
MINUTES- **AMENDED**

THE Downtown Development Authority OF THE CITY OF BUCHANAN, in compliance with Michigan's Open Meetings Act, hereby gives notice of a regular meeting to be held in the Chamber of City Hall.

** Comments may be submitted in writing at least 4 hours in advance to the City Clerk at Clerk@cityofbuchanan.com*

I. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 5:01pm.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Paniagua led in the pledge of allegiance.

III. Roll Call

Present: Antisdell, Capron, Paniagua, Reed, Renfro, Terry, Weedon, Williams, Finan arrived at 5:03pm

Absent: None

City Staff Present: City Manager Tony McGhee, Clerk Kalla Langston-Weiss

IV. Approve Agenda

Motion made by Reed, seconded by Weedon, to approve agenda as presented.

Yes: Antisdell, Capron, Paniagua, Reed, Renfro, Terry, Weedon, Williams

No: None.

Motion carries.

V. Public Comments - Agenda Items Only (3-minute limit)

None.

VI. Approve Minutes**A. Consider the Regular Meeting Minutes from August 13, 2025.**

Motion made by Reed, seconded by Terry to approve minutes as presented.

Paniagua requested a spelling error be corrected in section V.

Motion made by Terry, seconded by Renfro to approve amended minutes. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

VII. Unfinished Business**A. Development and TIF Spending Plan- Dan Fette, Berrien County Community Development**

Fette discussed an issue they've discovered with the tax increment funding role, where there were around 100 fewer parcels in the district now versus 2020. In discussing it with City Assessor Cole-Crocker, it seems to have been a result of the way the previous assessor handled lot combinations and splits and their associated reference parcels, and is being resolved. Another issue that was identified is

that the City had been previously advised to include personal property as capturable within the DDA, which would create a situation where the total value was greatly reduced because personal property can only depreciate. Real property cannot be removed, but Fette will look into whether personal property can.

Fette has put together the base of their plan. City staff will add what of the projects have been completed in full. From there, Fette has some technical questions for staff, confirm the unrestricted fund balance, and whether the DDA wants to be able to use debt financing in the future. By next month, Fette will have a clear projection of tax increment revenue for the next ten years, and the DDA should go through the list of projects for prioritization.

Antisdel asked how Fette does his escalator modeling. Fette responded that they use historic CPI (customer price index) projections.

Paniagua asked what the likelihood was of being able to remove personal property from the TIF plan. Fette cannot be sure, as the issue has come up before but there hasn't been clear guidance from the attorney general or the tax commission.

Antisdel asked about audits for the DDA after it was dissolved. Those static funds are in City audits. Weedon explained that the funds didn't move while the DDA was dissolved.

B. Committees Creation and Finalization *(schedule regular work sessions for committees)*

1) Marketing Committee

There was an editorial that alleged the DDA was having secret meetings. The DDA is not having secret meetings, with a recent subcommittee meeting having been previously noticed, minutes were kept, and it was a workshop only. Committees may meet and have discussion, but may not make decisions. For additional transparency, subcommittee meetings will be held at City Hall.

Reed asked why meet at City Hall if it's not required and is an opportunity to support local businesses in their district. Clerk Langston-Weiss does not disagree, but advocated for additional transparency. Renfro likes meeting at City Hall for its consistency. Finan understands the previous DDA lost some public trust due to lack of transparency. Reed strongly feels the subcommittees should continue meeting where they would like, as it is not against the rules and is properly noticed. Weedon supported meeting outside of City Hall as long as notice is given and minutes are kept.

Motion made by Paniagua, seconded by Finan to conduct all DDA, subcommittee, and working group meetings at City Hall.

Finan asked if they'd be setting a date and time. Paniagua confirmed they would.

Yes: Renfro, Terry, Weedon, Williams, Antisdel, Capron, Paniagua, Finan

No: Reed

Motion carries.

Motion made by Paniagua to create a marketing subcommittee of board members Finan, Renfro, Reed, Williams, and Paniagua.

The time for the meeting was discussed. The Wednesday following the DDA meeting at noon was suggested.

Motion made by Paniagua, seconded by Williams to create a marketing subcommittee of board members Finan, Renfro, Reed, Williams, Capron, and Paniagua that meets on the third Wednesday of the month at noon.

Reed does not agree with having six members of the DDA on a subcommittee and the number of members should not amount to a quorum. He also believes a meeting the week after the DDA meeting will not be productive. Paniagua doesn't think there will be perfect attendance and doesn't see why the meeting wouldn't be productive. Finan feels the work is important and the time will be well spent considering the substantial task at hand.

Capron asked if there would be crossover on committees and why there should be attendance issues. Weedon spoke to his experience on the Landfill board where there are very active subcommittees who communicate well with the board. The crossover lends itself to time efficiency, where DDA meetings are more concise and productive.

Reed asked about potential third party input at subcommittee meetings. Langston-Weiss advised that there be a strong agenda with a section for public comment to keep things on track.

Roll call vote carries unanimously.

2) Finance Committee

Paniagua asked for volunteers for the Finance Committee.

Motion made by Paniagua, seconded by Reed to create a finance subcommittee of board members Terry, Paniagua, Weedon, and Antidel. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

Paniagua suggested meeting on the third Wednesday at 10:30 am. There was discussion on optimum times. The Clerk is able to remotely host board members. McGhee suggested changing the marketing meeting to 11am and having the finance meeting at 12pm.

Motion made by Paniagua, seconded by Weedon to have the finance subcommittee meet on the third Wednesday of the month at 11am. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

Weedon wondered if more time should be taken before committing to the ad. Paniagua didn't want to do the ad just to say they were doing something, particularly if many businesses would not be open. Finan emphasized that the ad would bring awareness to Buchanan. Reed felt it was a good idea, especially as the City had just offered to pay for it.

VIII. New Business

A. Marketing Committee Request - WVPE Advertisement purchase

At the initial subcommittee meeting on marketing, there had been discussion of placing an advertisement for Buchanan to drive traffic to downtown businesses during construction. Finan got a quote for a 5 month radio advertisement through WVPE at a cost of around \$600. There are a variety of time slots available, and WVPE would finalize the wording to remain compliant for broadcast.

Antidel wanted to focus on building a brand and worried about damaging the brand by having people visit Buchanan during downtown construction.

Williams is supportive of the sponsorship as a quick but effective way of doing something for downtown businesses during construction. He asked for clarification on the money the DDA can spend. McGhee answered they can spend according to the existing DDA plan, as confirmed by the lawyer. McGhee suggested the City pay for the ad as a Community Development expense.

Motion made by Reed, seconded by Weedon to promote Downtown for the next 90 days using the \$1,800 from the City. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

- B. **DDA Liquor License**- *Consider a recommendation to the City Commission for the application submitted by Building 324 DDA for a Liquor License.*

~~Weedon spoke to the application. The State will ultimately approve the application and their approval is a formality.~~

Paniagua inquired whether the DDA had the opportunity to review the application.

Weedon addressed the application, noting that the DDA would review it as a courtesy for being part of the District. The City Commission will then decide whether to approve it. If the City Commission gives its approval, the State will have the final say on the application.

Williams asked Tom Schmit, a consultant representing Building 324, to explain the difference between DDA licenses and Redevelopment licenses. Schmit clarified that the primary distinction with RRC licenses is the requirement for specific hours of operation, which does not align with the model that Building 324 is pursuing, particularly regarding the investments made in the property.

To meet the requirement of being "open to the public," Building 324 plans to host events that will be accessible to everyone.

McGhee emphasized that since this is a new license and process, it was most sensible to bring it to the DDA first.

~~Williams asked for the difference between the DDA and the Redevelopment Liquor License. The DDA License has a different threshold for investment and isn't tied to certain hours of operation.~~

Motion made by Capron, seconded by Reed to recommend approval of the application submitted by Building 324 for a DDA Liquor License. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

IX. **Communications**

- A. **Downtown Data Distribution**

McGhee presented marketing information for the Downtown he had received.

- B. **The Buchanan Art & Antiques Show**- *Communication from Alan Robant*

McGhee shared an email from Alan Robandt about a Buchanan Art & Antique Show that is being planned in Building 324.

X. **Public Comment - Non-Agenda Items Only** (3-minute limit)

None.

XI. **Staff/Committee Comments**

McGhee asked for patience as the Finance Committee works. Langston-Weiss asked for any agenda items for upcoming subcommittee meetings.

Reed spoke in favor of using Pacer.ai for foot traffic and marketing data during events. The Niles DDA pays for it and the Buchanan DDA could build a relationship with them and request data during events.

XII. **Adjournment**

Motion made by Williams, seconded by Weedon to adjourn at 6:28pm. Voice vote carries unanimously.