CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING- *proposed*
February 9, 2026

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 Clark and Councilmembers Dean, Gardner, Muncey, Peterson.
Absent: Stanton.
Others Present: City Manager Cummins, Department of Public Works Superintendent Herbert, Planning & Zoning Director Moore, Attorney Witte, and Deputy Clerk Williams.

Motion by Muncey, second by Dean to excuse Councilmember Stanton's absence from the meeting. Via roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.

Mayor's Comments:
Mayor Holly Anderson shared a personal story to publicly that deputy Mark Levitz. She explained that about a week and a half earlier, a friend had called her in a panic because she was badly stuck while trying to get into the condos at the corner of Blue Star Highway and Lake Street. Deputy Levitz happened to drive by, stopped to see if they needed help, arranged for a tow truck to come, and stayed with them until everything was resolved. The friend had originally called the mayor asking if she knew of a tow company; Mayor Anderson texted Councilmember Stanton for a recommendation and passed it along. Throughout the evening, she and her friend exchanged text messages about how appreciative the friend was and how much the experience felt like a "small town sheriff" moment. Mayor Anderson said she wanted to share this with everyone as an example that the community still has people who serve, know, and step up for residents. She thanked Deputy Levitz in person and concluded by saying that that was her comment.

City Manager Comments:
City Manager Ryan Cummins said that he would let his written report stand and only add a few updates: the new doors for the Mt. Baldhead restrooms have arrived, been installed, and look good, bringing that project closer to completion. He reminded council that at their next regular meeting, Sergeant Haas will attend to present the sheriff's department's annual report and address council's prior questions, especially about response times and related data. He concluded by noting that the rest of the projects he's working on are already on the evening's agenda.

Agenda Changes:
Motion by Dean, second by Muncey, to add the Wildlife Committee as a discussion item under Item 10B on the agenda. Via voice vote, motion carried 6-0.

Guest Speakers: None.

Public Comment on Agenda Item Only:
Tom Siver (Candidate running for 57th District Court Judge in Allegan County) – introduced himself to council.

Consent Agenda:
Approval of City Council Workshop Minutes from February 4, 2026.
Allegan County 2026 Imagery Partnership Agreement.
Right of Way Signage – Saugatuck Center for the Arts Mountain Film Festival.
Right of Way Signage – Saugatuck Center for the Arts.

Motion by Peterson, second by Muncey to pass the consent agenda dated February 9, 2026. Via roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.

Staff Reports, Boards, Commissions & Committees:
Reports provided by the City Staff and the following board, commission and committee members.

Tri-Community Wildlife Committee:
Councilmember Dean explained that the Douglas City Manager wants to reconvene the Tri-Community Wildlife Committee for a one-time check-in meeting on March 4 to compare where each community ended up with ordinances, not to develop new policy. Because the committee has been sunsetted, he asked council if they had any objections to him attending that meeting as the city's former representative. No objections were raised by the Mayor or fellow Councilmembers. Dean said he would make an effort to attend.

Fire District Administration:
City of Saugatuck fire board representative Dan Fox reported that the fire district is close to finalizing a purchase agreement with Douglas for the second station site on Wiley Road, and reviewed January 2026 call data showing slightly lower call volume, faster response times, and a typical seasonal pattern. He highlighted strong cost-recovery performance, including a $31,000 reimbursement from a major truck crash, and concluded with a strong safety reminder about people walking on the unstable Lake Michigan ice shelf, emphasizing the extreme danger and difficulty of rescue.

Interurban Board:
Councilmember Muncey reported that Interurban ridership continues to grow, with 4,385 riders in December and more than 400 riders using the free New Year's Eve late-night service from 6 p.m. to 1 a.m. He noted that the building expansion is underway and progressing, and that the board has approved pursuing a five-year millage renewal plus a 0.50-mill increase on the August ballot to support growth and offset reductions in state and federal funding. Because Laketown Township chose not to continue funding service, Interurban maintained rides there initially through a private donation from the director and then by increasing fares for riders outside the taxing district (e.g., in Laketown, $2 for students and $5 for regular fares), while keeping existing fares in Saugatuck, Saugatuck Township, and Douglas. Muncey added that Interurban continues to partner with the Center for Aging and Allegan County's transportation system to provide longer-distance medical and other essential trips.

Kalamazoo Lake Sewer & Water Authority:
Mayor Pro Tem Clark reported that the Kalamazoo Lake Sewer & Water Authority has hired a new administrator, Robert Miller, who will start on February 26th and will be introduced to local committees once settled. He noted that the operations manager has decided to retire, leaving the authority "on the fine edge" for staffing and making it a priority to backfill open positions. Clark reviewed the draft 2027 budget, which projects about $3.4 million in expenses and $3.7 million in revenues, with no commodity rate increase planned this year because of a recent 20% water rate hike. However, he explained that the long-term capital improvement plan shows roughly $50 million in needs over 20 years, with current reserves covering only about 9% of that and some very large, uncertain projects (such as a $13.5 million

sewer main reroute under the river near Kal Lake). As a result, he warned that future, possibly substantial, commodity rate increases will be necessary to build adequate capital reserves and keep ahead of infrastructure risks.

Kalamazoo Lake Harbor Authority:
Councilmember Peterson reported that the Kalamazoo Lake Harbor Authority agreed they need an economic impact study to quantify how a navigable harbor benefits the whole community - businesses, boaters, non-boaters, tourism, and residents - so they can realistically pursue funding for ongoing dredging. Greg Weykamp obtained a draft proposal from Vetter Consulting Enterprises (shared with council), and the Authority decided they do not need a formal RFP because the cost is below their contractual threshold. Each member government will now go back to its board to seek support for funding "Task One" of the study, anticipated at about $6000 total this fiscal year (roughly $10,000 per community for the full scope later). Peterson stressed that water levels are back near 2016 conditions, prior recommendations on sediment traps and upstream runoff were never implemented, and without a local funding strategy the harbor will again silt in. The goal is to keep the project moving so a funding framework for regular dredging is in place within roughly five years.

Zoning Board of Appeals: None.

Historic District Commission:
Councilmember Dean noted that the February 5th meeting was cancelled. The next meeting will be March 5th, at 6pm.

Planning Commission:
Councilmember Gardner stated that the next meeting is scheduled for next Thursday, the 19th, at 6:30 p.m.

Parks & Public Works Committee:
Mayor Anderson noted that the January meeting had been cancelled. Next meeting is Tuesday, February 24th.

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

Water Systems Operations Contract Advisory Committee:
Councilmember Gardner noted the next meeting is scheduled for Friday, February 13th.

Parking Improvements Task Force Committee:
Councilmember Muncey noted that the citywide parking survey is live and accessible via the city website, Facebook page, and recent newspaper coverage, and said there were already over 350 responses, including 150-200 in the first 24 hours. He mentioned that Walker Consultants has assigned a new lead, John Dorsett, who has already walked the downtown to study conditions and will attend the next committee meeting on February 17th at 3 p.m. Muncey emphasized the importance of broad public participation early in the process so that any recommendations to council reflect community experience and expectations. He also highlighted that the city has nearly 2,000 parking spaces (about 1,600 off-street and 303 city-owned on-street spaces), which suggests the issue may be more about parking behavior and distribution than sheer supply.

Approval of Accounts Payable:
Motion by Dean, second by Peterson, to approve the accounts payable in the amount of $531,676.94. Via roll call, motion caried 6-0.

Public Hearing: None.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business:

Maple Street and Other Street and Utility Improvements – Bid Award and Proposal for Construction Engineering Services:

Motion by Muncey, second by Gardner to award the 2026 Street and Utility project in the amount of $4,334,036.50 to Schippers Excavating and to approve the proposal submitted by Fleis & VandenBrink Engineering for construction engineering services – 2026 Street and Utility Improvements in the amount of $318,700. Via roll call, motion carried 6-0.

Park Street Planning & Conceptual Design – Proposal for Engineering & Landscape Architecture Services and Michigan Coastal Management Program Grant Agreement:

Motion by Dean, second by Peterson to approve the engineering and landscape architecture services proposal from Fleis & VandenBrink for Park Street planning and conceptual design in an amount not to exceed $40,000, and to approve the Michigan Coastal Management Program Grant Agreement. Via roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.

Village Square Park – Proposal to provide Design and Construction Engineering Services for Village Square Park Improvements Project in the amount of $35,000:

Motion by Muncey, second by Gardner to approve the Fleis & VandenBrink Proposal to provide Design and Construction Engineering Services for Village Square Park Improvements Project in the amount of $35,000. Upon roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.

Proposals for Logo and Branding Refresh Project:

Motion by Dean, second by Peterson to approve the Proposal and Creative Services agreement from Concept A Creative Studio for the logo and branding refresh project in the amount of $24,500. Via roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.

New Historic District Signage:

Motion by Peterson, second by Clark to approve the recommended proposal, Round 2, Direction 1, as prepared by Concept A Creative Studio, for three (3) single-faced cast aluminum signs, each measuring 24 inches by 36 inches, mounted on 8-foot posts, as detailed in the specifications sheet included in the meeting packet dated February 9, 2026.

The conversation continued and Councilmember Peterson withdrew her original motion.

Motion by Gardner, second by Muncey to table this proposal until they have more due diligence completed on sign costs as well as possible Michigan vendors. Upon roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.

Ordinance No. 260209-A – Short Term Rental Licensing Ordinance Amendment.

Motion by Muncey, second by Gardner to approve Ordinance Number 260209-A, Short Term Rental Licensing Ordinance Amendment. Upon roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.

Goals and Priorities for Fiscal year 2026/2027:

Motion by Dean, second by Peterson to approve the goals and priorities for fiscal year 2026-2027. Via roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.

Public Comment:

James Sermon
Nick Masters

Correspondence:

Brian Serman

Council Comments:

Councilmember Muncey offered condolences on the recent passing of community members Don Beery and Betty Jones, noting that both were wonderful, memorable "characters" who contributed a great deal to Saugatuck and helped make the community what it is. He also shared details for Betty Jones's funeral services at St. Peter's, specifying the visitation and service times.

Councilmember dean echoed condolences for Betty Jones and Don Beery, saying it is always sad when a neighbor and community member passes. He also complimented the council on what he felt was a strong, productive two hours of discussion on important issues.

Mayor Pro Tem Clark also offered condolences on the passing of Betty Jones and Don Beery, recalling that Betty's late husband had served as police chief and joking that the chief had corrected him a few times when he was younger. He remarked that Betty often passed his house on her scooter and that he would miss their conversations. Clark then thanked the DPW staff for their work during recent bad weather and early mornings.

Councilmember Gardner offered heartfelt reflections and condolences on the deaths of Betty Jones and Don Beery, sharing personal memories and noting how much they meant to the community. He also requested that council schedule a future workshop discussion on downtown sidewalk snow and ice maintenance, to decide whether the city should enforce existing requirements on businesses or assume more responsibility itself, given current winter conditions downtown.

Councilmember Peterson echoed the condolences for Betty Jones and Don Beery, recalling Betty's tole in prompting the city's garage sale ordinance and noting she has tried unsuccessfully to get that ordinance repealed. She also made a light remark that the Mount Baldhead radar station is as old as she is, and, like her, needs upkeep but she hopes both will last a few more years.

Mayor Anderson noted it was hard to follow Councilmember Peterson's remarks. She added her own condolences for Betty Jones and Don Beery and agreed the meeting had been a good discussion on many topics.

Adjournment:

Motion by Peterson, second by Dean to adjourn the meeting. Upon voice vote, motion carried 6-0. Mayor Anderson adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

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Sara Williams, Deputy Clerk