CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
April 8, 2026

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 Clark and Councilmembers Gardner and Muncey.
Absent: Dean, Stanton and Peterson.

Motion by Clark, Second by Gardner to excuse Dean, Stanton and Peterson's absence. Via voice vote, motion carried 4-0.

Others Present: City Manager Cummins, Attorney Witte, Zoning Director Moore, Treasurer Bredeweg, DPW Superintendent Herbert, DPW Admin/Project Coordinator Gibson and Clerk Wolters.

Agenda Changes: None.

Public Comment on Agenda Items Only:
Barry Johnson provided comment.

Approval of Minutes:
Regular City Council Meeting Minutes – March 23, 2026:

Motion by Muncey, second by Clark to approve the minutes from the last council meeting dated March 23, 2026. Via roll call vote, motion carried 4-0.

Guest Speaker: None.

Discussion Items:
On-Premises Tasting Room Permit – 118 Hoffman Street:
Zoning Director Moore presented a request for an on-premises tasting room/liquor license at 118 Hoffman in the Water Street zoning district. Staff clarified that the site is in a commercial zone where liquor licenses require Council approval but not special land use. It was confirmed with the applicant that all production will occur off-site at an existing facility 2.6 miles away, and the Hoffman location will operate as a retail/tasting outlet only. The applicant described a Spanish-style tapas bar concept, drawing on his experience in Spain and prior brewery work in Madrid, with in-house crafted beverages produced at the off-site facility and served on tap, paired with small plates. Council asked about

building control (he will be a tenant under a lease), with a timeline (targeting a June opening, subject to state timing and product readiness), and neighborhood relations. The applicant reported positive feedback from nearby businesses.

Blue Star Trail - Proposal for Phase Ia Archeological Site Identification Survey and Memorandum of Understanding:

City Manager Ryan Cummins reported that as part of the Section 106 review for the Blue Star Trail, the city must complete a Phase I archeological survey after a site walk with tribal nations and review of records raised concerns along most of the route and within portions of Oval Beach Park and adjacent township areas. An RFP was issued in consultation with MDOT's archeologist and tribal representatives, who requested a firm familiar with local history and tribal resources. One proposal was received from Abercroche Cultural Resources, LLC (Dr. Misty Jackson), which staff, the engineering firm (c2AE), Saugatuck Township, and Friends of the Blue Star Trail all found well-qualified and reasonably priced, with an advantageous timeline that could begin work before the end of May if MDOT signs off on the work plan. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was developed to clarify cost-sharing: Friends of the Blue Star Trail will pay $20,197.93 (about 77%), while the city and township will split the remaining $3,016.57 equally.

Chain Ferry Landings – Proposals for Reconstruction and Installation:

DPW Project Coordinator Michelle Gibson presented two proposals for reconstruction of the chain ferry landings, following years of noted deterioration. Three local welding/fabrication companies were contacted: one (Preferred Machine) declined due to lack of in-house drafting capacity; Tier One Services and Diversified Welding submitted similar proposals covering fabrication, removal, and reinstallation of the landings. The budget includes $80,000 for reconstruction in the current fiscal year. Staff recommended Diversified Welding, which previously fabricated the chain ferry arbors and is familiar with the structure. DPW Superintendent Scott Herbert explained that about $20,000 had been budgeted for engineering/design to potentially "re-imagine" the landings, but staff now recommends essentially replacing like-for-like to preserve the character of the ferry, reduce engineering costs, and redirect funds to other pressing capital needs. DPW will assist by removing and reinstalling decking (estimated about six hours of crew time) and adding new decking with non-slip adhesive for improved accessibility. Diversified will handle the metal structure. The only design change anticipated is an upgraded railing, replacing the existing fencing style with a cleaner, more suitable design; this will require Historic District Commission review.

Proposals for City-Wide Invasive Species Survey & Management Plan:

DPW Project Coordinator Michelle Gibson Staff reviewed four proposals for a city-wide invasive species effort and recommended engaging Outdoor Discovery Center (ODC) because they are already working on two other ecological projects for the city (including 63rd Street/Wilds ecological evaluation), ensuring continuity and consistent data. DPW Superintendent Herbert ODC has proven responsiveness and familiarity with Saugatuck's landscapes and expectations. Council discussed how the survey and management plan will guide annual budgeting and prioritization, recognizing that invasive species work—similar to managing Eurasian watermilfoil in the harbor—will be a multi-year, recurring expense.

Agreement Framework for Oval Beach Concessions:
DPW Project Coordinator Michelle Gibson reported that an RFP for Oval Beach concessions was issued in November, and two proposals were received: Midtown Tavern and Grow Estate LLC d/b/a Saugatuck Taco (Saugatuck Taco / "Saga Taco"). Staff recommended awarding to Grow Estate LLC and a licensing agreement is being finalized for Council's formal approval. Key agreement points include: a $10,000 minimum payment to the city per season (not all up front; monthly percentage-of-sales remittances will be reconciled at season's end to ensure at least $10,000 is paid), operation up to 30 days before Memorial Day and 30 days after, full compliance with all applicable laws and Allegan County Health Department requirements, and $1 million liability insurance naming the city as an additional insured. Alec and Lindsey (operators) presented their concept: a concession focused on grab-and-go and pre-packaged items (e.g., snacks, pre-packaged ice cream, beverages) at the stand, plus full Saga Taco food delivered to the beach. Delivery logistics were discussed in depth. The goal is roughly 45 minutes from order to delivery, which Alec and Lindsey view as consistent with typical delivery expectations, recognizing that the highest-demand days are a limited number of "peak" summer days. Delivery could be by e-bike entering via the Oval Beach road; For this season, the city will provide transferable beach passes or similar credentials for the concession's delivery vehicle.

Resolutions Authorizing Additions to City's Act 51 Map:
DPW Project Coordinator Michelle Gibson and DPW Superintendent Scott Herbert noted to maintain eligibility for Act 51 transportation funding, the city must annually review and update its certified street map. Michelle Gibson presented recommended additions: a short segment of Elizabeth Street from Grant Street to its southwest dead-end, and Lakeview Street from Park Street to its east end. These segments are currently maintained by the city but had not been previously certified.

Updates to Wicks Park Boat Slip Leasing Policy:
Jamie outlined proposed changes to the Wicks Park boat slip leasing policy based on recurring issues experienced over the past several seasons. Previously, the city held multiple boat slip lotteries throughout the summer (last year extending into late July) in an effort to fill vacant slips, but this was administratively burdensome and still left vacancies. Under the revised policy, applicants must submit a current boat registration with their application, and there will be one primary lottery; any remaining slips afterwards will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis rather than through repeated lotteries. The policy will also formalize the process for boat changes during the season (e.g., upgrading to a new vessel) to ensure the slip holder remains the same legal owner and to provide clear documentation. Finally, the policy will explicitly prohibit commercial use of the slips. The updated rules state that anyone caught operating commercially from a city slip will be ineligible to reapply in future years. Council members supported the changes as sensible continuous improvement, noting that the new system better aligns slip allocation and staff capacity.

Revenue/Expenses through 3rd Quarter.I.
Treasurer Bredeweg provided a Q3 financial update, noting that the city is in a strong position. Through three quarters, overall revenues are at about 74% of budget, which aligns with expectations, while expenditures are at roughly 49%, reflecting the timing of major capital projects that will ramp up later in the fiscal year (e.g., City/Village Square improvements, Mount Baldhead work, Maple Street construction). Property tax collection is complete for the year; the city is awaiting some pass-through revenues from the county. Franchise fees stand at about 50% of budget because payments are received with a lag; additional installments are expected. State revenue sharing comes in during

even-numbered months; four of six payments have been received. Interest income is currently above budget due to favorable rates and active cash management.

Investment Update:
Treasurer Bredeweg reported steps taken to increase yield while maintaining safety. All CDs are now structured to remain fully FDIC-insured; one large CD that previously exceeded the $250,000 cap matured and was reduced and re-invested appropriately. The city moved its main checking balance into an ICS (Insured Cash Sweep) at the bank. Additionally, the city shifted Huntington CDs into a CDARS/CDRs-type structure (a Certificate of Deposit Account Registry Service), which allows larger aggregate balances to be insured by breaking them into multiple under-$250,000 CDs at participating institutions. The city also established an investment relationship with Consumers Credit Union, attracted by promotional 4.99% CD rates, and is in the process of moving funds there after pre-note testing. Michigan CLASS, the local government investment pool, continues to be used for short-term cash with good liquidity and higher yields than traditional bank accounts. Council members noted the positive impact of rising interest rates on investment balances and appreciated that the city is actively managing idle cash within statutory limits to maximize return while preserving liquidity and safety.

Letter of Support – Ox-Bow House Project:
City Manager Ryan Cummins presented a draft letter of support for the Ox-Bow House renovation project. Ox-Bow is seeking congressionally directed spending (earmarked funding) through Senator Slotkin's office to renovate the Ox-Bow House property in Douglas. Douglas has already issued a supportive letter; Ox-Bow requested similar support from Saugatuck. The proposed Saugatuck letter emphasizes that investments in Ox-Bow benefit the entire tri-community region (Saugatuck, Douglas, and Saugatuck Township) due to interconnected economies, shared cultural and tourism assets, and the importance of Ox-Bow's arts programming to the area's identity and economy. Senator Slotkin's staff confirmed they would accept a support letter after their formal request deadline. Council members were supportive.

Status Update on Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Priorities:
City Manager Ryan Cummins walked through a detailed status report on the current fiscal year's Council priorities and how they are tracking into the upcoming 2025/26 cycle.

Public Comments:
Rakesh Madhava provided comment.

Council Comments:
Council Member Muncey said he had a great Easter weekend and hoped others did as well. He noted that State Representative Joey Andrews had been in town the previous week meeting with local people. Muncey mentioned he has invited Andrews onto his radio show. He then closed by noting the weather is starting to improve, even with a cooler week ahead, and wished everyone a nice week.

Mayor Pro-Tem Clark kept his remarks very brief. He said he also hopes everybody has a nice week and stated that he would defer more substantive comments until the upcoming Monday council meeting.

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Council Member Gardner used his closing comments to address a few operational and policy points. He first remarked on seeing Otter/AI note-taking in use, saying his own workplace relies heavily on similar tools and expressing support for City staff using automation. He then asked the city manager to provide an update at the next regular meeting on plans to backfill the DPW Superintendent position and how interim coverage will be handled. Cummins confirmed he would cover this in his manager's report rather than as a separate agenda item. Gardner also raised two items he wants on the agenda for the next workshop: a discussion of free Oval Beach passes for residents and a discussion about lowering the city's operating millage for taxpayers. After other members indicated support for at least debating free passes, it was agreed that the free-pass question would be added to the next Monday meeting agenda for formal council consideration.

Adjournment:

Motion by Clark, second by Muncey to adjourn the meeting. Upon voice vote, motion carried 4-0. Mayor Anderson adjourned the meeting at65:0 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

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Jamie Wolters, City Clerk

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