

REGULAR MEETING OF THE BUCHANAN CITY COMMISSION
MONDAY, AUGUST 12, 2024 – 7:00 PM
CHAMBER OF BUCHANAN CITY HALL - 302 N REDBUD TRAIL, BUCHANAN MI

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Mayor Denison.

II. Recognition

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Denison led the Pledge of Allegiance of the United States.

IV. Roll Call

Present: Mayor Sean Denison, Mayor Pro Tem Mark Weedon, Commissioner Patrick Swem, Commissioner Larry Money and Commissioner Dan Vigansky

City Staff: City Manager, Timothy Lynch; City Clerk, Kalla Langston; Chief of Police Harvey Burnett

V. Approve Agenda

Motion made by Weedon, supported by Money, to amend the agenda to remove item VII (6). Consent Agenda item (B) BAFAC Appointment and approve the agenda with the amendment. Roll call vote carries unanimously

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

None.

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

A. Minutes

1) Consider the Regular Meeting Minutes from July 22nd, 2024.

2) Consider Special Meeting Minutes from July 29th, 2024.

~~**B. BAFAC Appointment:** Consider approving Kim Oleson to the Buchanan Area Fine Arts Council.~~

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. Resolution 2024.08/22- Consider Resolution 2024.08/22 a resolution of the Buchanan Fine Arts Council to continue utilizing city-owned property in the City of Buchanan.

Motion made by Swem, supported by Weedon, to approve Resolution 2024.08/22, as presented. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

B. Primary Election Report -City Clerk Kalla Langston

Langston reported on a successful Primary Election with 594 voters casting their ballot. With voter turnout being at 18 percent for the city. We are already prepping for the General Election. As well as

teaming up with the library to participate in National Voter Registration Day which will be held on September 17th from 10 AM- 6 PM at the Buchanan District Library.

Votes cast in the August 6th, 2024 Primary Election with the breakdown of Election Day Voters, Absentee Voters, and Early Voters.

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Election Day Voters | 328 |
| Absentee Voters | 257 |
| Early Voting Voters | 8 |

X. Unfinished Business

A. SMCAS Articles of Incorporation-Consider approving Resolution 2024.08/23- a resolution to approve amendments to the Southwestern Michigan Community Ambulance Service (SMCAS) articles of incorporation.

Brian Scribner presented the Articles of Incorporation to the Commission. Right now, SMCAS is under a temporary agreement with Cass County. They are working on a permanent agreement and hope to have that considered in a few months. However, the Articles needed to be updated before going into any permanent agreement Cass County will not become owners of the organization at this time.

Motion made by Vigansky, supported by Swem, to approve Resolution 2024.08/23, as presented. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

XI. New Business

A. Expenditures- Consider approving the expenditures for August 12, 2024, in the amount of \$143,980.71.

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

B. Closed Session- Consider entering a Closed Session pursuant to MCL 15.268 Sec.8 (1)(a)(c) for discussions relating to negotiation of collective bargaining agreements and personnel evaluation.

Motion made by Money, supported by Vigansky, to enter closed session pursuant to MCL 15.268 Sec (1) (a) & (c), at 7:19 PM. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

Motion made by Weedon, supported by Money, to re-enter open session at 7:49 PM. Roll call vote carries unanimously.

Motion made by Swem, supported by Money, to approve the annual evaluation for City Manager, Timothy J Lynch with an overall positive performance evaluation and approval of his annual increase dated back to July 1 per his contract.

Yea: Denison, Swem, Weedon, Money

Nay: Vigansky

Motion carries 4-1

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

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

Haley Jones- Comments about the positive impact Ashley Regal had on the community and her personally.

Adam Burk- The Buchanan Area Senior Center parking lot will be under construction in the month of September. The Senior Center would like to utilize the Red Bud City Center during that time, to still be able to provide services.

John VanDyke- Published a letter to the editor of the Palladium in support of Mayor Denison and fact-check the rumors that have circulated.

Angela Lowery- Candidate for City Commissioner for November 2024 asking for support. Also apologized to Denison for a poison pen letter that was not her doing.

Chief Burnett- Thanked everyone for a successful National Night Out as well as thanked the Scarecrow Charities for giving \$600.00 for the shop with a cop program.

XIV. Executive Comments

A. City Manager Comments

Lynch- Updates of preparing for the financial audit as well as the notice period for the wastewater treatment plant permit. For USDA the loan closing was held on June 30th with a pre-construction meeting. Front Street retaining wall Lynch had received a second setting of drawings and provided comments, we are expecting additional drawings for review. McCoy Creek project the EGLE permit was issued on August 6th specifies the work within the creek needs to be completed by October 1, the remaining work above the creek can continue after October 1.

B. Commissioner Comments

Weedon- Congratulated Chunk's on their success. Thanked the public for their kind words about Denison. Best of luck to the candidates running for Commission.

Swem- Wished Ashley Regal the best of luck in her new opportunity and her work does not go unnoticed. Thanked Lynch for all that he has done to community in the short time he has been here, it was approved tonight with an overall positive evaluation. Congratulated Hannah and will continue to cheer her on. Thanked the police and first responders for National Night Out.

Money- Thanked Ashley Regal for everything she has done. Congratulated Chunk's. The reception for Hannah Roberts downtown was great. Glad to be able to help the Senior Center out while under construction. National Night Out had a great turnout. Thanked Tim and the commission for all the work they have done.

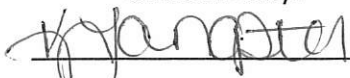
Vigansky- Lynch has my support 100 percent. The Senior Center is one of the best in the county.

C. Mayor Comments

Denison read a statement he prepared. Denison has decided to resign as Mayor and City Commissioner effective immediately. The statement is included see attachment A

XV. Adjourn

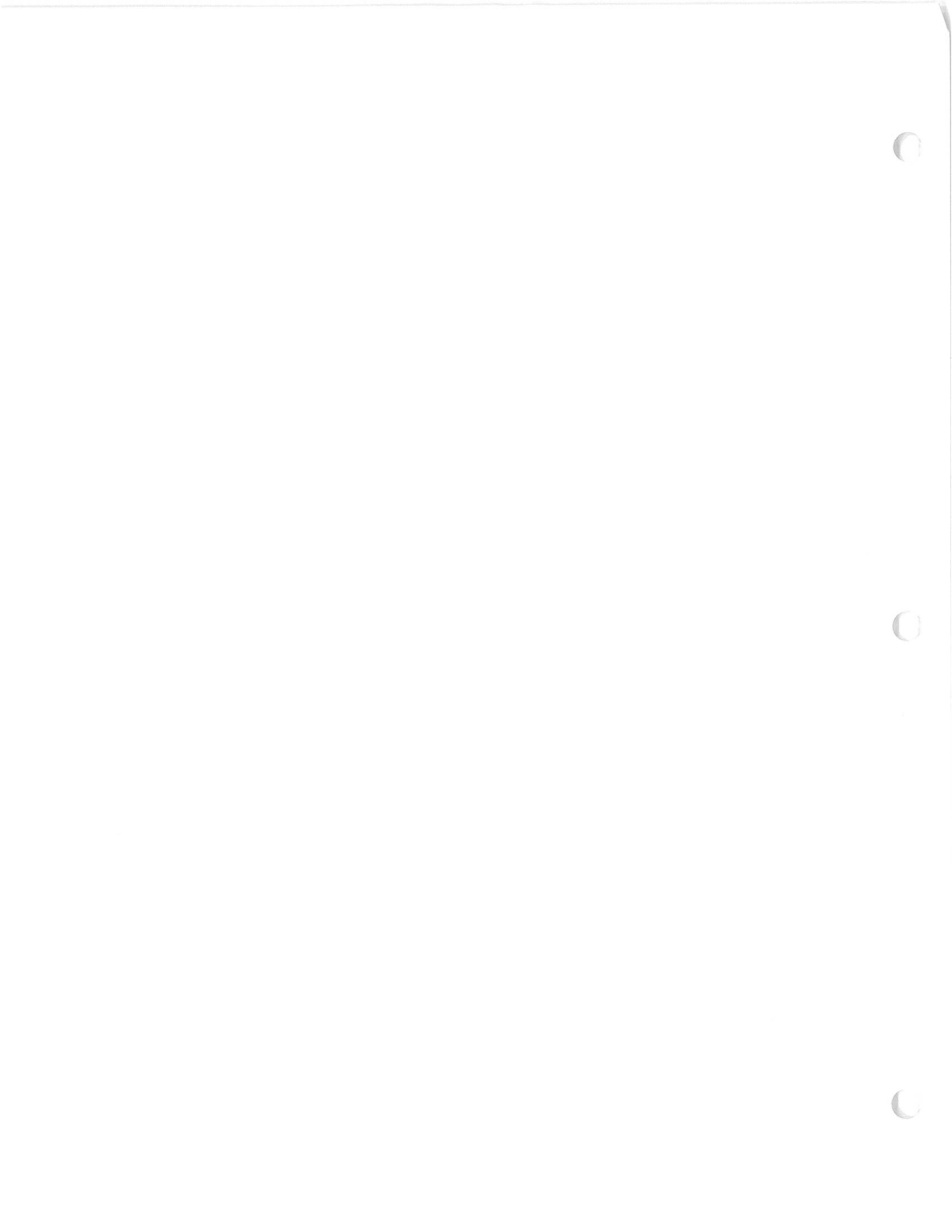
Motion made by Weedon, supported by Vigansky to adjourn at 8:14 PM. Roll call vote carries unanimously.



Kalla Langston, City Clerk



Mayor Pro Tem Mark Weedon



Since 2018, when I decided to run for the position of city commissioner, I have given everything I had to this position. As I stated when I ran for commissioner and time and time again since, my goal was and is simply to leave Buchanan a better place than I found it. I have invested countless hours over the past 7 years trying to achieve that goal. I have offered to pitch in at City Hall, I have volunteered for and sit on 5 different boards, lending a helping hand whenever and wherever I thought I could make a difference.

I have not been alone in this endeavor. Buchanan has so many good, decent people working for it, both in City Hall and the various DPW departments. They are ALL very good at what they do, and they do it because they share a common goal of doing what's best for Buchanan. I am honored to get to work beside them. Kalla Langston, Rich Murphy, Tim Lynch, Ashley Regal, Courtney Baham, Emma Lysy and all the other hard working, dedicated employees in this building. Mike Baker, Klay Weaver and the rest of the DPW employees are committed to doing everything they can to keep the city running smoothly. Our Police force, our firefighters, and all of our amazing volunteer organizations that do so much for our community. I would be here all night if I tried to name everyone. But all of these people give of their time and energy to try and make Buchanan a better place to live for all of us.

Buchanan is home to so many wonderful people that I value deeply, and with whom I enjoy working alongside - volunteers, civic leaders, business owners, and all those who share the common vision of a healthy, vibrant Buchanan, Michigan. To all of you that have consistently stood by me with unwavering support and to all those who continually support our small town, **thank you**. Your kind words, thoughts and actions have carried me through my years of service to this city. It is people like you that make Buchanan, Michigan "The nicest place in America" and the reason I wanted to be a part of leading our community in the first place.

Unfortunately, and maybe naively, I was unaware of another group of people that live here in Buchanan. A small but loud percentage of misguided, ill informed, small minded people. The kind of people that continually insinuate corruption exists inside city government without evidence. The kind of people that continually insult and question the integrity of those trying to serve our community. The type of people that would vandalize my home, simply because they are unhappy with me. The kind of people that bully, that continually post lies



and rumors on social media, and the kind of people who are profane and vulgar at our city meetings, and who disregard our rules of conduct and procedure.

To those of you who question my integrity and ethics because of lies that you have heard through gossip, or the anonymity of the internet, I want to tell you this:

I strive to be a person of character, and I can recognize right from wrong. My values won't bend for any member of this commission, for anyone in city hall or for anyone in our community. Right is right, wrong is wrong. I believe it's wrong to talk down to, or to berate anyone because of their sex, age, race, education or religion. I believe it's wrong to send provocative emails on city devices. I believe it's wrong to make inappropriate comments about females working at city hall. I will not look the other way when I see anyone, including fellow commissioners, participating in actions that put our city at risk of litigation. I will not accept retaliation against whistleblowers by members of this commission. I will not condone, by my silence, those who make racist statements. I will not stand silent when a commissioner verbally degrades city employees, especially in public. As the mayor, as a husband, and as a father to a teenage daughter, I will not just stand by while the city's harassment and misconduct policy is being violated by anyone - even if the person in violation of the policy is my friend, or your friend.

Please understand, my criticism of Mr. Vigansky isn't because I "don't like" Mr. Vigansky. It's because his behavior, words and actions jeopardize Buchanan's ability to operate effectively. His negativity, bigotry and constant attempts to circumvent the work and authority of the city commission puts the city at risk for litigation while at the same time impedes Buchanan's progress and hinders economic development opportunities. Our city's problems, both big and small, require intelligent, respectful debate, not self serving, outdated, obstructionist behavior born of ignorance.

After discussing it with family, and friends, I have decided that the level of incivility I have dealt with as mayor has reached a level beyond what I consider acceptable for small town politics. I signed up to help, to work with everyone to improve our community. I didn't sign up to have my home vandalized. I have tried my very best to always treat others with respect, and to focus on solutions

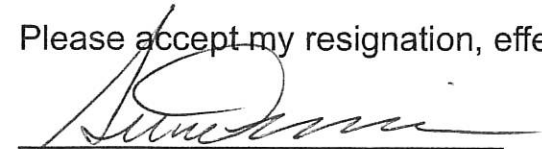


to our problems. I didn't sign up to have my character and integrity attacked with untruths and lies.

With that being said, tonight, I am choosing to resign as your mayor, and city commissioner, effective immediately. I have decided to focus on my health, my family, and on things that bring me joy. Unfortunately, this position is no longer one of them.

Thank you,

Please accept my resignation, effective immediately.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sean Denison', written over a horizontal line.

Sean Denison

