



CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING March 23, 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.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Attendance:

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

Motion by Clark, second by Muncey to excuse councilmember Peterson. Via voice vote, motion carried 6-0.

Others Present: City Manager Cummins, Attorney Cunningham, DPW Superintendent Herbert, Zoning Director Moore, Treasurer Bredeweg and Clerk Wolters.

Mayor's Comments:

Mayor Holly Anderson reported positive news about the senior meals program in Allegan County, explaining that the city had received an email from a representative of Allegan Cares with whom councilmembers Muncey, Peterson, and Clark had recently met. Based on feedback from Allegan County communities, the senior meals program has been expanded and is now able to provide improved services to seniors. She thanked everyone involved for taking an active interest in the issue.

City Manager Comments:

City Manager Ryan Cummins began by acknowledging that council was entering a period with an extra week between meetings after a heavy workload. He outlined that residents would soon see a significant increase in construction activity around town. He described a productive kickoff meeting with Shippers Excavating regarding Maple Street and other infrastructure improvements. Public Works will prepare notices for residents along Maple Street and adjacent cul-de-sacs to inform them of the upcoming construction and to invite them to provide email addresses if they wished to receive project updates. He highlighted upcoming Water Street gate valve work that could result in up to eight hours of water service interruption, emphasizing that this project is intended to improve the system's ability to isolate future water main leaks and avoid large-scale shutoffs. Notices will go out in advance regarding both the potential water disruption and related intersection closures. Finally, he referenced the substantial packet for the Parking Improvements Task Force, noting it was released two weeks early due to its size and depth of analysis, and he encouraged council members and community members to review it, as the task force is now getting into the core of its work.

Agenda Changes: None.

Guest Speakers: None.

Public Comment on Agenda Item Only:

Kimberly Bagierek, CJ Bagierek, Bobbie Gaunt, AJ Marineau and Brad Lubbers provided public comments.

Consent Agenda:

- A. Approval of City Council Workshop Minutes from March 18, 2026.
- B. Resolution No. 260323-A - Adopting Early Voting Site and Municipal Agreement for Election Services Between the City of the Village of Douglas, Saugatuck Township, and City of Saugatuck.
- C. Resolution No. 260323-B - Approving the Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation of the Interurban Transit Authority to Add the City of Fennville as a Member of the Authority.
- D. Resolution No. 260323-C - To Amend the Budget of the 2025/2026 General Appropriations Act.
- E. Resolution No. 260323-D - Approving Michigan Recreation Passport Grant Program Development Project Agreement.
- F. Township Cemetery Services Agreement Extension.
- G. Spear Street Launch Ramp Management Agreement.
- H. Miedema’s Rangerbid Proposal and Agreement for Current and Future Surplus Equipment Auctions and Authorization for City Manager to Sign Titles.
- I. Proposal from Lakefront Roofing & Exteriors for Oval Beach Ticket Booth Repairs.
- J. Updated Capital Improvement Plan.
- K. Oval Beach Pass Request – Hope College for Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area Research.
- L. Pallet Sign Banner Application – Spring Gallery Stroll.

Motion by Dean, second by Stanton to approve the consent agenda with amendment to the minutes from March 18, 2026, to reflect that councilmember Muncey was not present for the adjournment. Via roll call vote, motion carried 5-1. Yes – Anderson, Clark, Dean, Gardner, Stanton. No – Muncey.

Approval of Accounts Payable:

Motion by Stanton, second by Muncey, to approve the accounts payable in the amount of \$102,813.12. Via roll call, motion carried 6-0.

Public Hearing:

Ordinance 260323-A - An Ordinance to Amend the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map of the City of Saugatuck by Approving a Planned Unit Development Overlay and Associated Plan for 640 Water Street.

- A. Hearing was called to order by Mayor Anderson at 7:02 p.m.
- B. Mayor announced subject of public hearing was Ordinance 230323-A - An Ordinance to Amend the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map of the City of Saugatuck by Approving a Planned Unit Development Overlay and Associated Plan for 640 Water Street.
- C. Zoning Director Grayson Moore presented the Ordinance to council.
- D. Public Comment regarding Ordinance 230323-A:
 - 1. Supporting comments (audience & letters). None.
 - 2. Opposing comments (audience & letters). None.
 - 3. General comment opportunity (Supporting, Opposing, General). None.
- E. Public comment portion closed by the Mayor at 7:05 p.m.
- F. Council discussed Ordinance 230323-A.
- G. Hearing closed by Mayor Anderson at 7:10 p.m.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business:

Ordinance 260323-A - An Ordinance to Amend the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map of the City of

Saugatuck by Approving a Planned Unit Development Overlay and Associated Plan for 640 Water Street:

Motion by Stanton, second by Muncey to postpone a decision of the proposed Planned Unit Development to April 13, 2026, to allow finalization of the following, an easement agreement, floor plans and overall site plan, Historic District Commission approval of materials and final ordinance language. Via roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.

Planning Commissioner Matter:

Motion by Dean, second by Clark to request planning commissioner Bagierek, vice chairman of the planning commissions resignation, failing that, or if such resignation is not forthcoming, to schedule a public hearing seeking his removal prior to the next planning commission meeting. Via roll call vote, motion failed 3-3. Yes – Anderson, Clark, Dean. No – Gardner, Muncey, Stanton.

Motion by Dean, second by Clark to respectfully request commissioner Bagierek's resignation from the planning commission within 30 days from March 23rd, failure to secure his resignation, to hold a vote on censure and removal from the role of vice chairman of the commission. Via roll call vote, motion carried 4-2.

Staff Reports, Boards, Commissions & Committees:

Reports provided by City Manager Cummins and the following boards, commissions & committees:

Fire District Administration Board:

Dan Fox reported that the Fire Board met on March 16. The board is reviewing a proposal from a third architectural firm. Cost recovery since the prior meeting totaled \$20,263.50, and the next Fire Board meeting will be in April. For February, the district handled 54 incidents (141 year-to-date), a slight decrease compared to the prior year. He reviewed response time statistics, ALS transport times by area, and motor vehicle incident data. Calls to the orchards at Douglas Cove have increased and are being monitored. He highlighted the use of the Traffic Management Apparatus (TMA) truck, particularly on M-196, where it has logged significant hours, and introduced the district's new ambulance. Finally, he clarified his earlier comments about cost recovery: while the department generally does not bill district residents for normal fire responses, it may seek cost recovery at the chief's discretion in egregious cases of illegal burning, such as a recent incident involving a large illegal burn of construction debris and unknown materials.

Interurban Board:

Councilmember Muncey reported that February ridership increased over the previous year, with nearly 3,800 riders for the month and year-to-date ridership already up by 3,923 compared to the prior year. The Tuesday Holland route continues to see growth. The Interurban continues to offer takeout food pickup: riders can place an order with a restaurant and Interurban will pick it up and deliver it to their home. Construction of the new facility is progressing well. They have printed yard signs and business cards with QR codes to promote the new "Spare" app and will distribute them to local businesses. They have applied for a CVB grant and are planning changes to the summer shuttle route to include both Saugatuck and Douglas, with designated pickup and drop-off points (Saugatuck at Mason and Butler near the visitor sign; Douglas at Beery Field), and will explore sponsorships from local businesses that want advertising in exchange for supporting parking. Staff recently celebrated National Transit Driver/Dispatcher/Mechanic Appreciation Day with a staff lunch. Muncey also noted ongoing conversations with Laketown Township about putting Interurban service for Laketown on the August ballot. He reported that Interurban will be receiving four used vans that will be painted and wrapped in time for the summer season, bringing the active fleet to 12 vehicles. Two larger new buses have also been funded via grants and will arrive later. He reminded council that state and federal operating funds are declining and that the Interurban expects to be on the August ballot locally to ask for a modest increase in support; he also noted that Fennville is moving toward a ballot measure to formalize ongoing service there, which has been popular.

Kalamazoo Lake Sewer & Water Authority:

Mayor Pro Tem Joe Clark reported that conditions at Kal Lake continue to improve under the new administrator,

who has been stabilizing operations, evaluating hires, and engaging with community leaders and field staff. Hydrant flushing is scheduled for April, which may result in temporarily rusty water, pressure fluctuations, and, because of system stress, occasional breakages that require repairs. At the most recent board meeting, elections were held, Greg Freeman was elected Board Chair, Joe Clark will serve as Vice Chair, and Jennifer Ludwig as Secretary. Clark also noted ongoing work on a State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan/grant package for numerous sewer infrastructure upgrades, especially at the plant, and for full sludge removal from the ponds. Engineers are continuing to refine detailed plans, and more information will be brought forward as that project advances.

Kalamazoo Lake Harbor Authority:
None.

Zoning Board of Appeals:

Zoning Director Moore reported that the ZBA considered and approved a variance request for 250 Mason Street property. The applicant sought relief from landscaping buffer requirements to allow additional on-site parking as part of a conversion to a new bed and breakfast with associated site renovations. The variance was granted.

Historic District Commission:

Councilmember Dean reported that the next HDC meeting is scheduled for April 2 at 6:00 pm. He noted that the most significant recent action was the HDC's unanimous approval of the new design for 640 Water Street, which council had discussed earlier in the meeting. The HDC has focused on ensuring compatibility with surrounding historic waterfront context and will finalize material approvals as the project moves forward.

Planning Commission:

Councilmember Gardner reported the Commission recommended approval of the PUD for 640 Water Street. Two other items—conditional rezoning and a text amendment to the zoning ordinance's definition of "motel/motor court" related to 510 Butler and 120 Mary were tabled for further review and will return at a future meeting. The Commission also reviewed its annual activity report. The "learning and improvement opportunity" concerning Commissioner Bagierek, was removed by motion. Gardener noted that the Master Plan update continues and is targeted for completion in the fall. Commissioner Auston Marinaeu provided an update on the Parking Improvements Task Force.

Parks & Public Works Committee:

Councilmember Stanton reported that the DPW board is scheduled to meet the following morning at 10:00 a.m.

Tri-Community Non-Motorized Trail Study Committee:

Councilmember Dean reported that the Tri-Communities trail group has a meeting on March 26, focused on Phase 1A of the archaeological site survey associated with the planned trail. City Manager Cummins will participate in that meeting. This work is part of the due-diligence phase to understand cultural and historical resources along the proposed route before design and construction decisions are finalized.

Water System Operations Contract Advisory Committee:

Ryan Cummins stated that the Water/Sewer Operations Contract Advisory Committee's next meeting is scheduled for May. The committee is currently awaiting a formal presentation from the consultants who are analyzing the long-term operations contract.

Logo and Branding Advisory Committee:

Councilmember Stanton reported that the Logo and Branding Advisory Committee held its initial meeting with the city's branding consultants. Participants included HDC Chair Tim Straker, SCA representative Kristin Armstrong, Councilmember Peterson, and Lauren. The group explained to the consultants why the city is pursuing a logo and branding refresh: to align with council's priority to redesign the city website, implement consistent wayfinding signage in the business district, and improve signage in parks. The committee provided early creative input and high-level direction, with the expectation that the consultants will now develop

logo/branding concepts. Those concepts will later be refined and brought back to council for review and selection.

Parking Improvements Task Force:

Councilmember Muncey provided a detailed update on the Parking Improvements Task. He thanked the volunteer members—Auston Marineau, Cathy Brockington, Wendy Colsen, Alec Payleitner, Michael Gustaitis, Gary Kott, and Becky Carten-Crandell—as well as consultants and City Manager Ryan Cummins. The next agenda will cover parking inventory field work and initial mapping, results from the online community survey (which drew over 600 responses), findings from stakeholder interviews, a cost and operations analysis for a potential parking structure, preliminary consideration of paid parking options, signage and wayfinding needs, remote parking possibilities, and framing the core parking challenges in Saugatuck. He highlighted several survey insights: about 37% of respondents are full- or part-time city residents, 30% are full- or part-time Saugatuck Township residents, 12% are Douglas residents, and only 21% are visitors; 34% work outside Saugatuck, 30% are not working or retired, and 15% own a local business. Stakeholder interviews revealed mixed views on a potential parking structure and split opinions on paid parking. He stressed there is more existing parking than many realize—approximately 1,900 off-street spaces citywide (including private parking), with about 1,516 off-street spaces within city limits and 303 city-owned off-street spaces. The task force aims to bring formal recommendations to council by around mid- to late-August and Muncey strongly encouraged residents and stakeholders to engage now, while options are still being shaped, rather than waiting until final recommendations are on the table.

Public Comment:

CJ Bagierek and Rakesh Madhava provided public comments.

Correspondence:

Jim Bouck provided comment.

Council Comments:

Councilmember Gardner said he stood by both his earlier comments and his vote on the planning commissioner matter. He stressed that integrity and ethics cannot be treated as a quarterly “project” or a yearly form, but must be supported every day in how the city operates. He argued that if the city genuinely wants to build trust among staff, elected and appointed officials, vendors, and others, it needs ongoing, practical strategies that promote ethical conduct, not just periodic check-ins. He emphasized that there are immediate opportunities for improvement and that tonight’s issue is just one example.

Councilmember Clark acknowledged it was a good but difficult meeting. He noted that the council will not always agree, but that it is important the group can work through tough decisions together. He said he hopes everyone is aligned on the idea that council members must hold themselves to a higher standard of conduct. While he takes no pleasure in the disciplinary recommendations and the difficult conversation about the planning commissioner, he believes the council is moving in the right direction by facing those issues directly.

Councilmember Dean echoed Clark’s comments and reiterated his respect for all citizens who volunteer to serve on boards and commissions. He said one of the hardest parts of being an elected official is having to “call balls and strikes” in situations like the planning commissioner matter—it is not enjoyable, but the community expects it. He framed the decision as a necessary step to protect public trust. Scott also disclosed again that Rakesh (who commented about his STR issue) is his neighbor, and that he has tried to explain to him how the council’s prior decision was reached. Scott stated he is sympathetic to Rakesh’s situation and, if the council or the city takes that item up again, he is willing to recuse himself from deliberations because of that neighbor relationship.

Councilmember Muncey reflected on his four years on council and said he has seen instances of unethical behavior by both council members and a past employee. He argued that if the city is going to scrutinize a planning commissioner now, it should also acknowledge earlier ethical lapses it did not fully address, and he

agreed that broader discussion of ethics is needed. He said it feels to him as though the situation with CJ is being singled out while other issues were not. On a lighter note, he reminded everyone that Easter is two weeks away and that Douglas will hold its Easter egg hunt and bonnet contest on April 5, but not the traditional Easter parade. He expressed disappointment about the lost parade and encouraged more community volunteers to step up to sustain local events.

Councilmember Stanton stated she had no additional comments to offer at the end of the meeting.

Mayor Anderson acknowledged it had been a tough meeting but said she was glad the council can talk openly about difficult topics. She spoke directly to CJ, noting that she and he joined the Planning Commission at the same time and that she has great respect for his work—he was always prepared and contributed meaningfully. She then reaffirmed how seriously she takes ethics and her responsibility as mayor. Anderson said she stands by how every ethics-related matter brought to her has been handled following the adopted ethics policy. She committed to continuing that approach. She reminded the council that they did update the ethics policy last year after extensive work with an HR attorney.

Adjournment:

*Motion by Gardner, second by Muncey to adjourn the meeting. Upon voice vote, motion carried 6-0.
Mayor Anderson adjourned at 8:35 p.m.*

Respectfully Submitted

Jamie Wolters, City Clerk