



**CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
November 12, 2024**

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 Stanton at 6:30 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Attendance:

Present: Mayor Stanton, Mayor Pro-Tem Baldwin and Councilmembers Anderson, Clark, Dean, and Gardner.

Absent: Muncey.

Others Present: DPW Superintendent Herbert, Attorney Jake Witte and Clerk Wolters.

Selection of Mayor and Mayor Pro-Tem:

Mayor Stanton asked for Mayor nominations:

Motion by Dean, second by Baldwin to nominate Hollay Anderson to Mayor. Via roll call vote, motion carried 5-1. Yes: Stanton, Baldwin, Anderson, Clark, Dean. No: Gardner.

Mayor Anderson assumed control of the meeting.

Mayor Anderson asked for Mayor Pro – Tem nominations:

Motion by Baldwin, second by Clark to nominate Lauren Stanton to Mayor Pro-Tem. Via roll call vote, motion carried 5-1. Yes: Stanton, Baldwin, Anderson, Clark, Dean. No: Gardner.

Mayor Comments:

Mayor Pro-Tem Stanton:

Expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to serve as the mayor of Saugatuck over the past year, describing it as one of the most challenging periods of her professional career. Reflecting on the year, she acknowledged the difficult decisions faced by the council and the contentious moments that arose, including public scrutiny symbolized by her photo being displayed in a storefront. Despite these challenges, she noted personal growth and emphasized her pride in serving the city she deeply loves. She concluded by thanking the community and expressing her honor in continuing to serve on the council for a third term.

Mayor Anderson:

Commended the Veterans Day Service, describing it as a beautiful and moving event, and expressed appreciation to veterans, their families, and all who serve, acknowledging the sacrifices involved. She also congratulated the Saugatuck football team on a remarkable season. She offered high praise for Mayor Pro-Tem Stanton recognizing her grace and strength in navigating significant challenges during her tenure. Additionally,

she acknowledged Councilmember Baldwin for her dedicated service to the city, particularly in her work with the DPW Committee, where she played a pivotal role in advancing parks and green spaces. She highlighted Baldwin's contributions to projects such as the world-class playground, improvements at Mount Baldhead, and initiatives involving the airport property and STRs. Mayor Anderson described Helen as a visionary leader with fierce determination, expressing gratitude for her impactful work and noting she would be missed on the council.

City Manager Comments:

DPW Superintendent Herbert:

He extended congratulations to newly elected council members, as well as to Jamie Wolters and Sarah Williams for their exemplary work during the election. He expressed gratitude for their dedication, noting the significant stress associated with their responsibilities, and commended them for serving the city so well.

He also acknowledged the community's strong passion regarding the willow tree at Cook Park, mentioning the numerous ideas shared with him about its future. Herbert praised the DPW team for their exceptional efforts during the demanding fall leaf collection period. He shared that they had trucked out approximately 40 dump truck loads, which only made a small dent in the overall volume. He expressed appreciation for their hard work, especially while simultaneously managing tasks like winterizing equipment and irrigation systems and preparing Christmas decorations for the tree lighting ceremony. He concluded by recognizing the dedication and efficiency of the public works staff in handling these challenges under pressure.

Agenda Changes: None.

Guest Speakers: None.

Public Comment on Agenda Item Only:

Gary Medler, Vine Street: Mayor/Mayor Pro-Tem selection item: He was disappointed that public comment was scheduled after the mayor's selection, noted the selection process should have been explained and alleged that the mayoral decision had been made in private by council members over a month ago.

Consent Agenda:

A. Regular Meeting Minutes- October 28, 2024

Motion by Gardner, 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, City Clerk, Director of Planning & Zoning, Department of Public Works and Engineer submitted status reports of current activities since the last regular council meeting on October 28, 2024, for their respective departments.

Clerk Wolters expressed gratitude to the election team for their hard work and highlighted the impressive voter turnout of 79.98%. She commended the success of early voting, noting its significant impact in reducing the volume of voters on Election Day. She extended her thanks to everyone who participated in the election, emphasizing the importance of the team's efforts in managing the process smoothly.

DPW Superintendent Herbert highlighted recent accomplishments and ongoing priorities for the Public Works Department. He reported that 15 trees were planted last week as part of a street and boulevard tree planting initiative, funded in part by a Consumers Energy grant. While the city has not yet received the funds, the completed grant application has been submitted, and reimbursement is anticipated soon.

He also revisited the topic of the willow tree at Cook Park, noting its significance to the community. He shared a creative and meaningful story about a resident who propagated limbs from the tree to plant in their backyard, suggesting that the iconic tree may continue to live on in various forms throughout the city. He commended this initiative as a unique and fitting tribute, particularly given the resilience of willow trees.

Fire District Administration Board, Dan Fox: None.

Interurban Board, Councilmember Muncey: None.

Kalamazoo Lake Sewer & Water Authority: None.

Kalamazoo Lake Harbor Authority: None.

Zoning Board of Appeals: Mayor Anderson noted they canceled their next meeting.

Historic District Commission, Councilmember Gardner:

Recap from Thursday, November 7th:

- 249 Mason Street, where an outdoor deck and signage were proposed for the new Lulu Canoe space in the bank building. The application was approved with one exception: the proposed outdoor sign on the west side of the building, next to the Mize Rose Garden, was deemed inappropriate due to the nature of the garden. The applicant, Terry, agreed to remove the sign from the application, which was then approved.
- 740 Lake Street was approved. This property is owned by Councilmember Stanton.
- 142 Butler Street, proposed renovations include adding a stairwell for access to an upstairs apartment, which hasn't been used since the 1960s. The commission discussed the building's history, and the application for the exterior renovations was approved. The owner is also researching the building's history with the help of local historical experts.
- The commission elected its officers: Tim Straker will continue as chair, Kieth Paterson as vice chair, and William Donahue II as secretary.
- The commission requests from the council to have a discussion about anything specific they would like HDC to take a look at from a policy standpoint.

Planning Commission, Councilmember Clark: Next meeting is December 2.

Parks & Public Works Committee, Mayor Pro-Tem Baldwin: Possibly canceling the meeting at the end of the month due to councilperson transitions.

Tri-Community Non-Motorized Trail Study Committee, Councilmember Dean: None.

Water System Operations Contract Advisory Committee, Councilmember Gardner: There is a meeting scheduled on December 4th.

Wildlife Management Committee, Councilmember Dean:

At the first kickoff meeting, held at 6:00 PM in Douglas, significant progress was made in a short time. Councilmember Seabert was selected as chairperson, with Saugatuck resident Mr. Walker, serving as vice chair, and Tammy Cunnion, a Douglas resident, appointed as secretary. The group decided to meet monthly on Wednesdays at 6:00 PM, with the next meeting scheduled for December 4th. The committee's initial focus will be on addressing the deer population, with plans to educate the tri-community area on interim measures, such as avoiding feeding the deer. There was also discussion about the possibility of organizing a managed hunt for the 2025 deer season, including considering a managed archery hunt, which would be less expensive than hiring sharp shooters. The committee is looking into what other communities, like Lake Township, have done. The next steps involve bringing in the DNR's West Michigan deer management specialist to provide guidance and share how other communities have tackled similar issues.

Approval of Accounts Payable:

Motion by Stanton, second by Dean to approve the accounts payable in the amount of \$270,636.68. Via roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.

Public Hearing: None.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business:

Updated Waste and Recycling Collection and Disposal Agreement with Republic Services:

Motion by Stanton, second by Baldwin to approve the contract with Allied Waste Services Inc., DBA Republic Services of Jenison, for waste collection and disposal. Via roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.

Public Comment:

Bobbie Guant, Main Street: expressed gratitude to the council members for their service and extended congratulations to Chris on her election. She also acknowledged Jamie and Sarah for their excellent work during the election, sharing that he served as an election inspector for both early voting and on Election Day, commending their efforts. Looking ahead, he expressed optimism about the leadership of the council, particularly in addressing the challenges and strategic issues facing the city at the current moment. She concluded by congratulating Holly and Lauren, thanking them for their continued contributions.

Correspondence: None.

Council Comments:

Mayor Anderson:

Mayor Anderson expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve as Mayor, thanking the Council for their confidence. Despite some disagreements, particularly around specific issues, she emphasized a desire to move forward and work collaboratively as a team. She committed to working individually with each council member to foster better relationships and to explore opportunities for improving council dynamics and city representation. The speaker also referenced Clerk Wolters as a model of fairness, kindness, and professionalism, hoping to embody these qualities during her term. Anderson assured the community of her accessibility and expressed optimism about achieving great things for the city.

Mayor Pro-Tem Stanton:

Thanked the clerk's office and the volunteers for a successful election, noting the ease of early voting. She commended the Saugatuck School for hosting a Veterans Day breakfast, as well as the Veterans for the ceremony in the park and the new veterans sign at Veterans Park in Douglas. She recognized Baldwin for her exceptional leadership as Chair of the Parks and Public Works Committee and expressed gratitude for her hard work and emphasized how much she would be missed, though confident there was more to come from her efforts. Stanton thanked Holly for stepping into the role of mayor, recognizing the challenges of the position and appreciating her willingness to take on the responsibility while expressing admiration for Holly is confident that she would excel in the role, looking forward to continuing to serve together on the council.

Councilmember Baldwin:

Thanked everyone for the privilege of serving the public and appreciation for the opportunity to contribute. She thanked Stanton for her leadership, particularly highlighting her grace under pressure. She praised her ability to navigate difficult situations with composure, emphasizing that Saugatuck is fortunate to have had her in that role. She expressed pride in her record and campaign, noting key contributions such as driving meaningful reform on short-term rental legislation and overseeing important projects through the PPW Committee, including the new playground and the opening of trails at the airport property. Baldwin concluded by stating she wouldn't change anything about her tenure and expressed her gratitude once again.

Councilmember Clark:

He expressed his gratitude to former Mayor Stanton and former Mayor Pro-Tem Baldwin for their dedicated service to the city, acknowledging the challenges of the past year and commending them for their honor and distinction in office. He noted that their leadership had set a high bar, inspiring him to give his best in his own role. He went on to thank the election workers and the clerk's team, praising their flawless execution of the election process, despite the long hours. Additionally, the DPW for their excellent work on the Francis Street project, where he had a front-row seat to observe the process. He commended the coordination between the DPW, contractors, and engineers, noting that the project was completed smoothly and efficiently, with significant improvements over past experiences.

Councilmember Dean:

Echoed Councilman Clark's sentiments, beginning by thanking Jamie and her volunteers for their efforts in organizing a safe and secure election. He then extended his gratitude to Post 137 in Saugatuck for organizing the Veterans Day event, along with Saugatuck High School, which hosted breakfast for veterans. He acknowledged the DPW team for their excellent work, including the fresh asphalt on Francis Street, which he personally benefitted from. He also praised the team for handling fall activities like leaf pickup and addressing the tree issues in the area. He expressed appreciation for Stanton and Baldwin's service to the community and congratulated Chris on her return to the council. Finally, he congratulated the new Mayor.

Councilmember Gardner:

Began by echoing appreciation for the staff and volunteers who ensured the smooth operation of the election. He acknowledged his 86-year-old father, Bob Gardner, who served as the sergeant-at-arms at the Veterans Day event and participated in laying the wreath at the memorial. He extended thanks to Rick Gilman, Rob Boyce, and Father Corey for their contributions to the event. He also expressed appreciation for Stanton's leadership during a challenging year, noting that while some issues from the past were difficult, this was an opportunity for the council to move forward and leave behind legacy issues. Gardner thanked Baldwin for her passion, acknowledging that while they may not always agree, her enthusiasm for the city was clear and appreciated. Turning to future priorities, he proposed a discussion at the next workshop meeting regarding a review of the city's ethics policy, with particular emphasis on social media guidelines for elected officials, appointed officials, and city employees. He noted that as communication evolves, the city must improve in how it represents itself and guides those who serve. He also called for a discussion on setting city manager's goals and objectives, stressing that this issue had been raised multiple times without action and was overdue. Additionally, he suggested a review of the purpose and framework of city boards and commissions at the next workshop, emphasizing the need for alignment with the city's goals.

Adjournment:

Motion by Stanton, second by Baldwin to adjourn the meeting. Upon voice vote, motion carried unanimously. Mayor Anderson adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Jamie Wolters, City Clerk