



**CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES January 13, 2025**

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

Call to Order:

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 Clark, Dean, Muncey, Peterson and Gardner.

Absent: None.

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

Mayor Comments:

Mayor Anderson reflected on comments made by Councilmember Dean during his tenure as mayor, connecting them to the devastating fires in Hawaii and California and the broader attention on climate change. She acknowledged Michigan's relatively good fortune in having moderate temperatures, avoiding severe droughts, and being spared from catastrophic wildfires. However, she emphasized the need to remain forward-thinking and prepared, noting that climate change could make areas like Michigan more attractive destinations for those relocating from impacted regions. She shared that she had even encouraged her family in Los Angeles to consider moving to the area. She concluded by expressing her thoughts, prayers, and appreciation for the firefighters and those affected by the fires.

City Manager Comments:

City Manager Cummins highlighted recent efforts to improve communication and information sharing with the community. Over the past year, meeting links for not only council meetings but also planning commission and historic district commission meetings, as well as other board and commission meetings, have been posted on Facebook and other social media platforms. He mentioned receiving positive feedback about his manager's report, which is included in the council meeting packets. This year, he plans to share the manager's report as a standalone document distributed directly to the community to further keep residents informed. The first version of this revised approach was sent out earlier in the day, including updates on upcoming meetings and other key information. Initial feedback from the community has been positive, and he expressed hope that this initiative will continue to be a valuable resource. He also noted plans to provide updates on ongoing projects that were previously

shared with the public. Updates will begin rolling out soon as new developments occur. He reminded the council and listeners about the upcoming workshop on January 22, where significant discussions will take place regarding Maple Street. The topics will include options for replacing the road and water main as well as pathway plans. He encouraged public engagement in this important process. Additionally, he shared an update about a community project led by Eagle Scout Anthony Carlotto, who donated a Life Jacket Loaner Station for Old Beach. The project is now complete, and photos have been shared with permission from Anthony's father. The station will include life jackets, which are being delivered to the Department of Public Works. Several community members have already expressed interest in donating additional life jackets for future use. He expressed his appreciation for Anthony's efforts, highlighting the impact of this long-lasting project on public safety.

Agenda Changes: None.

Guest Speakers: None.

Public Comment on Agenda Item Only:

Steve Manns, Weirich Dr. – commented on agenda item 14a. Appointment of Craig Baldwin to Planning Commission.

Consent Agenda:

- A. Regular Meeting Minutes – December 23, 2024.
- B. Resolution No. 250113-A – A Resolution Approving the Adoption of Guidelines for Poverty Exemption For 2025.
- C. Report/Agreement Outlining the Duties and Responsibilities for Conducting Elections in the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District for a four-year period expiring January 1, 2029.
- D. Election Coordinating Contract for Election Coordinating Committee Members and Jurisdictions Contained in the Saugatuck School District.

Motion by Peterson, second by Stanton to approve the consent agenda. Via roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Staff Reports, Boards, Commissions & Committees:

The City Manager, Treasurer, City Clerk, Director of Planning & Zoning, Department of Public Works, Engineer and Police submitted status reports of current activities since the last regular council meeting on December 23, 2024, for their respective departments.

Fire District Administration Board, Dan Fox:

Dan Fox addressed multiple topics related to climate change, fire safety, and community preparedness. He reflected on the historical fires in Chicago, Wisconsin, and Holland, Michigan, highlighting similarities in drought and strong winds to current conditions. Fox emphasized the importance of proactive measures. He provided updates from the first fire district workshop focused on addressing facility and operational needs amidst challenging real estate and financial constraints. Fox also noted the fire district's appreciation for community engagement regarding equipment feedback. He clarified that the district shares ownership of a drone used for wildlife tracking with other fire departments and the coordination required for its operation. Fox urged consideration of a multidisciplinary committee to address community safety during parades and other events. He noted the potential for legal and financial repercussions if proactive measures are not taken.

Interurban Board, Councilmember Muncey:

The next meeting is Wednesday, January 22. Updates from the last meeting can be found in the clerk's minutes included in the meeting packet.

Kalamazoo Lake Sewer & Water Authority:

City Manager Cummins will send the council the KLSWA packet from their last meeting.

Kalamazoo Lake Harbor Authority, Councilmember Peterson:

She will be attending the next scheduled meeting and noted the meetings will be quarterly, there is not a schedule of meetings yet.

Zoning Board of Appeals, City Manager Cummins:

Last meeting they chose Chair and Vice Chair, they set their meetings for the year and went over their annual report. Both Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals chairs will be invited to a council meeting in February to present their annual reports.

Historic District Commission, Councilmember Gardner:

During a meeting held last Thursday, several new items were discussed and addressed. Key points included the following:

1. 333 Culver: A garage door replacement was approved for the condominiums.
2. 611 Lake: A request for a new pool and spa on the water-facing side of the property was reviewed and approved.
3. 8080 Holland: An addition to their building and updates to fencing, both of which were approved.

Additionally, the meeting touched on the commission's goals. Input from the council was requested regarding any policies or initiatives they would like the Historic District Commission to address in the upcoming year.

Planning Commission, Councilmember Clark:

The next meeting is this coming Thursday and he will have a report for the next council meeting.

Parks & Public Works Committee, Mayor Pro-Tem Stanton:

The next meeting has been rescheduled to January 21, they will be choosing Chair and Vice Chair and discussing ideas for the new year.

Tri-Community Non-Motorized Trail Study Committee, Councilmember Dean:

There will be a meeting with MDOT, Township, tribal interest and management tomorrow.

Water System Operations Contract Advisory Committee, Councilmember Gardner:

A draft contract is out for review, and they are making good progress.

Wildlife Management Committee, Councilmember Dean:

The next meeting is February 5, there are a lot of folks engaged based on public participation at meetings.

Approval of Accounts Payable:

Motion by Gardner, second by Dean to approve the accounts payable in the amount of \$952,079.44. Via roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing: None.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business:**Appointment of Crag Baldwin to the Planning Commission:**

Motion by Dean, second by Clark to appoint Craig Baldwin to planning commission with term ending July 1, 2026. Via roll call vote, motion carried 4-3. Yes – Anderson, Clark, Dean and Stanton. No - Gardner, Muncey and Peterson.

Council Review and Approval of City Manager Performance Evaluation Criteria:

Motion by Stanton, second by Muncey to suspend the 2020 boards and commissions selection policy related to this appointment of an alternate to the Fire District Board of Appeals and to appoint Scott Phelps to serve on the Fire District Board of Appeals as the city's alternate member. Via roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment:

Chief Greg Janik, Fire Department Chief commended the council on their leadership and tough decision-making, emphasizing the positive impact their actions have had on the fire department. He thanked Council Members Peterson and Clark for their new council orientation visit, and praised Ryan Cummins for effectively coordinating these visits, even accommodating scheduling conflicts. The chief highlighted how meaningful these visits are to the firefighters, expressing his appreciation for the council's engagement. He also acknowledged Council Member Dean for supporting the fire district's collaborative efforts, including the unique drone initiative for surveying deer. Additionally, he expressed gratitude for the council's focus on parade safety and for the appointment of Scott Phelps. He concluded by thanking the council for their ongoing efforts, recognizing their work as challenging but deeply valued by the fire department and community.

Correspondence: Sevryn Nowicki correspondence regarding approval for livestock in the city.

Council Comments:

Councilmember Clark did not have comment.

Councilmember Muncey acknowledged the new owners of the Emerson Lounge, which is hosting an invitation-only event, and praised their prior success with the Ivy House. Although the establishment is located in the township, he noted its positive economic impact on the city, including benefits for local businesses like the flower shop they use for weddings. He expressed enthusiasm for the upcoming strategic planning meeting, highlighting the importance of refining the process to focus on key priorities.

Councilmember Dean commended the DPW for their dedicated efforts in snow removal. Acknowledging the challenging and relentless nature of the work, he extended a heartfelt thank you to the team and urged residents to exercise caution due to the icy conditions resulting from recent weather fluctuations. Reflecting on broader concerns, he expressed gratitude for the local community and environment, noting the contrast between their current weather challenges and the severe difficulties faced by residents of Los Angeles. He emphasized how fortunate the region is to be situated in such a special part of Michigan, surrounded by approximately 23% of the world's fresh water—a vital and invaluable resource.

Mayor Pro-Tem Stanton raised concerns about the icy sidewalks around town, noting that many businesses are closed for the winter, which complicates maintenance efforts. She also expressed enthusiasm for the upcoming strategic planning meeting, describing it as an optimistic and productive opportunity to evaluate and prioritize the community's goals for the year. Stanton highlighted the value of these discussions in fostering a sense of alignment and progress, emphasizing the importance of thoughtful planning in setting the community on the right path forward.

Councilmember Gardner commended the city manager and staff for their efforts to improve communication with the community, recognizing the significant time and effort required. He highlighted the need to address residents without access to email or electronic communications, encouraging the exploration of alternative ways to reach them. Gardner also shared details about a Frontier team working in town to measure pole heights as part of a nationwide fiber optic update. He mentioned a business owner's correspondence from Comcast regarding fiber optic services, which underscored the need for a telecommunications strategy. Gardner advocated for the city to take a proactive role in coordinating with service providers like Frontier and Comcast to ensure equitable access for residents and businesses. He urged the council to prioritize this issue in the upcoming strategic planning session.

Councilmember Peterson highlighted the positive experience during the recent orientation, specifically commending the fire department for its remarkable operations and upkeep. She noted how every vehicle is meticulously polished and well-maintained, with the team swiftly cleaning and restoring equipment to pristine condition after responding to a call. Peterson also addressed concerns raised by constituents regarding the commercial garbage plan, mentioning reports of increased costs and the introduction of a fuel surcharge that some were unaware of.

Mayor Anderson expressed her excitement and optimism for the year ahead, noting the strong momentum the city has built. She highlighted her enthusiasm for the upcoming strategic planning initiatives and reflected on the community's significant achievements over the past year. Confident in the progress to come, she thanked everyone for their dedication and hard work.

Adjournment:

Motion by Stanton, second by Peterson to adjourn the meeting. Upon voice vote, motion carried unanimously. Mayor Anderson adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Jamie Wolters, City Clerk