the Harbor Authority and other city priorities.

Russ Gardner thanked the Council for their work, promoted the Saugatuck Film Festival on September 27th at the Saugatuck Women's Club and American Legion Hall, and expressed gratitude to Andrew, Donna, and Joe, from Lakeshore Resort for taking the restrooms from Mount Baldhead. He also mentioned his daughter's involvement at the resort and shared excitement about seeing improvements there.

Lauren Stanton noted that September is a great time for tourism, with many retirees and out-of-

town visitors coming to Saugatuck, some for the first time. She highlighted enjoyable conversations with visitors and mentioned that many couples return to celebrate their anniversaries, creating a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere in the community.

Scott Dean expressed his amazement at the strong tourism during the shoulder season, even after schools have resumed. He credited the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) for their effective marketing and innovative ideas and looks forward to their future efforts to further extend the season's success.

Gregory Muncey echoed appreciation for meeting new people and noted a significant increase in weddings this year, with bookings already extending into 2026 and 2027. He expressed gratitude for community support in decorating the town for fall, thanked local businesses and volunteers, and highlighted the importance of maintaining community traditions and welcoming fresh perspectives.

Joe Clark remarked on the friendly and happy atmosphere in town, appreciating the positive interactions he has with residents and visitors. He also praised the Interurban service and its staff for providing outstanding service to the community.

Holly Anderson shared that September is her favorite month, expressed curiosity about glitter accessories for fall decorations, and gave heartfelt thanks to Diana Decker for her feedback during public comment. She thanked Councilman Dean for his work, and to everyone involved, especially noting satisfaction with the Dark Sky event solution.

Adjournment:

Motion by Muncey second by Stanton to adjourn the meeting. Upon voice vote, motion carried unanimously. Mayor Anderson adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Sara Williams, Deputy Clerk