



**CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
March 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 and Stanton.

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

Mayor's Comments:

Mayor Holly Anderson celebrated the Saugatuck High School girls' basketball team's strong season and noting that their recent Friday night game was one of the best she has ever seen in any sport. She mentioned that the team was playing during the meeting, encouraged sending them positive thoughts, and expressed hope that those interested could attend the game on Wednesday night. She also commented on the beautiful spring weather and concluded that all was well in Saugatuck.

City Manager Comments:

City Manager Ryan Cummins followed noted the pleasant spring weather and thanking the Mayor and Council. He recognized Clerk Wolters for her quick thinking in addressing internet issues at City Hall by using a hotspot on her phone to keep the Zoom connection running. He explained that this change in setup required the city attorney to drive in and would result in the attorney arriving later than expected, and he asked for patience with any technical issues that might arise.

Agenda Changes:

Motion by Peterson, second by Gardner to add Bob Miller as agenda item 7b and Brad Lubbers as agenda item 7c. Via voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

Guest Speakers:

Alec Payleitner from Art Coast® Food & Wine Festival:

Alec Payleitner introduced himself as the owner of Saugatuck restaurant "Sauga Taco" and as the project manager for the inaugural Art Coast Food and Wine Festival, scheduled for November 5–7, 2026. He explained that the event is sponsored by the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) as part of a shoulder-season strategy to bring visitors to town after the busy summer period, based on a multi-year plan developed by a CVB subcommittee. The main venue will be a 16,000 sq. ft. heated "Riverside Pavilion"—a large temporary structure set up for about a week in the Singapore Yacht Club parking lot between The Butler and Coral Gables, featuring clear river-side walls, décor with chandeliers and "mini living rooms," and an overall VIP feel. Alec outlined a three-day, three-night destination festival geared toward: a Thursday welcome luau at the pavilion; Friday afternoon "mini sessions" hosted by local businesses (tastings, tours, classes); Friday night restaurant showcase dinners at 20–25 local restaurants with prix fixe menus; late-night "Club Sugar" at the pavilion; a Saturday Grand Tasting with wineries, chefs, demos, and

signings; and a Saturday night “Grand Collaboration” dinner for VIP ticket-holders, potentially followed by s’mores on the beach (weather and permissions permitting). He described an all-inclusive ticket model (no additional on-site charges): a \$400 pavilion pass (three pavilion events), a \$550 weekend pass (pavilion + one restaurant showcase dinner), and a VIP pass for about 150 of the 1,000 guests, adding the Grand Collaboration and s’mores event. In questions, he noted that walk-up/a la carte options are not planned for this inaugural year, restaurant participation varies by capacity (some will remain partially open to other diners), there is strong local restaurant buy-in with tentative commitments exceeding projected seats, and while some celebrity chefs may be brought in, the core mission is to keep the food and chef participation as local as possible.

Bob Miller – Kalamazoo Lake Sewer and Water Authority:

Bob Miller introduced himself as the new administrator for the Kalamazoo Lake Sewer and Water Authority (KLSWA), noting that this was the start of his third week in the role. He shared that he has lived “right down the road” for 15 years and is excited for his first opportunity to work in what he considers his hometown. Bob emphasized that he has been warmly welcomed by staff and local leaders, and that the existing team—both in the office and the field—is small but strong and has been very supportive in his transition. He is spending time in the field with operators to better learn the system and aims to become capable of covering any operational role over time, acknowledging that the current operators are more qualified in day-to-day field work than he is at this moment. He also highlighted staffing needs, including open positions already in the interview process (front-office and operator roles), and a desire to engage in and help shape capital planning as KLSWA and the three municipalities consider what the system should look like over the next several decades. Council members responded positively, noting both the historical importance of Cal Lake and their interest in Bob’s perspective once he’s more fully acclimated.

Brad Lubbers – Allegan County Commissioner :

County Commissioner Brad Lubbers explained recent and pending changes in the senior home-delivered meals program funded by the Allegan County Senior Millage. He described the long-standing arrangement under which Community Action House of Allegan has provided hot meal delivery to seniors for approximately 20 years, operating under three-year contracts. With the current contract expiring April 1, the county followed its standard process by issuing an RFP; they evaluated the options and recommended switching to Meals on Wheels (out of Grandville) for the next three-year contract. Under the new model, instead of five days a week of hot meals, seniors would receive one to three days per week of frozen meals, based on factors including cost and logistics. Lubbers also reported news that county administration had decided to terminate the Community Action House contract early, effective the next day, so Meals on Wheels would begin providing frozen meals starting Wednesday instead of April 1. He acknowledged mixed reactions among seniors—some preferring hot meals and frequent visits, others preferring frozen meals and fewer visits—and clarified that drivers for Meals on Wheels will be new people to most clients. He stressed that the county’s goals include fiscal responsibility with millage funds and ensuring that anyone needing more frequent wellness checks can be connected to other Senior Millage services.

Public Comment on Agenda Item Only:

Rakesha Madhava

Consent Agenda:

- A.** Approval of City Council Workshop Minutes from March 4, 2026.
- B.** Resolution 260109-A Opposing Michigan House Bills 5529-5532 and Related Zoning Preemption Legislation.
- C.** Outdoor Discovery Center Proposal for Conservation Services - Mt. Baldhead Invasive Species Management and Dune Revegetation.
- D.** Culver Street Parking Lot Operation Agreement.
- E.** 2026 Boat Slip Management Agreement.

F. Special Event Application – Community Car Parade.

G. Special Event Application – Music in the Park.

H. Special Event Application – Venetian Festival.

Motion by Muncey, second by Stanton to pass the consent agenda as listed in the city council meeting of March 9, 2026. Via roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Accounts Payable:

Motion by Dean, second by Clark, to approve the accounts payable in the amount of \$ 192,031.76. Via roll call, motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing: None.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business:

Village Square Courts – Selection of a Concept and Approval of Donation Agreement:

Motion by Dean, second by Muncey to approve concept one and the related donation agreement for Village Square Park and to authorize the city manager to obtain all required permits and approvals, including Historic District Commission approval. Via roll call vote, motion carried 5-2. Yes – Clark, Dean, Gardner, Muncey, Peterson. No – Anderson, Stanton.

Public Speech Policy and Palette Sign Display:

Motion by Stanton, second by Clark to approve the public speech policy and palette sign display policy as presented. Via roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Staff Reports, Boards, Commissions & Committees:

Reports provided by City Manager Cummins, Treasurer, Clerk, Planning & Zoning, Department of Public Works, Police & Engineer.

Public Comment:

Jim Story, Diop Harris and Rob Sarro.

Closed Session:

Motion by Muncey, second by Gardner to move into a closed session pursuant to MCL 15.268(e) to consult with the City Attorney regarding the ongoing lawsuits filed against the City by Dune Ridge, captioned Dune Ridge v. City of Saugatuck (Case No. 22-65713-CK) and Dune Ridge v City of Saugatuck (Case No.21-64709-CZ) regarding trial or settlement strategy, which if discussed in an open meeting would have a detrimental financial effect. Via roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Council entered closed session at 7:46 p.m.

Motion by Gardner, second by Peterson to move into open session. Via roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Council entered open session at 8:33 p.m.

Motion by Muncey, second by Peterson to accept City Attorney’s recommendation regarding dispositive motions and or mediation. Via roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Correspondence:

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Nick and Donna Agnew, Kevin Tringali & Rakesh Madhava, Renee Zita and Kam Morris.

Council Comments:

Councilmember Peterson commented positively on the meeting and on the change in weather, noting how nice it was to see the sun, people starting to return, and restaurants reopening. She praised the DPW for doing a great job getting things ready for the season, and closed by mentioning that despite the return of spring, bad weather (rain and possible tornadoes) was forecast for the next day.

Councilmember Gardner thanked everyone and raised two main points. First, he reiterated his interest in discussing a proposal to provide one free Oval Beach pass per city property, asking about the process and timing to get that on a future workshop agenda; this led to a brief clarification about tying new items into the quarterly priority/budget review process. Second, he expressed confusion about the short-term rental “amnesty” actions, noting that he thought nine properties were to be grandfathered but understood that number had effectively been reduced, and he wanted to better understand what the council had actually approved. He also publicly thanked several residents who wrote letters regarding Mount Baldhead and invasive species management, emphasizing that such input helps council make decisions.

Mayor Pro Tem Joe Clark said it was a good meeting and thanked everyone for the constructive dialogue. He specifically thanked City Attorney Jake Witte for attending in person and for his support, and also thanked Bob Miller (Kalamazoo Lake Sewer and Water Authority) for coming to introduce himself, adding that his confidence in Bob grows daily and that he believes Bob will serve the community well. Clark then expressed concern about what he heard regarding changes to Senior Services and home-delivered meals, saying it felt like the level of service to seniors might be reduced and that the change appeared to have been made abruptly. He stated he would like to look into the matter further to ensure the community is raising—rather than lowering—the bar on services for vulnerable seniors.

Councilmember Dean echoed Clark’s concerns about the senior meals transition, noting that council only learned of the change via an email earlier in the day. He said the rushed nature of the situation made him want to “dig deeper” into the facts. Dean explained that it is the same reason he was cautious about the idea of free Oval Beach passes: he wants to see clear data and usage information and avoid rushing into commitments without understanding the financial and operational impacts on taxpayers.

Councilmember Muncey agreed with Clark and Dean about the Meals on Wheels change, saying it felt “odd” that council had just been informed of a significant shift that was taking effect very soon. He said he would like more discussion and planned to do some of his own research, including speaking with the gentleman who came on behalf of the Commission on Aging, to better understand the changes and impacts. Muncey also shared that he was not fully clear why the short-term rental “amnesty” count had moved from nine properties to seven, mirroring Gardner’s confusion. He then highlighted upcoming community events: the St. Patrick’s Day pub crawl organized by April Gundy (supporting Operation Hope and its backpack and Christmas programs) and the “Erin Go Bark” pets parade in Douglas, describing this weekend as a kind of local “spring opener” as the town wakes from winter.

Councilmember Stanton focused on local schools and recreation. She congratulated the Saugatuck girls’ basketball team for winning their conference and district championships, noting that although they fell short at regionals, it was still a significant accomplishment. She praised the strong community support for the team and for women’s sports generally, and pointed out that attention now shifts to spring sports—softball, track, baseball, and girls’ soccer—encouraging continued community backing. She also said she looks forward to deeper discussions with the school district about plans for the sinking fund.

In closing comments, Mayor Anderson addressed the confusion around the short-term rental ordinance and amnesty. She clarified that there were nine properties under discussion, but the council’s intent was not to extend amnesty to everyone in that group; rather, it was to provide relief specifically to those who had

been genuinely confused between the re-application deadline and the permit expiration date, and who submitted their applications after the re-application deadline but before their license expired. She noted that at least two cases involved applications that missed the deadline by several months and therefore were not covered by the accommodation. She indicated the city attorney and city manager could provide further detail to anyone needing more explanation. Anderson then briefly remarked that it had been a great meeting (and referenced the earlier great basketball game), noted the pleasant seasonal change.

Adjournment:

Motion by Peterson, second by Dean to adjourn the meeting. Upon voice vote, motion carried unanimously. Mayor Anderson adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Jamie Wolters, City Clerk