



CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES- *proposed*
May 12, 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, DPW Superintendent Herbert, Deputy Clerk Williams, Sergeant Haas, Attorney Witte.

Mayor's Comments:

Mayor Anderson briefly reflected on the significance of the Pride Month proclamation, sharing personal insights as an openly lesbian individual. She acknowledged some critical social media reactions to the Pride sidewalk but emphasized the importance of creating inclusive spaces. She recounted a meaningful experience officiating a wedding for a young lesbian couple in Saugatuck's Rose Garden – chosen by the couple after searching for LGBTQ-friendly wedding locations. This moment underscored the city's welcoming reputation and reinforced her pride in being part of the Saugatuck community. She concluded by expressing her support for the proclamation and her joy in signing it.

City Manager Comments:

City Manager Cummins shared personal news of his recent marriage and their honeymoon in Italy, expressing gratitude for the well wishes and the team's support during his absence. He noted observing public infrastructure abroad with professional interest, even while on vacation. He thanked staff, particularly DPW Superintendent Herbert, for covering his responsibilities while he was out of the office.

He praised the Clerk's team and election workers for successfully managing the recent election. He also recognized Planning & Zoning Director Thompson's outstanding efforts in handling communications and inquiries following changes the short-term rental ordinance.

Regarding the Maple Street project, he detailed work being done by Herbert and the engineers, including on-site assessments and planning for stormwater and sidewalk improvements. The project is advancing toward the next public feedback stage, with the aim of completion next year.

Lastly, he thanked the City of Douglas, their engineers and contractors, for completing Ferry Street repairs ahead of schedule and commended their communication throughout the project.

Agenda Changes: None.

Guest Speakers: None.

Public Comment on Agenda Item Only: None.

Consent Agenda:

- A. Approval of Workshop Meeting Minutes for May 7, 2025
- B. Proclamation 2505152-P1 – Pride Month Proclamation
- C. Social District Application – AMS 1, LLC dba Pumpnickels
- D. Right of Way Application – Saugatuck-Douglas Garden Club
- E. Special Event Application – Town Crier Run
- F. Special Event Application – SCA Farmer & Artisan Markets

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

Staff Reports, Boards, Commissions & Committees:

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

Fire District Administration:

Dan Fox presented a recap from the Saugatuck Township Fire Board's meeting held on April 21, 2025, Meeting. Key points included:

- **Facility Limitations:** The current fire station has inadequate water and sewer infrastructure (small water line, septic), lacks proper sleeping and shower accommodations for firefighters who live outside the district, and is nearing or at capacity for housing apparatus.
- **Southern Expansion Site:** A property at Wiley and Blue Star in Douglas (former Allen Hospital building) is being considered for a new southern response facility. The fire board toured the site, and a non-binding letter of intent is being developed with Douglas officials.
- **Advantages of Site:** The southern portion of the building is in near move-in condition with minor upgrades needed, and it was originally constructed to a high standard. Douglas plans to renovate the northern two-thirds for its own use, leaving the southern third for potential fire district use.
- **Funding Concept:** Preliminary discussions include a possible condominium-style ownership structure allowing the fire district to acquire its portion of the building.

- **Site Layout & Access:** Plans include a new three-bay apparatus garage. Vehicles would exit onto Wiley Street, away from Blue Star, due to future plans for a stoplight or roundabout at the corner, improving emergency access and safety.

The proposal remains in early stages, with funding and final decisions still under discussion.

Interurban Board:

Councilman Muncey said that the service area has expanded to include three stops in Fennville: Wagner's, The Post Office, and Ladders of Hope – for just 1\$. Additionally, \$1 door-to-door service is now available throughout Laketown Township. The Fennville program will run for about two years, while the Laketown pilot ends in October, with potential continuation based on demand.

Special \$5 rides to three local wineries (Modalis, Virtue Cider, and Fenn Valley) are also available from anywhere in the service area. March 2024 saw record ridership, with nearly 4,500 passengers – an increase of 260 youth riders from the previous year. Demand is rising, especially in the afternoons.

Facility expansion is in the design phase, with construction expected to begin within two months, including an added bathroom and more building space. Lastly, the director reviewed a strong performance review, praised for service expansion and strong staff relationships. The next meeting is scheduled for May 20.

Kalamazoo Lake Sewer & Water Authority:

Councilmember Clark gave a recap of the last meeting and said that Greg Wyckoff has agreed to lead the harbor project, with funding already included in the upcoming budget for all three communities. The first meeting with him, focused on the no-wake survey, is scheduled for July 8. There was an issue receiving an update from Daniel, who is tracking survey responses, but a key upcoming decision will be determining a final deadline for survey submissions – either by setting a firm cutoff date or issuing a final reminder. Staff input will help guide that decision.

Kalamazoo Lake Harbor Authority: None.

Zoning Board of Appeals: None.

Historic District Commission:

Councilmember Gardner said that at the May 1 meeting, the Historic District Commission discussed three key items:

1. Kilwins Building (Mason & Butler): Damage to the inlay tile at the entrance, caused by a storm, led Kilwins to request replacing a portion with cement. The Commission approved the partial replacement acknowledging Kilwins' care for preserving the building's character.
2. Butler Pantry Building: A rotting and settling window on the left side of the storefront was approved for replacement with a historically accurate replica. Commissioners praised the detailed preservation work and commitment to maintaining the building's historic integrity.
3. Coghlin Park Marker: Approval was given to replace the existing sign in the park's northeast corner with one of the city's new historic markers.

Additional administrative approvals included a city application to replace decking at the Chain Ferry Landings, with further discussions planned regarding arbor replacements in that area. The next commission meeting is scheduled for June 5.

Planning Commission: None.

Parks and Public Works Committee:

Mayor Pro-Tem Stanton said that the next meeting is scheduled for May 27.

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

Water System Operations Contract Advisory Committee: None.

Wildlife Management Committee, Councilmember Dean:

Councilmember Dean reported on the last meeting where the fire department shared drone footage confirming large deer populations, particularly between Wiley, Campbell, and Blue Star Highway – an area already known for heavy deer activity. Dean said that the Committee representatives recommended the drone focus continue in that region and extend toward Oxbow and Peterson Preserve, noting that the highest deer concentration appears to be on that side of the river near Douglas.

Additionally, the group reviewed draft homeowner association (HOA) hunting guidelines. While Douglas preferred stricter rules, Saugatuck representatives advocated for guidelines closely aligned with state regulations to reduce administrative and legal burdens. The goal is to develop a flexible template HOA's can use, not to override state DNR rules.

This work is progressing with an aim to finalize materials and ordinances before the October 1 start of the hunting season. Dean advised focusing deer management efforts on the high-density areas east of the river, based on both anecdotal and drone data.

Approval of Accounts Payable:

Motion by Stanton, second by Clark to approve the accounts payable in the amount of \$224,954.32. Via roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing: None.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business:

A. Set Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget Public Hearing:

Motion by Dean, second by Stanton, to set a 2025-2026 Budget Public Hearing for June 4 at 6pm. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

B. Replication of Chain Ferry Arbors:

Motion by Stanton, second by Peterson, to approve the work proposed by Diversified Welding and Fabrication LLC, to replicate the steel structures of the Chain Ferry arbors contingent on approval from the Historic District Commission. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

C. Streetlight Removal Request – Spear Street:

Motion by Dean, second by Stanton, to have Consumers Energy deactivate and remove, the streetlight located near 555 Spear St, ID number 188348. Dean withdrew his motion.

Motion by Dean, second by Stanton, to have Consumers Energy deactivate the streetlight located near 555 Spear St, ID number 188348. Upon voice vote, motion carried 6-1.

Yes: Anderson, Clark, Dean, Muncey, Peterson, and Stanton

No: Gardner

D. Addendum to Trash Services Agreement:

DPW Superintendent Herbert said that the final version of the agreement with Republic Services includes minor revisions based on feedback from Council and legal. Key changes are:

1. **Service Timeline:** The response window for Public Works service requests was adjusted from two days to three days to give Republic more flexibility, especially during high-demand periods.
2. **Oval Beach Dumpster:** Language requiring annual delivery and removal of the dumpster was removed, as the container remains on site year-round. This is more cost-effective and operationally efficient.
3. **Optional Fees:** If the dumpster were ever removed for winter, Republic clarified a \$95 delivery and \$95 pickup fee would apply.

These changes were reviewed and approved by both legal counsel and Republic, and a finalized version of the agreement was presented.

Public Comment: None.

Correspondence: Lisa Mize – Executive Director of the Saugatuck Douglas Area Convention and Visitor's Bureau.

Council Comments:

Councilmember Clark researched the “Dark Sky Initiative” and thinks it is very interesting, and he said that their website is very informative. He said that he went fishing and right near the marsh, he spotted two massive eagle nests and could see little heads pop up.

Councilmember Muncey thanked the staff for putting together a strong and detailed packet. He expressed appreciation for the various reports included—especially the engineer and planning commission reports—and noted how much he values the case-by-case approach that was introduced and continues to be used. He also mentioned always enjoying the police report and reiterated that the entire packet was well done.

Councilmember Dean emphasized the importance of continuing discussions around event safety and security. He suggested the council and staff explore ways to make events safer, including potential long-term infrastructure improvements on Butler Street—such as installing retractable bollards, a solution used by other communities. While acknowledging the cost, he noted that safety concerns are growing and that such investments could reduce the burden on staff and

better protect the iconic area. He also expressed appreciation for the fire department's feedback in these discussions.

Mayor Pro Tem Stanton congratulated City Manager Ryan and Lisa on their recent wedding and well-deserved time off. She also thanked the city clerk and community volunteers for their work in ensuring a successful election. Looking ahead to Memorial Day, she acknowledged the efforts of local businesses as they prepare for the busy tourist season and offered congratulations to them for their hard work.

Councilmember Gardner congratulated City Manager Cummins on his recent wedding and echoed Councilmember Muncey's appreciation for the detailed staff packet, acknowledging the time and effort that goes into its preparation. Gardner expressed frustration over the continued use of the public sidewalk by residents at the corner house of Holland St. and Francis St. and requested a firm timeline for sidewalk restoration—ideally before Memorial Day—stating the situation has become unacceptable. He described the condition of the area near the Hoffman Street end docks as "terrible" and emphasized the need for immediate infrastructure investment, especially given its visibility and heavy use by visitors to Coral Gables and the new Marker 14 restaurant. Gardner recommended the council formally discuss funding for improved signage at intersection of Holland St. and Blue Star Hwy. that would direct visitors to Saugatuck, suggesting it be added to a workshop agenda.

Councilmember Peterson congratulated City Manager Cummins and noted that things around town are starting to look really good. She reiterated the need for a Saugatuck sign at the intersection of Blue Star Hwy and Holland Street. She expressed concern that the issue keeps falling off the radar and suggested it be formally added to a workshop agenda to discuss funding options. She emphasized the importance of clear signage to direct visitors. She ended on a positive note, welcoming the arrival of summer.

Mayor Anderson expressed gratitude to the election workers, highlighting the diverse group involved—including residents, non-residents, and people of all ages. She emphasized the complexity of the election process and praised the clerk and deputy clerk for their excellent organization and leadership.

Adjournment:

Motion by Stanton, second by Dean to adjourn the meeting. Upon voice vote, motion carried unanimously. Mayor Anderson adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Sara Williams, Deputy Clerk