

Council Meeting  
Common Council  
August 17, 2026

The regular meeting of the Common Council was held at 21 S. Elm Street, Zeeland, MI 49464 on Monday, August 17, 2026. Mayor VanDorp called the meeting to order at 7:03 P.M.

PRESENT: Councilmembers - Mayor VanDorp, Mayor Pro-Tern Gruppen, Timmer,  
Perkins, Bult  
ABSENT: Lam, Langeland

Staff Present: City Attorney Jim Donkersloot, Interim City Manager/Finance Director Kevin Plockmeyer, Community Development Director Tim Maday, and City Clerk Kristi DeVerney

The Invocation was offered by Pastor Jeremy Cobb from First Baptist Church.  
The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Motion by Mayor Pro-Tem Gruppen and Supported by Councilmember Perkins to excuse Councilmember Lam and Councilmember Langeland's absences.

### **Consent Agenda**

Motion was made by Councilmember Timmer and Supported by Councilmember Bult to approve the Consent Agenda.

1. Approve minutes of the City Council Work Study of August 3, 2026.
2. Approve minutes of the Regular City Council meeting of August 3, 2026.
3. Receive for information draft minutes of July 9, 2026, Planning Commission meeting.

Motion carried. All present voting aye.

### **Public Comment**

Missi Potter (Adorned Home owner) and Sue VanderHeide (Lorna Lou owner) expressed concern about the construction project affecting their businesses as they have noticed a decrease in foot traffic since the project began which has impacted profitability.

### **Communications**

None

### **Interim City Managers Report**

ICM Plockmeyer reported:

Church Street Construction Project – Work continues on the project, and the contractors continue to stay on schedule. Tentatively, on Monday, crews will begin pouring concrete in the Church Street intersection and along the southern portion of the project. The base course of asphalt is tentatively scheduled for August 24, with the final course of asphalt scheduled for August 31.

In the northern portion of the project, north of Central Avenue, sanitary sewer work will continue over the next couple of weeks. This work will require the intersection of Main Avenue and Church

Street to be closed for approximately two days; however, the intersection will then reopen, albeit with a gravel surface, until a full closure of the intersection is necessary. At this time, that full closure is likely to occur in the middle of September. We remain on track to complete the project this fall.

Cemetery and Parks Commission – The Cemetery and Parks Commission continue to work on the City's five-year Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The Commission reviewed the goals and objectives section of the plan and heard from Zeeland Recreation regarding current recreation programming, participation trends, facility needs, and what they are seeing in the recreation area more broadly. This discussion provided helpful context as the Commission continues to evaluate how the City's parks can support both organized recreation and informal community use.

As part of the ongoing master planning process, the Commission also decided to use its September 9 meeting to take a bus trip to each of the City's parks. This will allow Commission members to evaluate park conditions in person and better understand potential capital improvement needs as they begin working through the capital improvement schedule. City Council members are also interested in taking a bus trip to each of the City's parks.

The Commission also discussed the large BBQ grill at Lawrence Park and, due to lack of use and the need for repair, determined that the grill can be removed.

Andy Boatright Retirement Open House – After 43 years of dedicated service to Public Power, including the past seven years at Zeeland BPW, Andy Boatright will be retiring. A retirement open house honoring Andy and his legacy of service is scheduled for Friday, September 18, from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM at Zeeland BPW, 350 E. Washington Avenue. Council is invited to attend and help thank Andy for his many years of service to Zeeland BPW and the broader public power community.

Events this Week – Thank you to the staff, volunteers, sponsors, downtown businesses, and community partners who helped with Sweet Summer Night this week. August events continue with Music on Main Street returning downtown on Thursday, August 20, from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM.

## **Action Items**

### **26.128 Washington Avenue Concept/Traffic Study Award**

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Gruppen and Supported by Councilmember Timmer to approve the Eberle Traffic Solutions proposal for both the intersection traffic analysis and the mid-block pedestrian analysis for a total contract amount not to exceed \$17,568, inclusive of reimbursable expenses.

Ayes: Mayor Pro-Tem Gruppen, Timmer, Perkins, Bult, Mayor VanDorp  
No Vote: None  
Absent: Lam, Langeland

### **26.129 Downtown Mural Contract Award**

Motion was made by Councilmember Timmer and Supported by Councilmember Perkins to approve the 2026 Artwork Agreement between the City of Zeeland and Marissa Tawney Thaler.

Ayes: Timmer, Perkins, Bult, Mayor Pro-Tem Gruppen, Mayor VanDorp  
No Vote: None  
Absent: Lam, Langeland

**26.130 139 East Main Hold Harmless Agreement**

Motion was made by Councilmember Perkins and Supported by Councilmember Bult to approve the 2026 VQuest Artwork License Agreement between the City of Zeeland and VQuest, LLC.

Ayes: Perkins, Bult, Mayor Pro-Tem Gruppen, Timmer, Mayor VanDorp  
No Vote: None  
Absent: Lam, Langeland

**26.131 Downtown Mural Budget Amendment**

Motion was made by Councilmember Bult and Supported by Councilmember Perkins to approve a budget amendment for the mural project, transferring \$25,000 budgeted amount from the 2025-2026 budget to the 2026-2027 fiscal year budget.

Ayes: Bult, Mayor Pro-Tem Gruppen, Timmer, Perkins, Mayor VanDorp  
No Vote: None  
Absent: Lam, Langeland

**26.132 Skyline Lighting Contract Award**

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Gruppen and Supported by Councilmember Perkins to approve the proposal from Chip's Groundcover, LLC and authorize a five-year agreement for Downtown Skyline, Tree and Patio Lighting services covering 2026 through 2030. The agreement includes an initial 2026 cost of \$37,800 and an annual cost of \$24,340 for each year from 2027 through 2030. The agreement would remain subject to annual budget appropriation, satisfactory performance, and a cancellation clause permitting the City to terminate after any contract year upon payment of the applicable contract terms.

Ayes: Mayor Pro-Tem Gruppen, Timmer, Perkins, Bult, Mayor VanDorp  
No Vote: None  
Absent: Lam, Langeland

**26.133 Designated Assessor Designation**

Motion was made by Councilmember Timmer and Supported by Mayor Pro-Tem Gruppen to approve the Interlocal Agreement with Ottawa County designating Brian Busscher as the City's Designated Assessor beginning January 1, 2027.

Ayes: Timmer, Perkins, Bult, Mayor Pro-Tem Gruppen, Mayor VanDorp  
No Vote: None  
Absent: Lam, Langeland

**26.134 Alice Avenue Drain Jurisdictional Agreement**

The purpose of the proposed agreement is to formally document the respective jurisdiction and responsibilities of the City and the Alice Avenue Drain Drainage District for this infrastructure.

Under the proposed agreement, the portions of the storm sewer system, including both the open channel and enclosed portions of the drain and their associated structures and appurtenances, will be placed under the jurisdiction of the Alice Avenue Drain Drainage District and administered as a county drain under the Michigan Drain Code.

The Drainage District will be responsible for the Alice Avenue Drain in accordance with the Drain Code. The City will have no responsibility or liability for that portion of the system except as specifically provided in the agreement.

Portions of the system, along with other storm sewer infrastructure constructed by the City that is not part of the Alice Avenue Drain, will remain under City ownership and jurisdiction. The City will continue to be responsible for the operation, maintenance, repair, and replacement of this infrastructure.

The proposed agreement confirms that the storm sewer system has been fully constructed and paid for and that the Drainage District has no additional obligation to reimburse the City for the design, engineering, or construction of the system. Construction reimbursement associated with the county drain improvements was addressed as part of the 2021 Alice Avenue reconstruction project.

Motion was made by Councilmember Perkins and Supported by Councilmember Bult to approve the Agreement Regarding Jurisdiction of the Alice Avenue Drain Storm Sewer Infrastructure between the City of Zeeland and the Alice Avenue Drain Drainage District.

Ayes: Perkins, Bult, Mayor Pro-Tem Gruppen, Timmer, Mayor VanDorp  
No Vote: None  
Absent: Lam, Langeland

#### **26.135 Street Department Pickup Bid Award**

Included in the FY27 budget is the replacement of the 2017 ½-ton pickup truck used by the Streets Department. Because the department was regularly hauling heavier loads, this continues the direction, since 2023, to move from purchasing a ½-ton pickup to a ¾-ton pickup.

Motion was made by Councilmember Bult and Supported by Councilmember Timmer to approve the purchase of a Ford F 250 ¾-ton pickup truck from Barber Ford, Inc. in the amount of \$45,285.

Ayes: Bult, Mayor Pro-Tem Gruppen, Timmer, Perkins, Mayor VanDorp  
No Vote: None  
Absent: Lam, Langeland

#### **26.136 MML Voting Delegate Designation**

The Michigan Municipal League requests that City Council designate, by action, one official who will attend the MML Annual Convention as the City of Zeeland's official representative to cast the City's vote at the Annual Meeting.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Gruppen and Supported by Councilmember Perkins to designate Mayor Pro-Tem Gruppen as the City's official representative to cast the vote of the City at the Michigan Municipal League Annual Meeting.

Ayes: Timmer, Perkins, Bult, Mayor VanDorp  
No Vote: None  
Abstain: Mayor Pro-Tem Gruppen  
Absent: Lam, Langeland

Community Development Director Tim Maday stated he is a member of Neighborhood Connections which treats the community with dignity during difficult times, while telling their stories. The Neighborhood Connections group was recently able to help prepare a resident's home for resale, which was appreciated by the family.

Councilmember Bult inquired about rental properties and whether there was a cap for them. Community Development Director Tim Maday noted that this would be a great item to discuss at Strategic Planning & Goal Setting.

The Labor Day Parade will include the Fire Department and the Police Department.

Councilmembers said thank you to the Employee Appreciation Committee for organizing the Whitecaps Event.

There being no further business, motion was made by Councilmember Timmer and Supported by Mayor Pro-Tem Gruppen to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 P.M. Motion carried. All voting aye.

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Mayor Richard VanDorp III

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City Clerk Kristi DeVerney

MEMORANDUM OF-STUDY SESSION  
Zeeland City Hall Council Chambers Monday, August 17, 2026  
5:45 P.M.

Mayor VanDorp called the Study Session to order at 5:45 P.M.

PRESENT: Councilmembers - Mayor VanDorp, Mayor Pro-Tern Gruppen, Timmer, Perkins, Bult

ABSENT: Lam, Langeland

Staff Present: City Attorney Jim Donkersloot, Interim City Manager/Finance Director Kevin Plockmeyer, Community Development Director Tim Maday, Marketing Director Abby deRoo, and City Clerk Kristi DeVerney

**Project Clarity Update**

Project Clarity representatives, Travis Williams and Kelly Goward, gave an update on their recent progress and share what they are looking forward to in the future. Some of these goals are as follows:

- Goal 1 – Sustainable Funding – need to add membership fees
- Goal 2 – In-Lake Treatment - permitted through EGLE
- Goal 3 – Best Management Practices
- Goal 4 – Outreach and Education on how watersheds work
- Goal 5 – Maintenance and Monitoring - use a buoy to get data

In order to have a thriving ecosystem, flood resilience, clean water, smart growth, etc., Project Clarity would like to raise \$7.65 million. They are asking Council to consider donating \$20,000 per year for the next 5 years.

**Initiative Funding Considerations**

ICM Plockmeyer stated as part of the Fiscal Year 2027 budget development process completed in February, we projected that the General Fund would end Fiscal Year 2026 with approximately \$5.9 million in fund balance. Based on our current year end projections, we now anticipate that the General Fund will finish Fiscal Year 2026 with more than \$6.7 million in fund balance. This represents an improvement of approximately \$800,000 compared with the estimate used during the budget process.

In addition, the City received approximately \$1.95 million in unbudgeted Personal Property Tax reimbursement revenue in May. When combined with the approximately \$800,000 improvement in projected General Fund fund balance, the City has approximately \$2.75 million in additional resources that were not contemplated when the Fiscal Year 2027 budget was developed.

Staff have identified three potential uses for approximately \$2.75 million in available funding. They are as follows:

- 84<sup>th</sup> Avenue Reconstruction with curb and gutter - \$1.113 million.
  - o Bonding was originally going to be used but cash would be available now.
  - o This will be reimbursed through the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority in 13-30 years.
  - o Proposed initiative funding allocation: \$1,200,000.
- Facilities Implementation Plan, Series 1 - \$10.17 million.
  - o Improvements to the Howard Miller Library and Community Center and City Hall.
  - o Proposed initiative funding allocation: \$750,000.
  - o Combined with \$250,000 from the Facilities Maintenance Fund, this would provide approximately \$1 million for Series 1 design and construction administration services.

- Lawrence Park Reconstruction - \$1.08 million.
  - o Next priority park project identified.
  - o Proposed initiative funding allocation: \$800,000.
  - o Combined with approximately \$500,000 in the City Park Improvement Fund, this would provide approximately \$1.3 million for Lawrence Park reconstruction and future park improvement projects.

Staff requested City Council's feedback regarding the proposed projects, funding amounts, and overall approach.

### **Washington Avenue Concept / Traffic Study Award**

The City's 2026 Strategic Action Plan identifies Washington Avenue development and redevelopment as a priority. The action steps established by City Council include:

1. Identifying right-of-way constraints throughout the corridor.
2. Working with corridor stakeholders to better understand future plans, access needs, utility concerns, and related issues.
3. Developing a traffic-flow plan based on the identified right-of-way constraints and information gathered from corridor stakeholders.

The overall objective is to develop a vision for the future reconstruction of Washington Avenue that improves traffic flow and accessibility, supports adjacent property owners, and creates opportunities for downtown vibrancy and future economic development.

Staff recommended that City Council provide direction regarding whether the removal of the center left-turn lane should continue to be evaluated as part of the Washington Avenue corridor-planning process.

If City Council is supportive of further consideration, staff recommended approval of the Eberle Traffic Solutions proposal for both the intersection traffic analysis and the mid-block pedestrian analysis for a total contract amount not to exceed \$17,568, inclusive of reimbursable expenses.

### **Downtown Mural Contract Award**

Marketing Director deRoo stated as a continuation of the 2026 Mural Project recommendation presented to City Council in May, the Marketing Department has chosen Marissa Tawney Thaler, a professional artist from the Lansing area with ties to Grand Rapids

Her proposed artwork has been designed specifically for the west wall of 139 E. Main Avenue, within the downtown passageway. The artwork will be painted on removable wood panels that will be mounted within three distinct inset sections of the passageway wall.

Thaler has designed a coordinated piece for each of the three sections, collectively representing the seasons of Zeeland. The largest panel combines spring and summer, while the remaining panels feature fall and winter as individual works. Together, the three pieces will create a cohesive seasonal collection tailored to the broader downtown environment.

The targeted timeline is to complete and install the artwork by the end of September so the collection can be enjoyed during Pumpkinfest in the first week of October. Although the custom display will be removable, the City intends to enjoy and celebrate the collection for several years. The panel installation also provides flexibility for the City to explore new exhibits in the passageway in the future.

Staff recommended that City Council approve the 2026 Artwork Agreement between the City of Zeeland and Marissa Tawney Thaler.

### **139 East Main Hold Harmless Agreement**

Marketing Director deRoo noted this agreement is for a 2026 Property Owner License Agreement between the City of Zeeland and VQuest LLC, property owner of 139 E. Main Avenue.

Staff recommended that City Council approve the 2026 VQuest Artwork License Agreement between the City of Zeeland and VQuest., LLC.

### **Downtown Mural Budget Amendment**

Marketing Director deRoo stated The City of Zeeland budgeted \$25,000 in the 2025-2026 FY budget for this round of downtown murals. The proposal from Krista Arendsen/Art by Krista (approved in May) will use approximately \$14,500. The enclosed proposal from Marissa Tawney Thaler is estimated at \$5000. The City of Zeeland will have some cost into the site preparation and installation of the murals and contingency for unforeseen expenses. The Marketing Department projects this project will stay within budget. However, given that the mural projects were not completed within the 2025-2026 fiscal year, we are requesting a budget amendment for this project.

Staff requests a budget amendment for the mural project, transferring the \$25,000 budgeted amount from the 2025-2026 budget to the 2026-2027 fiscal year budget.

### **Skyline Lighting Contract Award**

Marketing Director deRoo noted the City of Zeeland issued a Request for Proposals for the updated supply, installation, maintenance and removal of downtown skyline, tree and patio lighting. The program combines year-round architectural lighting with seasonal tree and landscape lighting to create a coordinated display throughout the downtown district and at key City gateways.

Chip's Groundcover, LLC proposed a fixed annual price of \$24,340 for each consecutive year from 2027 through 2030, consisting of \$16,895 for skyline lighting, \$1,650 for patio lighting and \$5,795 for tree lighting. The lower consecutive-year pricing is anticipated to reflect efficiencies associated with the City's ownership of the lighting materials, the year-round installation of the skyline system and reduced setup or installation needs following the initial year. The total proposed cost for the five-year period is \$135,160.

Staff recommended that City Council accept the proposal from Chip's Groundcover, LLC and authorize a five-year agreement for Downtown Skyline, Tree and Patio Lighting services covering 2026 through 2030. The agreement includes an initial 2026 cost of \$37,800 and an annual cost of \$24,340 for each year from 2027 through 2030. The agreement would remain subject to annual budget appropriation, satisfactory performance, a cancellation clause permitting the City to terminate after any contract year upon payment of the applicable contract terms.

### **Designated Assessor Designation**

Assessor Maday stated following changes to Michigan law under Public Act 660 of 2018, the City joined with other assessing jurisdictions in Ottawa County, in 2020, to approve an interlocal agreement naming Brian Busscher, of the Ottawa County Equalization Department, as the City's Designated Assessor.

Public Act 660 established a process for the State Tax Commission to periodically audit local assessing practices. If a local unit is found to be out of substantial compliance, it is provided an opportunity to

complete a corrective action plan and undergo a follow-up review. If the unit remains noncompliant, additional corrective action is required and the unit may ultimately need to utilize its Designated Assessor or pursue another remedy permitted by the State.

The City's current Designated Assessor agreement expires December 31, 2026. Ottawa County has prepared an updated interlocal agreement naming Brian Busscher, Ottawa County Equalization Director, as the Designated Assessor beginning January 1, 2027.

The proposed agreement is substantially similar to the agreement previously approved by the City. The primary substantive change is that, rather than expiring on a fixed date, the new agreement will remain in effect until Brian Busscher's employment with Ottawa County ends. There is no annual cost to participate; costs would only be incurred if the City were required to activate Designated Assessor services.

Staff recommended approving the Interlocal Agreement with Ottawa County designating Brian Busscher as the City's Designated Assessor beginning January 1, 2027.

There being no further items to discuss, Work Study was adjourned at 7:00 P.M.

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Kristi DeVerney, City Clerk