

REGULAR MEETING OF THE BUCHANAN CITY COMMISSION
MONDAY, DECEMBER 08, 2025 – 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 by Mayor Weedon at 7:00 PM.

II. Recognition

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Weedon led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. Invocation

Invocation was given.

V. Roll Call

PRESENT: Mayor Mark Weedon, Mayor Pro Tem Patrick Swem, Commissioner Raquell George, Commissioner Larry Money, Commissioner Dan Vigansky

STAFF: City Manager, Tony McGhee; City Clerk, Kalla Langston-Weiss; Director of Public Services, Mike Baker; Chief of Police Harvey Burnett

VI. Approve Agenda

Motion was made by George, seconded by Vigansky, to approve the agenda as presented. Voice vote carried unanimously.

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

None.

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

A. Minutes: Consider approving the Regular Meeting Minutes from November 24th, 2025.

B. 2026 Notices: Consider approving the 2026 Meeting Notices and Holiday Closure Notice.

C. DDA Board Appointments: Consider approving the DDA board appointments with the following terms:

1-year: Haley Jones

1-year: Libby Hein

3-year: Michelle Fletcher

4-year: Tracy Mast

D. Department Head Reports- accept the monthly department head reports.

E. Road Closure- Consider approving the road closure submitted by the Buchanan Area Chamber of Commerce for the Buchanan for the Holidays parade. Front St. to Oak St. from 6:15 PM 7:00 PM

Motion made by Swem, seconded by Vigansky to approve the consent agenda, as presented. Voice vote carried unanimously.

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

X. Reports by: Departments, Committees, Boards

A. Buchanan Tree Friends: Presentation and consideration for the approval of the Urban Forestry Plan.

Brian Murphy, Chair of Buchanan Tree Friends, and Lee Mueller, Certified Arborist from the Davey Resource Group, presented an overview of Buchanan's urban forestry history, highlighting key data such as the 2017 tree canopy assessment and the 2022 street tree inventory. Key points included: Buchanan has been a Tree City USA since 1990. Tree Friends was reestablished in 2017. The 2017 assessment found a 36% canopy with 26% impervious surfaces. The 2022 inventory identified maintenance and removal priorities for around 1,700 street trees. The Urban Forest Plan aims to prioritize tree maintenance and planting within limited resources. The vision for 2030 includes maintaining Tree City USA status and sustaining 36% canopy coverage.

During the discussion, important topics arose: Considerations for planting sizes. Arborist training and certification opportunities. Addressing citizen concerns about tree roots impacting sidewalks and sewer systems. Tree Friends requested that the Commission accept the Urban Forestry Plan and support collaborative efforts for its implementation.

Motion made by Money, seconded by Swem, to accept the Urban Forestry Plan, as presented. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

B. Buchanan Police Department: Shop with a Cop update.

An update was provided regarding the Shop with a Cop program held at Walmart in Niles.

Highlights: 18 children participated, \$200 per child was raised through donations, and Walmart contributed \$25 per child. Appreciation expressed to donors, businesses, private donors, City staff, Fire Department support, and Buchanan Community Schools (noted later).

XI. Unfinished Business

XII. New Business

A. Adult Use Marihuana Retailer Permit- Consider the approval of the Adult Use Marijuana Retail Permit for Mint Seven LLC, dba Mint Cannabis at 221 E. Front St.

Consideration was given to the adult use marijuana retailer permit application for Mint Seven, LLC, doing business as Mint Cannabis, for the transfer and continuation of operations at the former Pinnacle location. City staff reported the application had been processed and was acceptable, contingent upon completion of the required background checks. The applicant stated their goal was to open by approximately February 1, pending state approvals and inspections, and noted the company currently operates six dispensary locations in Michigan, with plans to expand to eight, including Buchanan, as well as operations in other states.

Motion made by Vigansky, seconded by Money to approve the adult use marihuana permit for Mint Seven contingent upon the completion of background checks. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

B. Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus Bid- Consider approving the Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) bid award.

Units currently in service include equipment dating back to 2003, which exceeds the expected useful life of approximately 12 to 15 years. Parts for the older units have become increasingly difficult to obtain, resulting in several units being out of service or nearing the end of serviceability. The City indicated it will proceed with a phased replacement approach and will continue to pursue grant funding opportunities to assist with future purchases.

Motion made by Money, seconded by George, to approve the bid award to MacQueen Equipment in the amount of \$59,460.00, as presented. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

- C. Ground Lease Agreement**- Consider accepting the ground lease agreement for N/S Dewey St. The lease is intended as an interim step toward a future sale of the property, with the process requiring additional procedural steps due to the proximity of McCoy Creek and state requirements governing public rights-of-way located within 25 meters of a body of water. Under the proposed agreement, Building 324 will assume responsibility for maintenance of the leased area, including snow removal, as part of its parking operations. An access control arm is also planned to prevent traffic.
Motion made by Vigansky, seconded by Money to approve the proposed three-year lease of the specified portion of the Dewey Street public right-of-way to Building 324 at an annual lease rate of \$1, and to authorize the City Manager to sign and execute documents and negotiate the final location of the 10-foot trail easement during lease execution. Roll call votes carried unanimously.
- D. December 22nd City Commission Meeting**- Consider canceling the City Commission meeting scheduled for December 22, 2025, and granting City Manager McGhee administrative approval for expenditures.
Motion made by Money, seconded by George to approve the cancellation of the December 22nd, 2025, Regular meeting and give Manager McGhee administrative approval of expenditures. Roll call votes carried unanimously.
- E. Expenditures**- Consider approving the expenditures for December 8th, 2025, in the amount of \$115,223.40.
Motion made by Vigansky, seconded by Swem to approve the expenditures in the amount of \$115,223.40. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

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

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

Dr. Redding: An update was provided regarding ARL, formerly known as Stark. Reported that the facility was completed after 92 days of construction. A grand opening is scheduled for January 2 at 3:00 p.m., with classes beginning on January 5 at 9:00 a.m. Programs to be offered include a nursing bridge, pharmacy technician, medical terminology, QMA, CNA, phlebotomy, and additional allied health courses. It was also noted that the facility has been renamed ARL and is no longer operating under the Stark name.

Randy Hendrixson: An update was provided regarding the Building 324 project. Reported that the contractor has pulled the necessary permits and construction is underway. The target completion and occupancy for the loading dock is anticipated by the end of March. Projected attendance is estimated at approximately 60,000 visitors annually across a variety of events. Phase 1 of the project represents an investment of approximately \$1.5 million. Parking and occupancy planning were discussed, with Phase 2 expected to add additional parking in the future.

XV. Executive Comments

A. City Manager Comments

McGhee reported that additional wall art was received last week for the Downtown Project, signed by the State Representative, State Senator, Governor, and Lieutenant Governor in recognition of the project. Also noted that the upcoming Saturday marks 11 months since beginning service with the City. As this was the last meeting before the holidays, holiday greetings were extended to the Commission, staff, and community, including well wishes for Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and other holidays. Further reported that with the downtown project substantially completed, the City's focus will shift during the second half of the fiscal year to quality-of-life issues within neighborhoods, including increased emphasis on sidewalks, code enforcement, and parks and recreation. It was also announced that the new Planning and Community Development Director, Kristen Gunderson, will begin employment with the City the following week and will attend the first

City Commission meeting of the new year. Additionally, an RFP for the twelve lots recently approved for sale will be issued the following day and distributed electronically to the Commission, the Builders Exchange, local builders' organizations, known developers, and posted on the City's website. Approximately six weeks will be allowed for proposals, with the goal of presenting a sales agreement for consideration prior to the February City Commission meeting.

B. Commissioner Comments

George: Requested clarification on the stoplights at Open and Front Streets, and the City Manager confirmed they are being installed, with an AEP service issue currently being addressed and activation expected soon. It was also announced that Buchanan for the Holidays was rescheduled to Friday at 6:00 p.m., with the event proceeding downtown. Appreciation was expressed for the Shop with a Cop program and the Police Department's efforts, and congratulations were extended to ARL on its upcoming opening.

Swem: expressed gratitude to the Tree Friends Team for their collective work. The lead line project is still ongoing. Thanked the Police and Fire Departments for their participation in the Shop-with-a-Cop event. Congratulations to ALR! The water and sewer analysis was included in your packets. McGhee will be attending the Bertrand Township meeting to discuss the potential expansion of water and sewer services. Additionally, there has been an improvement at the landfill, which involves an investment towards direct discharge at the site.

Money: Expressed gratitude to Chief Burnett and thanked the tree friends. Welcome to Dr. Readding in Buchanan, and congratulations to Building 324. I would also like to thank the Department of Public Works and its crew for their hard work on snow removal over the Thanksgiving holiday. Please note, this Saturday, December 13th, at 10 AM, there will be a Wreaths Across America presentation at the Veterans Circle in Oak Ridge Cemetery.

Vigansky: I'm happy to have a nursing school in town. The excitement and recognition of ALR cannot be expressed enough.

C. Mayor Comments

Weedon: I would like to express my gratitude to the DDA members and Chamber members for their numerous emails regarding the rescheduling of the parade. I also want to thank the Police and Fire Departments for their participation in the "Shop with a Cop" program. Additionally, I appreciate the Tree Friends for their thoughtful plan and presentation. Dr. Readding is excited to welcome you to our town and takes great pride in having you here in Buchanan. Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a safe New Year!

XVI. Adjourn

Kalla Langston-Weiss, City Clerk

Mayor Mark Weedon