

**CITY OF AU GRES
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2025
7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Mayor Jon Sanford, Dan Heinrich, Jane Barbour, John Popovich, Joe Warr

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Dale Wiltse, Police Chief Charles Allen, Grant, Tom, Shauna, Sophie & Max Fox, Nick & Shirley Moore, Blake Crane from APM, Steven & Kathy Bilacic, Peggy Knockeart, Diane Anderson, Kayla Compau, Cody Mawhorter, Mike & Victoria Kwater, Attorney Andrew Hereza, Lyne Lutz, Cammie Angstman, Tom Henika, Ron Noble, Randy Thibo, Floyd Perkins, Frank & Karen Storey, Eileen Walsh, Jim Hatch, Keith & Scott Ososki

1). CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Jon Sanford called meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2). PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor led City Council and audience into the Pledge of Allegiance.

3). ROLL CALL

Roll call noted all present.

4). MINUTES

MOTION (Popovich) to approve September 2, 2025 regular meeting minutes as presented; support (Barbour). Motion carried.

5). SET AGENDA

MOTION (Warr) to set agenda as presented; support (Popovich). Motion carried.

6). CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

Mayor Jon Sanford presented to Max Fox a Volunteer Award from the City of Au Gres for his efforts in building a gaga ball pit at the City Park in 2024 which helped him receive his Eagle Scout Badge.

Grant Fox: Would like to ask City Council to put in 4 more pickleball courts on the current tennis courts. City Manager informed him it is on our Park & Recreation Plan and was discussed at the last meeting.

7). AU GRES CITY POLICE CHIEF REPORT

Police Chief Charles Allen was present at meeting tonight and handed out stat sheet for the month of September. Working on state mandated 24 hours of continuing education credit (CEC) for the 2025 year. Electric bikes and scooters are becoming an issue with them becoming more popular and going so fast. They are not allowed on sidewalks.

8. OLD BUSINESS: None

9). NEW BUSINESS

9.1 Advanced Pest Management 2025 Year End Presentation

Blake Crane from APM was present tonight to go over 2025-year end report. New this year, APM used drones to spray various areas in the city. Phone calls were down this year due to it being very dry. City Council thanked Blake for coming and the presentation.

9.2 Moore Builders Re-Zoning Request

City Manager informed Council that public hearing was held at last Planning Commission meeting on September 29, 2025 and this re-zoning request recommendation was turned down 3-2 vote with 1 abstaining. It is up to City Council to make the final determination. Nick Moore was present again tonight and had site plan showing layout of accessory buildings on each lot. They will not be building on lot 26 due to the sharp corner; this will allow for campers, boats and fire trucks to get in and make the wide turn. Nick addressed the concerns from Planning Commission meeting.

- These lots will be self-owned; buyer will be purchasing lot along with building. Spoke with Attorney and will put deed restrictions on the property if required to not allow commercial business to be conducted inside building, no outside storage, etc.
- Checked with building department and a residential building permit will be pulled to build these residential accessory buildings.

- No issues with fire department on 10' side setbacks or no issue with no fire hydrants in development; fire hydrant on Michigan Avenue. All these lots will only have electric; no water or sewer.
- Storm water run-off will be run to the ditch on the east side.
- Traffic: very low impact traffic based on storage units in Whitney Township. You would see more traffic if 24 homes were to be built there.
- Crime: very low crime with these property owners having expensive "play toys" and they monitor or purchase cameras themselves to watch over their belongings.

Nick is proposing to build 23 accessory buildings and asking for a 10' side setback along with 20' front yard setback variance for each lot. These setbacks would comply with the residential zoning but do not with commercial property. Large buffer zone in the back butting up to Michigan Avenue property owners and will leave trees. All pole barns will come with 100-amp service and will be doing underground electric. On the smaller lots, buildings will be 30x40 and the larger lots will be 38x60.

Warr: Likes the idea of the project, just looking for opinions on the street easements in that subdivision.

Mike Kwater: "C" district defines what can go in that district: accessory buildings is not one on the list. Section 1402 parking: can see a problem with ingress/egress? Wanted to let City Council know that a signed petition was handed in at the Planning Commission meeting of all the neighbors on Michigan Avenue against this project.

Attorney Andrew Hereza: Couple questionable things like section 1901: property owner needs to submit re-zoning request, not developer. (For the record: application was signed by property owner Tom Lutz.)

Section 306 page 3-21: Definition of mini-storage talks about leased or rented; developer said these units will be individually owned. Several factors in zoning ordinance that need to be addressed for this development. City Manager explained that zoning ordinance is all about interpretation. City does not have City Attorney present tonight and will look into more. Zoning ordinances needs to adapt for changes in the community.

Karen Storey: Never thought that property would be changed to "C" Commercial zoning. This will bring down property values. Feels like City Council is not hearing City resident's concerns; these units are going to be bought not by city residents but Sims Township, Au Gres Township or even further away.

Ron Nobel: Stays at City Park for 6 months although he is from Bay City. He would be interested in purchasing 1 of these units- for 6 months he shops here at our local grocery store, etc. and spends money in our town.

Randy Thibo: He also would be interested in these units, stays at the City Park for 6 months. This will not decreased property values; values keep going up. Can't believe city residents have a say in this since he is from Bay City and when the expressway came through, they just did what they wanted, didn't ask residents.

Floyd Perkins: Doesn't want to look at pole barn in his back yard. Just re-did Michigan Avenue paving a few years ago. Afraid the road will not hold up with the increased traffic this project will bring.

Kathy Bilacic: City Manager said there is a need in this area for these buildings. Went and asked 2-3 boat storage facilities in Au Gres if they had room this winter for rental and all of them said yes. One facility reported that they have seen vandalism/crime from these storage unit facilities.

MOTION (Warr) to table this agenda item until City can get a legal opinion on this re-zoning request; support (Barbour). Motion carried.

9.3 Modern Craft Winery Liquor License-Off Premises Tasting Room

Tom Nixon, owner of Modern Craft Winery was present tonight to ask City Council to approve resolution for his upgraded license for off premises tasting room. This will be a benefit to visitors and the community since they can only serve 3-ounce samples and are starting to see a trend where people want to stay and have a full drink. He has 4 tasting rooms in the State and is asking for this upgraded license at all locations.

MOTION (Barbour) to approve Off Premises Tasting Room Liquor License for Modern Craft Winery at 211 E Huron Road, Au Gres; support (Heinrich). Motion carried.

9.4 Health Insurance Renewal

To remain on the same health insurance package as last year, Blue Care Network premiums will be going up by 12.94% for the 2025/26 year.

MOTION (Heinrich) to approve Blue Care Network health insurance renewal for the 2025/26 year through Valley United Insurance; support (Popovich). Motion carried.

9.5 Opt Out Resolution

MOTION (Warr) to approve opt out resolution of PA 152 for the 2026 year; support (Popovich). Motion carried.

9.6 Property Insurance Renewal

The City's property and liability insurance coverage for the 2025/26 year will be going up by 21.6%. Main factor for such a large increase is due to the police department and the value of property/buildings going up. City has a replacement cost policy.

MOTION (Warr) to approve property insurance renewal for the City of Au Gres for 2025/26 year through Decker Agency; support (Barbour). Motion carried.

10). CITY MANAGER REPORT

- Southcourt Development- 4 homes moving forward
- Campground Expansion- moving forward. Completion date of Engineer and Bilacic Trucking set for July 4, 2026; personally, would like to see May 1, 2026. State still has the \$400,000 grant the city was awarded tied up and City cannot do any work that this grant money was to be used for.
- Joe Warr asked again Saginaw-Midland ROW parking lot- Dale turned over to Au Gres Cruisers to work on.
- River easement surveys: Keyno just finishing up with them and will have a December/January meeting with property owners. Did discover some encroachments.
- Halloween in the Park set for October 18, 2025.
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11). COMMENTS

11.1 Citizens: Randy Thibo: Great to see that a town this small can pull off a huge event like Halloween in the Park. Has a great turn out and usually about 1000 kids!

11.2 Mayor: None

11.3 Council Members:

Barbour: Town looks fall festive!

Popovich: He starting going back to the Arenac County Board of Commissioners Meetings'. County is struggling to finding attorneys- need 4 on retainer and an Animal Control officer.

Warr: Town looks great! Nice to see a big crowd attending and that residents are passionate about our community.

Heinrich: Been working on concession stand at new ballfield with John McKenzie.

11). PAYMENT OF BILLS

MOTION (Warr) to approve payment of bills as submitted; support (Barbour). Motion carried.

12). APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

MOTION (Warr) to approve August financial statements as submitted; support (Popovich). Motion carried.

13). ADJOURNMENT

MOTION (Barbour) to adjourn meeting at 8:35 p.m.; support (Popovich). Motion carried.

Jon Sanford, Mayor

LaVonne Pritchard, City Clerk