



CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES November 6, 2024

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 Stanton at 4:00 p.m.

Attendance:

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

Absent: Dean.

Others Present: City Manager Cummins, Attorney Chris Patterson and Clerk Wolters.

Agenda Changes: None.

Guest Speakers: None.

Public Comment on Agenda Items Only:

Mike Tie, Laketown Twp: commented on item 6B – He is a woodworker and interested in assisting with what tree wood once removed.

Discussion Items:

Oval Beach Report:

City Treasurer Nicole Bredeweg presented the Oval Beach sales report for the 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 seasons. The recent analysis of the 2024 season numbers shows that they align more closely with the figures from 2022, unlike the notably high numbers seen in 2023. The season passes, both for residents and non-residents, were significantly higher in 2023, although the cause of this increase remains unclear. To provide greater clarity, the report presents data by calendar year (2021-2024) rather than the traditional fiscal year (July-to-June). Oval Beach's revenue for 2024 reached approximately \$815,000, reflecting a steady increase since 2021, likely due to a resurgence in outdoor and social activities post-COVID.

The expense report, also shown by calendar year, includes costs associated with both general parks and Oval Beach. As Oval Beach generates revenue intended to support other park-related expenses,

these numbers reflect both categories. While expenses for Oval Beach remain relatively stable, minor adjustments may occur within the broader parks budget.

Willow Tree Update:

City DPW Superintendent Scott Herbert informed council that following last week's strong winds, a significant failure occurred in the black willow tree in Cook Park, likely due to a large pocket of decay at the base, which became visible after the incident. The Public Works team responded promptly, clearing debris and arranging an assessment by Ed Dowd, a seasoned arborist serving the city for over 30 years. The assessment identified severe internal decay in the tree. Although alternative options were considered, including weight reduction of the damaged sections, these solutions would leave the tree structurally compromised and aesthetically altered, with limited future viability. Given the extent of decay and associated risks of further limb failure, the arborist recommended tree removal. Recognizing its age and significance—estimated at 150 years—this decision is made carefully. Plans include removing the tree and planting a replacement to restore the site over time.

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

The City Council has been in contract negotiations with Republic Services, as the existing five-year agreement was set to expire. The council prioritized surveying community satisfaction with Republic's service and exploring increased recycling frequency. The survey conducted this summer received nearly 160 responses, with 70% expressing satisfaction with trash services, while a notable portion supported more frequent recycling pickups.

After discussions with Republic, a four-year contract extension has been proposed, addressing the council's request for a term shorter than five years, though anything less would increase costs. Key points in the proposed extension include:

- **Increased Recycling Frequency:** Republic agreed to bi-weekly recycling pickup, though they cannot offer weekly service.
- **Trash Pickup and Rate Adjustments:** Weekly trash pickup remains on Mondays at 7 a.m. The first-year rate will increase by \$4.53 to \$20.50 per month for a 96-gallon cart, covering both trash and recycling. Annual rate increases are set at the greater of 4.5% or CPI.
- **Service Modifications:** Republic no longer offers smaller 32-gallon carts; however, they will still service existing ones at the 96-gallon rate. Rear yard service will rise from \$15 to \$20 per month. Yard waste and bulk item pickups continue to be offered.
- **Improved Reporting on Service Issues:** Strengthened contract language now allows the city to request complaint reports, ensuring accountability.

Public Comments:

Chris Peterson, Pleasant Street: Advised of how to get ahead of the public on the Willow Tree topic.
Severyn Nowicki, Holland Street: Summarized an email he sent to council about a new proposed ordinance to allow hens in residential areas like surrounding cities.

Correspondence: None.

Council Comments:

- Councilmember Anderson: None.
- Mayor Pro-Tem Baldwin: None.

- Councilmember Clark: None.
- Councilmember Gardner: None.
- Councilmember Muncey: Glad the election is over and looking forward to the next two years together.
- Mayor Stanton: Veterans Day is November 11th, don't forget all the activities scheduled and reminded everyone that the next city council meeting is Tuesday November 12th.

Adjournment:

Motion by Anderson, second by Muncey to adjourn the meeting. Upon voice vote, motion carried unanimously. Mayor Stanton adjourned the meeting at 4:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Jamie Wolters, City Clerk