

MINUTES

THE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF BUCHANAN, in compliance with Michigan’s Open Meetings Act, hereby gives notice of a regular meeting of the Buchanan City Commission to be held in the Chamber of City Hall.

** Requests to be added to the agenda as a “Scheduled Matter from the Floor” should be submitted in writing to the City Clerk at least 5 business days prior to the scheduled meeting during which the speaker wishes to appear, and the approval of such requests remain within the discretion of the Mayor. If denied, the speaker may nonetheless speak during the “non-agenda items only” public comments section of the agenda.*

** Those who are unable to appear during a meeting but who still wish to share public comment may submit such comments in written form to the City Clerk at least 4 hours in advance of the meeting.*

** Individuals with disabilities may request necessary reasonable accommodations by submitting requests to the City Clerk, preferably at least 24 hours in advance.*

** Written requests and comments may be submitted to the City Clerk either in person or via mail to Buchanan City Hall, 302 N. Redbud Trail, Buchanan, MI 49107, or via email to clerk@cityofbuchanan.com*

I. Call to Order

II. Recognition

A. Galien-Buchanan Lions Club would like to present a \$500.00 donation to the Buchanan Police Department to use towards the purchase of Body Worn Cameras.

The Lions Club presented the donation to Chief Harvey Burnett. Buchanan Lions club also is celebrating its 90th year anniversary in Buchanan.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Denison led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. Roll Call

Present: Mayor Sean Denison, Commissioner Patrick Swem, Commissioner Larry Money, Commissioner Dan Vigansky

Absent: Mayor Pro Tem, Mark Weedon

City Staff: City Manager, Timothy Lynch; City Clerk, Kalla Langston; Community Development Director, Rich Murphy; Community Development Director Assistant, Ashley Regal. Chief of Police, Harvey Burnett.

V. Approve Agenda

Motion made by Vigansky, supported by Swem to approve the agenda as presented. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

VI. Public Comment - Agenda Items Only (3-minute limit)

Jeannie Harris- Asking the Commission to consider approving Buchanan Home Repair and Buchanan Home Demolition program.

VII. Consent Agenda (can be approved all in one motion, for general housekeeping items)

A. Minutes-Consider approving minutes from the following meetings:

1) Special Meeting Work Session on April 11th, 2024.

2) Regular Meeting on April 22nd, 2024.

Motion made by Swem, supported by Money to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

VIII. Scheduled Matters from the Floor *(if any)*

IX. Reports by: Departments, Committees, Boards

A. Community Development Report- *Community Development Director, Rich Murphy and Assistant Community Development Director, Ashley Regal.*

1) *Consider approving the Request for Proposal (RFP) for a third-party administrator for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) CHILL Round 2.*

Murphy is requesting approval for a third-party administrator RFP. The city was approved for \$300,000.00 of CDBG funds, CDBG funds are federal funds that require significant reporting. It is recommended that the city engages with a third-party administrator for the first round, so the team can understand the requirements and comply. The money that will be used for the third-party administrator comes from the CDBG grant fund and it is best practice to use. The recommendation from the field expert who handles our region recommended allocating \$50,000.00 for the third-party administrator.

Motion made by Swem, supported by Money to approve the RFP for a third-party administrator for Community Development Block Grant CHILL Round 2.

Yea: Swem, Denison, Money

Nay: Vigansky

Motion carries 3-1.

2) *Consider approving the Buchanan Home Repair Program and the Buchanan Home Demolition Program.*

The Community Development Department is excited to announce they will be working in partnership with the Hunter Foundation and Michigan Gateway Community Foundation on a program that targets the Northside Neighborhood for Home Repair and Demolition program. They have received \$50,000 and anticipate more money to come in from other agencies and organizations. This money is less restrictive since this money is from local partners they have developed the program and are looking to receive approval to go live with them.

Motion made by Vigansky, supported by Money to approve the Buchanan Home Repair Program and Home Demolition Program, as presented. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

Murphy mentioned the Ribbon Cutting for Victory Park Pavilion being held on June 8th, 2024, at noon.

X. Unfinished Business

A. Ordinance No. 2024.05/438- *Consider the second reading and adoption of Ordinance No. 2024.05/438, an ordinance amending the City of Buchanan Zoning Ordinance; **ARTICLE VII - R-3 MULTI-FAMILY ZONING DISTRICT; ARTICLE XXI GROUP HOMES AND ADULT FOSTER CARE FACILITIES.** (See Attachment A)*

Motion made by Swem, supported by Money to approve the second reading and adoption of ordinance 2024.05/438, as presented. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

XI. New Business

A. Expenditures - *Consider approving the expenditures for May 13th, 2024.*

Motion made by Vigansky, supported by Money to approve the expenditures for May 13th, 2024, in the amount of \$106,694.06. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

- B. Attorney Engagement Proposal-** *City Manager, Timothy Lynch will present the attorney engagement proposal from Attorney Mowitt S. Drew III of Butzel Long for consideration.*
City Manager Lynch presented the Attorney Engagement Proposal with our current attorney switching firms from Kotz Sangster to Butzel Long, before the Commission tonight is a proposal from the new firm to continue services with our current attorneys, same attorneys, and same location. The proposal is to continue working with the same attorneys at the same rate. Considering several ongoing projects with the current attorneys, switching to a different firm would be significant challenges. Lynch is recommending to continuing the engagement with current attorneys with Butzel. The Commission in the future may retain another firm, but in all practicality, it makes sense to continue with our current firm.

Motion made by Vigansky, supported by Swem to approve the Attorney Engagement Proposal with Butzel Long, Mowitt Drew ATTY, as presented. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

- C. Structural Engineering Services Proposal-** *City Manager, Timothy Lynch will present and request consideration for the Front Street Retaining Wall.*
Lynch presented the Structural Engineer Services Proposal from JPR for the Front Street Retaining Wall "Hoven Wall". Lynch is recommending moving forward, the commission made it clear in the budget workshop that this was a top priority. Lynch has reached out to JPR and vetted the company and received references. Lynch touched upon the services that would be provided.

Motion made by Vigansky, supported by Money to approve the structural engineer services proposal from JPR in the amount of \$17,500.00, as presented. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

- D. Update on Days Ave & McCoy Creek Culvert-** *City Manager, Timothy Lynch will provide an update to the Commission and the public regarding Days Avenue and McCoy Creek Culvert.*
We have been collaborating with our design engineers to address the failing culvert in Days Ave. Abonmarche has proposed three conceptual designs with rough cost estimates ranging from \$900,000 to \$1.1 million. These are preliminary cost estimates, and the three concepts take into account factors such as constructability, project timeline impacts, permitting, and the existing instability of the structure. We have decided to proceed with the most efficient concept, which involves using steel sheet piles. The extent of the work required will only be known after the existing infrastructure is dismantled. We are currently exploring design and bid options to expedite the process. The permit should be submitted to EGLE this month, with approval expected in mid to late June, unless there are unforeseen permitting issues. We are aiming to start construction potentially in July. The city will handle traffic control to reduce costs, and having ample construction space will help minimize construction timelines and closures. We are working with businesses and organizations to develop solutions that are most beneficial for the project, considering their needs. More information will be provided as the process unfolds. It's all in process and more information will be forthcoming.

XII. Communications *(informational only, formal board action is not necessary for these items, unless so desired)*

- A. MEETING Change & Public Hearings-** *The City Commission Regular Meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 28th, 2024. Due to the holiday on Monday, May 27th. There will also be two public hearings held at the May 28th meeting, for the proposed budget FY 2024-2025 and a proposed Obsolete Property Rehabilitation (OPRA) Exemption Certificate.*

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

Chief Harvey Burnett- Thanked the Buchanan Galien Lions Club for the donation and to keep the Writer Family and Ruth Writer in your prayers with the passing of Wayne Writer.

Monroe Lemay- Has concerns for the black community. In all of the years that her family has lived her, she has never seen the city put this much interest into the black community, it is something that they asked for many for many years. And the reason she started One Buchanan was so that everyone was treated equally. When the meetings began for the “Vision of Buchanan”, Monroe believed there was no black or person of color at those meetings. Former manager Grace advised Murphy to bring the community to the table. Her fear is for Gentrification. She finds it wonderful that the city is doing something for that neighborhood. Compared Harlem to the Northside of Buchanan. Recommends maybe having a contract with the city. Claiming the Northside needs to know how the “White Community Works.”

Rich Murphy- Clarified that a key stakeholder group with the Vision of Buchanan was the Northside Neighborhood Group including Jeanne Harris, John Brown, Barb Brown, James Busby, Mr. Kelly, Joe Bibbs, Kyra Clark, Shebra Guidry, and 3 years later we continue to work and have built an avenue of trust. Gentrify is a concern and we have been in discussions about that. Project NorthStar is trying to mitigate gentrification.

Jame Busby- Clarify Lemay’s comments. We as black and brown communities understand the white community just as they understand us. We have a lot of interracial couples and biracial children. Maybe the northside has been neglected for so long since we have been referred to as “you people” and “those people” and on occasion “raccoons”, we all know that is a racist statement. Busby has met with the former city administration about working on all parks with the city. I don’t want to hear the talk about understanding the black or white communities, we are all one. We are all here to make our community better, we do not need any racial bigotry. We are one! I love my city and my people no matter what color you are. And that is what we are doing in Buchanan, bringing everyone together and continuing to do. And if you don’t want to be part of the solution, go, we don’t need you. There is a lot of good people in this city.

Jeanne Harris- Every black person in here is educated, every black person in here is a homeowner. Some of the homes have been passed down, we take pride in our neighborhood and our homes. Every step of the way Rich and Ashley have been there, we have met with them and told them what we wanted. To keep our neighborhood residential and types of zoning. We are aware of gentrification and what that can do. Our concern right now is to rebuild our neighborhood. We have been working with Rich, Ashley, and the city, and no one from the outside is coming in and influencing us. The people not at the table are updated and we continue to show up, respecting our neighborhood.

Haley Jones- Thanked everyone who shared their post about the opening of Chunks. People were concerned about more trash being at the duck pond due to their business location. Every Saturday Haley and her child walk around picking up trash. They are not trying to cause trash and will continue to help clean up. There have been concerns about the renovations since the garden shack is over 100 years old. They are not trying to change it and keep it as historically accurate as possible. There was an ice cream shop in that building before as well.

Shelly Welch- Running for Berrien County Treasurer.

Mary Gilbert- Curious to see who works with any investors about the vacant properties around the city.

XIV. Executive Comments

A. City Manager Comments

We are in the final throws of preparing the 2024-2025 budget. The associated budgets will be presented at the May 28th meeting. Lynch is confident that the financials will be favorable with surplus projections in the General, streets, and Water/ Sewer. In addition, balanced funds will be presented for the next fiscal year.

B. Commissioner Comments

Swem- Thank you to the Lions Club for their continued support of the community and does not go unnoticed. The Common cleanup was a success and really appreciate the support from our volunteers. Rich I appreciate your comments, and the time in effort you're putting in. Mary's comment there have been talks about a feasibility study on what business would be a good asset to the city. Rich and Ashley have had general conversations about doing one.

Vigansky- Send your emails to Rich Murphy directing that comment to Mary Gilbert about her earlier comments. Vigansky has been in contact trying to push the sale of the Moose Lodge.

Money- Thanked the Lions Club. Had the opportunity to do Arbor Day for Tree City USA at the middle school. It was a great program and did an excellent job. The Buchanan Clean-up had a great time shoveling gravel at Ravish Park and thanked the volunteers who helped with the Clean-up. Thank you to the Northside Neighborhood Group for being here tonight and I am glad to see the enthusiasm and the work you do for your community. Thank you to the Staff and Commission. Happy Memorial Day.

C. Mayor Comments

Denison- thanked the Lions Club for their generous donation to the PD. Also to send his condolences to the Wayne Writer Family and Wendy Murphy's Family. Briefly on the gentrification comment, when he took office, Weedon and I were on the same page about the Northside we pushed hard to make improvements. One of the things I am proud of is what Rich and Ashley are doing, they are taking their time, they are making good decisions, and they are working so closely with the Northside to make sure they are the right decisions. He does not worry about gentrification because of how close we are to the group. He also wanted to mention that sometimes we forget that the people in City Hall work very hard to improve themselves. Denison read the Michigan State Extension program letter congratulating Emma Lysy on her successful completion of the Michigan State Extension Zoning Administrator Certificate and Master Citizen Planner Status. Denison read the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks letter congratulating Kalla Langston on obtaining her Level 1 MiPMC certificate. Thank you everyone for coming tonight.

XV. Adjourn

Motion made by Money, supported by Vigansky to adjourn the meeting at 8:14 P.M. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

Kalla Langston, City Clerk

Mayor Sean Denison