



**CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
December 9, 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 Anderson at 6:30 p.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance.**

**Attendance:**

Present: Mayor Anderson and Councilmembers Clark, Dean, Muncey, Peterson and Gardner.

Absent: Mayor Pro-Tem Stanton.

Others Present: City Manager Cummins, Attorney Jake Witte and Clerk Wolters.

*Motion by Peterson, second by Gardner to excuse Lauren from tonight's meeting. Via voice vote, motion carried 6-0.*

**Mayor Comments:**

Mayor Anderson thought the Christmas parade was nice—they are so much fun. The Mayor said it was wonderful to see everyone: the shovel guys, all the kids. She noted the town really comes together for the holidays, and it was heartwarming to witness. She had floated an idea to the city manager about possibly holding next year's parade in the evening. That way, trucks, people, and everything could be lit up. It might not be the perfect idea, but it was fun to think about.

**City Manager Comments:**

City Manager Cummins recognized the efforts of the Department of Public Works (DPW), starting with a recent promotion. Adam Kerridge, a long-time DPW staff member, has been promoted to Assistant Supervisor, taking on the role previously held by Cody Hardy. He expressed deep appreciation for the DPW crews and their hard work managing a couple of significant snowstorms, with more on the horizon, as another weather watch was already in place. Their dedication to keeping roads clear and the community moving was greatly valued.

He also echoed the positive sentiments about the recent Christmas parade. He extended thanks to the Convention and Visitors Bureau for leading the organization of such a successful event.

He took a moment to address the ongoing litigation related to the Dune Ridge case. Last week, the Court of Appeals heard oral arguments, and the proceedings, which are fully public, can be accessed via YouTube. He noted that a link to the recording is included in his manager's report.

Regarding the audit, he assured council that progress is steady. The auditor submitted minor questions the previous evening, all of which were addressed promptly. Preliminary financial statements are expected this week, and the audit remains on track for completion by the end of the month. Plans are also underway to schedule a workshop in January, where auditors will present and discuss the results with the council.

Finally, he confirmed the date for the upcoming strategic planning meeting: January 24th. Facilitator has been officially confirmed, and he appreciated the council's discussion and feedback from the prior week, which has been instrumental in moving the process forward.

**Agenda Changes:** None.

**Guest Speakers:** None.

**Public Comment on Agenda Item Only:** None.

**Consent Agenda:**

A. Regular Meeting Minutes - November 25, 2024.

B. Change Order #1 to TMF Water Service Material Verification Agreement with Compton Inc.

C. Amendment to Comcast Franchise Agreement to Change Legal Name

*Motion by Dean, second by Clark 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, Engineer and Police submitted status reports of current activities since the last regular council meeting on November 25, 2024, for their respective departments.

**Fire District Administration Board, Dan Fox:**

The upcoming board meeting will take place in a week. In the meantime, the staff report by Sergeant Haas praised the district's efforts, which included the deployment of a TMA truck during a recent emergency. During the incident, the Fire District implemented an "all hands-on deck" approach, summoning all available personnel to address the crisis, which temporarily strained staffing levels at the station. Fire District Chief Janik noted the unprecedented severity of the event, with five vehicles overturned simultaneously, described as the worst conditions ever seen.

Additionally, it was noted that the Life EMS ambulance stationed at the Fire District will be relocated during the off-season due to insufficient call volume to justify its presence. While this might marginally impact response times, Life EMS operates a highly advanced system to optimize coverage. Fire District EMTs, trained and equipped, typically arrive on scene within six to seven minutes, maintaining critical EMS response standards despite these changes.

**Interurban Board, Councilmember Muncey:**

The next meeting is scheduled for December 17.

Councilmember Muncey reminded of ongoing services, including free rides to the Super Value grocery store every Wednesday. Additionally, the meal delivery service continues to be available for a small fee. Residents can order meals from their favorite restaurants, pay directly, and have them delivered to their door. These initiatives aim to provide accessible and convenient options for the community.

**Kalamazoo Lake Sewer & Water Authority:**

None.

**Kalamazoo Lake Harbor Authority, Councilmember Peterson:**

She will be attending the next scheduled meeting.

**Zoning Board of Appeals, City Manager Cummins:**

None.

**Historic District Commission, Councilmember Gardner:**

The qualified meeting was canceled due to the weather. They are working on rescheduling that meeting, probably in early January.

**Planning Commission, Councilmember Clark:**

- Waterfront preservation district - Proposed amendments regarding first floor apartments. The discussion included input from legal counsel, resulting in a unanimous decision to approve the language, which will be reviewed at the next workshop.
- ADU - The current 300-square-foot minimum for short-term rental licenses was discussed, with most applications reportedly falling below this threshold. There is consideration of aligning with Michigan building codes to address these discrepancies, with further deliberation expected in the coming months.
- B & B Request - A request was received to permit accessory structures to be used for additional rooms in bed-and-breakfast operations. The discussion included concerns about citywide implications, such as the potential expansion of B&Bs into larger operations like motor courts. Further exploration of policy limits will continue.
- Strategic Planning - The upcoming December 19 meeting will address priority setting and strategic goals for the city in the new year, incorporating community input and reviewing related initiatives.

**Parks & Public Works Committee, City Manager Cummins:**

The next meeting is next Tuesday at 9 a.m.

**Tri-Community Non-Motorized Trail Study Committee, Councilmember Dean:**

The city manager's report highlights ongoing progress. The focus remains on ensuring that historical artifacts are protected and that the route is designed with sensitivity to potential cultural and historical considerations. This careful approach reflects the importance of preserving heritage while moving the project forward responsibly.

**Water System Operations Contract Advisory Committee, Councilmember Gardner:**

Next meeting is January 7, at 2:30 p.m.

**Wildlife Management Committee, Councilmember Dean:**

The Wildlife Committee recently held a meeting to discuss its mission and strategies for managing urban deer populations in the Saugatuck-Douglas Township area. The committee's purpose is strictly advisory, providing recommendations for consideration by the three municipalities.

Discussion included the following:

- The committee affirmed its deliberative mission and clarified it does not set policy.
- A DNR wildlife specialist, presented observations from a tour of the area, noting that local deer exhibit abnormal behavior, such as lacking fear of humans, contrasting with wild deer in the Allegan State Game Area.
- Potential methods included culling, firearm and archery hunting, and even birth control. However, the science suggests hunting or culling is the most effective approach.
- Low-cost and immediate actions proposed include lifting ordinances prohibiting bow and arrow use on private property and educating the public against feeding deer, which exacerbates the problem.
- A survey will be distributed to gather community input on experiences with deer and opinions on proposed solutions.
- The use of drones equipped with infrared sensors was suggested to conduct herd counts, providing precise data on deer populations and congregation areas.
- Allowing archery hunting on private properties, with appropriate regulations, could create necessary pressure on deer herds, mimicking natural deterrents.
- Future herd surveys could evaluate the effectiveness of these measures.
- Lessons from other communities, such as Ann Arbor and Jackson, provide valuable insights into urban deer management.

**Approval of Accounts Payable:**

*Motion by Garnder, second by Peterson to approve the accounts payable in the amount of \$163,045.08. Via roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.*

**Public Hearing:** None.

**Unfinished Business:** None.

**New Business:****Amendment to Coghlin Park Policy:**

*Motion by Muncey, second by Clark to approve or deny the revision of the policy clause changing, "Reservations may not be made for the future calendar" to "Reservations may be made up to two calendar years in advance." Via roll call, motion carried 6-0.*

**Resolution 241209-A Approving 2025 Meeting Dates:**

*Motion by Dean, second by Peterson to approve Resolution 241209-A listing the city council schedule of meetings for the year 2025. Via roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.*

**Public Comment:**

Sherry Tedaldi, North St.: She expressed her disappointment regarding conduct within the council.  
Dan Fox, Holland St.: He offered suggestions about deer management and the ethics policy considerations.

**Correspondence:**

The city is accepting application for the following:

Compensation Commission, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals and Historic District Commission.

**Council Comments:**

Mayor Anderson addressed the topic of ethics in governance, emphasizing concerns about perceived hypocrisy in public and private conduct. She reiterated that ethical behavior is fundamental to the functioning of public bodies and stressed the negative impact of hypocrisy on city governance and staff morale. She explained her conversation and meeting with councilmember Gardner.

Councilmember Clark reflected on a conversation with a local resident who expressed feeling fortunate to live in the town and a desire to stay, emphasizing the importance of continuing the traditions that make the town a great place, Clark agreed. He extended gratitude to everyone involved in maintaining these traditions, including city staff, the Department of Public Works, and first responders.

Councilmember Dean addressed Mr. Fox's comments regarding feeding deer, clarifying that, according to the DNR, it is illegal to feed deer statewide, similar to the illegal practice of baiting deer for hunting. He emphasized the need for further communication to ensure the community is aware of this law. Additionally, expressed gratitude to everyone who participated in the recent Christmas parade, highlighting it as a wonderful event that showcases the tight-knit community.

Councilmember Gardner echoed Councilmember Dean's comments about the parade as it was a lot of and the 30<sup>th</sup> year for the shovel brigade. The best years are still in front of them, and it was fun for everyone.

Councilmember Muncey expressed enjoyment at the recent parade, especially having City Manager Ryan Cummins and the Treasurer Nicole Bredeweg join the council in the festivities. He also appreciated the ongoing discussions about deer management, particularly the importance of educating the community about the negative effects of feeding deer. Muncey is excited about his new role in the annual production of *A Christmas Carol* at the Saugatuck Women's Club, where he will play Jacob Marley, moving away from his years in the previous role as Mr. Cratchit. They encouraged the community to attend the performance and mentioned that all proceeds from the play benefit Christian Neighbors, supporting those in need in the Saugatuck and Douglas areas.

Councilmember Peterson echoed all the comments about the parade as it was a wonderful parade. She commended the planning commission with the quality of the discussion and gratitude for the positive outcome.

**Adjournment:**

*Motion by Dean, second by Peterson to adjourn the meeting. Upon voice vote, motion carried unanimously. Mayor Anderson adjourned at 7:49 p.m.*

Respectfully Submitted

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Jamie Wolters, City Clerk