



CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES - *proposed*
June 23, 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 Clark, Dean, Gardner Muncey, and Peterson.

Absent: None.

Others Present: City Manager Cummins, Treasurer Bredeweg, Zoning Director Thompson, Clerk Wolters and Attorney Mills.

Mayor's Comments:

Mayor Anderson reflected on the current global tensions, particularly in the Middle East, and emphasized the importance of leadership. She highlighted the council's responsibility to make decisions that impact people's lives, noting that they oversee critical infrastructure like water systems and roads. Anderson expressed gratitude for working with a team that carefully considers the effects of their decisions on constituents.

City Manager Comments:

City Manager Cummins reported that Kalamazoo Lake Sewer & Water Authority had released the annual water quality report, which showed no significant concerns. The city's pension plan status, which remains robust at 113% funding, reflecting prudent financial management. The city received new bike racks from the Convention and Visitors Bureau, which have been installed on new concrete pads. In terms of staffing, the city is in the midst of interviewing for a new administrative and project coordinator position for the Department of Public Works, with an impressive pool of 124 candidates. Cummins also mentioned that he and Treasurer Bredeweg will be meeting with MERS next month to discuss the details of their pension plans, potentially exploring options for lump sum payments and future strategies.

Agenda Changes:

Motion by Gardner, second by Muncey to add Commissioner Brad Lubbers to agenda item #7B. Via voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

Guest Speakers:

Shannon Stratton, executive director of Ox-Bow delivered a comprehensive presentation about Oxbow, highlighting its 115-year history and evolving mission as an art school and community resource. She detailed the organization's strategic plan, which emphasizes supporting artists at all stages of their creative journey through immersive educational experiences in a unique natural setting. Stratton shared exciting developments, including the recent purchase of the old library in Douglas that will be transformed into an art gallery and exhibition space, showcasing the organization's commitment to preserving local history and supporting regional artists. She discussed Oxbow's summer workshops, residency programs, and efforts to expand programming beyond traditional summer sessions, with a focus on creating meaningful artistic experiences that bring people together. The presentation emphasized Oxbow's broader goals of community building, arts education, and environmental stewardship, positioning the organization as more than just an art school, but a vital cultural institution that promotes healing, creativity, and intergenerational learning. Stratton highlighted upcoming events like the Taste of Oxbow dinner series and the annual building benefit, demonstrating the organization's ongoing engagement with the local community and commitment to supporting artistic growth.

Allegan County Commissioner Brad Lubbers provided updates on several county-wide issues. He highlighted the upcoming Senior Expo at First Baptist Church in Allegan, encouraging attendance to learn about county services for seniors. Lubbers discussed the May 15th storm damage, reporting \$2.2 million in municipal damage claims, excluding agricultural losses. He noted an upcoming meeting on July 1st to guide municipalities through damage expense reporting. Lubbers also shared concerns about federal funding cuts, specifically impacting on the marine sheriff's division, which will result in reduced patrolling and potential staffing adjustments. He discussed potential county-wide park millage options, warning that without additional funding, some parks might close. Additionally, Lubbers mentioned Consumers Energy is negotiating to sell 13 hydroelectric dams, with potential positive implications for the Calkins dam in Allegan. He also reported on a resolution supporting the restart of the Palisades Nuclear Power Plant in Covert, citing infrastructure and workforce benefits.

Public Comment on Agenda Item Only: None.

Councilmember Garnder left the council meeting at 7:12 p.m.

Consent Agenda:

- A. Approval of Workshop Meeting Minutes for June 18, 2025.
- B. Approval of Closed Session Minutes for June 18, 2025.
- C. Special Event – Water Invitational Art Fairs.
- D. Special Event – Chili-Cook Off.
- E. Right of Way Sign – Banner for The Chamber Music Festival of Saugatuck.
- F. Renewal of the City's Property and Liability Insurance Policy with the Michigan Municipal League Liability and Property Pool for Fiscal Year 2025-2026.
- G. Revocable License Agreement for Restaurant Seating in the Public Right of Way – AMS II (Pumpnickels).
- H. Revocable License Agreement Regarding Sign in the Right of Way – Lucias Imports LLC.
- I. Revocable License Agreement Regarding Sign in the Right of Way – Noble Twist LLC.
- J. Change Order #1 – 2025-2027 Pavement Markings.

K. Reappointments to Boards and Commissions:

- Auston Marineau to Planning Commission - term ending 7/1/28.
- Chris Raphael to Zoning Board of Appeals - term ending 7/1/28.
- Richard Crawford to the Zoning Board of Appeals - term ending 7/1/28.

Motion by Peterson, second by Stanton 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, Sheriff and Engineer submitted status reports on current activities since the last regular council meeting for their respective departments.

Fire District Administration:

Dan Fox highlighted record-high incident numbers, partially due to the May storm, with a 50% overlapping call rate indicating high demand on resources. Fox noted that motor vehicle accidents at the roundabout have been limited to property damage, an improvement from previous years. He discussed the fire district's ongoing training programs and community engagement efforts. A significant portion of his report focused on the AED (Automated External Defibrillator) program, with the fire district becoming the lead sponsor and managing 65 AEDs across the district. He shared a training video demonstrating the fire district's ladder truck operations and emphasized the importance of continuous training and community support.

Interurban Board:

Councilmember Muncey's provided an update on the Inter-Urban Transit Authority. He reported that the building is preparing to break ground, with plans for two bathrooms, a larger conference area, and a dedicated office for the main mechanic. Muncey highlighted the success of their extended route, particularly attracting riders from Laketown Township. The organization has hired four new part-time employees and one seasonal employee. Looking ahead, Muncey noted they may request a larger millage for next year due to expansion costs. He also mentioned that healthcare costs have increased by approximately 12-14% for their employees, which is consistent with broader trends. Muncey emphasized the need to prepare for future financial challenges while continuing to expand and improve services.

Kalamazoo Lake Sewer & Water Authority: Councilmember Clark reported on several key issues for the Kalamazoo Lake Sewer and Water Authority. He addressed recent billing problems, explaining that customers who received mailed bills were given last year's rates and will receive catch-up bills in June without late fees. The authority will transition from postcard bills to full envelope bills to allow for more information and inserts. Clark highlighted a recurring seasonal issue with sewer backups caused by disposable wipes, noting several incidents including a backup on Butler Street. He mentioned minor storm-related damage to a truck and explained that while some property owners raised concerns about sewer issues, the problems were primarily related to private lateral lines. Clark emphasized that the city and Kalamazoo have been responsive in addressing these infrastructure concerns.

Kalamazoo Lake Harbor Authority: Councilmember Peterson noted there will be a committee meeting this month.

Zoning Board of Appeals: None.

Historic District Commission: None.

Planning Commission: Councilmember Clark provided an update on the Planning Commission's activities. The commission is actively working on the Master Plan, scheduling special meetings every Wednesday at 4 PM to make progress. They are focusing on public engagement and plan to develop a community survey to gather input. Clark also discussed the ongoing work on the sign ordinance, which is being mandated by a Supreme Court decision regarding content-based regulations. He mentioned that while the process is complex, they hope to have draft language to share with the council in the coming meetings. Clark noted the Planning Commission's review of Pumpnickel's request for outdoor dining.

Parks & Public Works Committee: Mayor Pro-Tem Stanton noted the next meeting is June 24th at 10 a.m.

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

Water Systems Operations Contract Advisory Committee: None.

Wildlife Management Committee: None.

Approval of Accounts Payable:

Motion by Stanton, second by Clark to approve the accounts payable in the amount of \$160,075.26. Via roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.

Public Hearing: None.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business:

Resolution 250623-A - Budget Amendments for Fiscal Year 2024-2025:

Motion by Dean, second by Peterson to approve Resolution 250623-A to amend the budget of the 2024/2025 general appropriations act. Via roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.

Resolution 250623-B- Electing to Comply with Provisions of Public Act 152 of 2011 by Exercising the City's Right to Exempt Itself from the Requirements of the Act for the Current Year:

Motion by Peterson, second by Stanton to approve Resolution 250623-B as presented. Via roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.

Employee Health Insurance Benefits:

Motion by Stanton, second by Clark to offer employees in a West Michigan partner county the priority HMO gold G 10-West Michigan partners plan or priority HSA HMO gold G 16-West Michigan partners plan with a \$2,500 city contribution to an HSA in lieu of the HRA, and to offer the priority HMO gold G 10 plan, or priority HSA HMO gold G 16 plan, with a \$2,500 city contribution to an HSA in lieu of an HRA, to employees outside of a partner County. Via roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.

Kalamazoo River Greenway Request for Funding and Advisory Board Appointment:

Motion by Dean, second by Peterson to approve \$5,000 in funding to the Outdoor Discovery Center for Kalamazoo River Greenway plan projects, and to appoint Council Member Stanton to serve on the Kalamazoo River Greenway Advisory Board. Via roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.

Closed Session:

Motion by Muncey, supported by, to move into a closed session pursuant to MCL 15.268(h), to discuss a confidential written legal opinion regarding compensation and benefits. Via roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.

The council entered a closed session at 7:47 p.m.

Motion by Stanton, second by Dean to go into open session. Via roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.

The council entered the open session at 8:41 p.m.

Motion by Stanton, second by Muncey to authorize the mayor and city attorney to negotiate amendments to the manager's employment agreement to provide for a three-year term with a car allowance of \$6,000 and minimum salary increases of \$135,000 effective July 1, 2025, \$145,000 effective July 1, 2026, And \$160,000 effective July 1, 2027. Via roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.

Public Comment: None.

Correspondence: None.

Council Comments:

Councilmember Peterson: None.

Mayor Pro-Tem Stanton: None.

Councilmember Dean expressed concerns about infrastructure issues in the county and municipality. He highlighted the impact of the recent power outage on local businesses, noting that many businesses suffered losses due to unexpected disruptions. Dean pointed out that during the Saturday afternoon power outage, cars were lining up on Holland Street and Blue Star Highway as people tried to leave town. He emphasized the need for the council and city to redouble efforts to find solutions to ongoing infrastructure problems, particularly as the area becomes more crowded during peak tourist season. Dean stressed the importance of addressing these challenges to minimize economic disruption and support local businesses.

Councilmember Muncey shared updates on local events and community activities. He expressed disappointment that the Music in the Park event the previous Wednesday was rained. Muncey mentioned his excitement about the upcoming Music in the Park event, playfully discussing his outfit choices and picnic basket selection. He seemed enthusiastic about participating in the community gathering and encouraged others to attend.

Councilmember Clark raised significant safety concerns about outdoor dining tables in the street. He described witnessing potentially dangerous situations, including a child reaching out and touching a passing car and a vehicle attempting a U-turn that nearly hit dining tables. Clark observed a truck mirror coming close to people's heads and suggested the need for a serious discussion about safety measures. He proposed adding an agenda item in a future workshop to discuss securing perimeters around street tables, potentially using parking barriers to create safer zones. Clark emphasized that while he doesn't want to eliminate outdoor dining, he believes it's crucial to address the safety risks to prevent potential accidents.

Mayor Anderson shared two key points in her final comments. First, she echoed concerns about infrastructure. She expressed frustration that the company spends more on outage responses than on infrastructure improvements, and felt particularly bad for businesses repeatedly impacted by power disruptions. Second, Anderson spoke positively about the city staff, highlighting her morning meeting and the collaborative work of employees. She emphasized how impressed she was with their efficiency and teamwork, expressing hope that the staff appreciation event would convey how much the council values their contributions. Anderson concluded by expressing gratitude for the city's exceptional staff team.

Adjournment:

Motion by Muncey, second by Dean to adjourn the meeting. Upon voice vote, motion carried 6-0. Mayor Anderson adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Jamie Wolters, City Clerk