

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

Mayor Denison called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Roll Call

PRESENT: Mayor Sean Denison, Mayor Pro Tem Mark Weedon, Commissioner Cameron Downey, Commissioner Larry Money, Commissioner Patrick Swem

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Community Development Director, Richard Murphy; City Clerk, Barbara Pitcher; Director of Public Safety/Chief of Police, Tim Ganus; Director of Public Services, Mike Baker; Assistant Fire Chief, Robert Blaylock; Treasurer, Stephanie Powers; Police Officer, Nicholas Pensari

GUESTS: Jason Lietz, Rebecka Hoyt, Norma Ferris, Fran Terry, Ralph McDonald, Molly Thornton, Del DeMao, Dan Vigansky, and 3 others

III. Approve Agenda

Amendments to the agenda to include:

Unfinished Business, Item A - Fire Department Equipment Request
New Business, Item D - Purchase of City Phone

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Weedon, Seconded by Commissioner Money to approve the agenda as amended. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

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

Dan Vigansky - Spoke regarding his request to have an item added to the agenda that was not. Disagrees with all the add-ons to the agenda and stated the deadline should be on Wednesday.

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

A. Approve Minutes

September 13, 2021, Regular Meeting; September 20, 2021, Special Meeting Minutes.

B. Approve Expenditures for September 27, 2021

C. Banner Placement Request Form

Approve banner placement request from Ann Tuite on behalf of the Buchanan Tree Friends for a large horizontal banner to hang on South Redbud From October 1-17, 2021 to advertise grant-funded tree planting on October 16, 2021.

Approve banner placement request from the Buchanan Area Chamber of Commerce for a large horizontal banner to hang on South Redbud from Nov. 12th-29th to advertise the White Saturday Shop Local Event that will be held the weekend after Thanksgiving.

D. Street Closure Request

Pending internal approvals, approve the request from Sarah Gault at the Buchanan District Library for a street closure on Days Avenue from Front to the Library parking lot on Saturday, October 2, from 2:30-4:30 p.m. to accommodate the Pumpkin Jamboree Pedal Pull. This request was withdrawn by the applicant prior to the meeting.

Pending internal approvals, approve a street closure on Front Street from Duck Pond Park to Oak Street on Fri., Oct. 8th from 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. for the Homecoming Parade.

E. Accept Staff Activity Briefings

Motion made by Commissioner Downey, Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Weedon to accept the consent agenda as presented. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

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

None

VII. **Reports by: Departments, Committees, Boards**

A. Public Services Report

Update on DPW Building Committee and staff transitions.

B. Public Safety Report

Update on the hiring of a new police officer.

Ganus introduces new police officer Nicholas Pensari. Pensari addressed the Commission and discusses his background and reasons for choosing Buchanan. He has been on board for three weeks working alongside Office Dave Capron.

Money asked if Pensari would be working downtown. Ganus indicated he would be placing a more seasoned officer downtown. Doney asked about the foot patrols, as he's witnessed many U-turns and some shouting matches downtown. Although the addition of Pensari will bolster the department's numbers, they are still short-staffed while Pensari is in training. The department is doing the best it can to be responsive and asks for the public to call if there are issues that need to be addressed. Weedon welcomed Pensari, stating we are the Nicest Place in America, and we also have "peace" officers.

C. Community Development Director Report

Addendums to be considered for Facade and Restaurant Incentive Programs.

Request for approval of Downtown Façade Program application by Molly Thornton and Union Coffee House, 115 E. Front St.

There was considerable discussion regarding addendums to the incentive programs, but no motions on the items.

Motion made by Commissioner Swem, Seconded by Commissioner Money to approve the Downtown Facade Program application of Molly Thornton and Union Coffee Hous, 115 E. Front St. Roll call vote carried by majority with Denison abstaining due to a conflict of interest, as he is quoting and providing the signage included in the application.

Voting Yea: Mayor Pro Tem Weedon, Commissioner Downey, Commissioner Money,

Commissioner Swem

Voting Abstaining: Mayor Denison

Vigansky had an outburst in objection to process and conflict of interest and was ordered removed by the Mayor.

VIII. Unfinished Business

A. Fire Department Equipment Request

Ganus revisited the issue of an AFG grant for Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SBCA) for the Fire Department which need to be replaced as they have or soon will come to the end of their lifespan. Additionally, the standards are continually being raised. The City of Buchanan Fire Department applied for a grant with a regional coalition of fire departments and is requesting a 10% match from the City in the amount of \$8,391.30.

Motion made by Commissioner Money, Seconded by Commissioner Swem to approve a 10% match of \$8,391.30 for SBCA units. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

Weedon asked someone to look into how tight the fire hydrants are tightened. Baker indicated that they will be exercising all hydrants during the upcoming hydrant flush and tight ones will be addressed.

IX. New Business

A. Sardor Vakhidov, Blackbird LLC Adult Use Marihuana Class C Grow Permit Application

Consider approval of an Adult Use Class C Grow Facility at 402-404 S. Oak St., Buchanan, Michigan, 49107. Sardor Vakhidov, Blackbird LLC submitted their application and received approval from the Planning Commission on September 14, 2021.

Murphy indicated the only outstanding items are background checks from a few larger municipalities which usually take longer to process. He recommends approval contingent upon a favorable background check.

Downey and Swem expressed their concerns regarding licensed businesses that have not yet opened. Denison agreed there is a need to look at the renewal process.

Motion made by Commissioner Swem, Seconded by Commissioner Downey to approve the Adult Use Class C Grow Facility at 402-404 S. Oak St., Buchanan, Michigan, 49107, Sardor Vakhidov, Blackbird LLC, contingent upon a complete and favorable background check. Roll call vote carried by majority with Weedon abstaining with a conflict of interest due to his employment in the cannabis industry.

***Voting Yea: Mayor Denison, Commissioner Downey, Commissioner Money, Commissioner Swem
Voting Abstaining: Mayor Pro Tem Weedon***

B. Buchanan Master Plan 2021

Consider adoption of Resolution No. 2021.09/236 to adopt Buchanan City Master Plan 2021.

Planning Commission Chair, Jason Lietz discussed the Master Plan process and thanked Murphy, Marcy Hamilton of the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, the City Commission, and Richard Gault and Dale Toerne who provided significant input. Highlights of the plan include community involvement in the development plan, and an action plan that contains 51 specific action items which call out individual or department leads for each item. The Planning Commission

has adopted the Master Plan but also seeks support from the City Commission. Denison expressed gratitude for Leitz' thoroughness and leadership on the Planning Commission.

Motion made by Commissioner Money, Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Weedon to adopt Resolution No. 2021.09/236 to adopt Buchanan City Master Plan 2021. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

C. Redevelopment Ready Communities

Review and discuss the MEDC Redevelopment Ready Communities baseline report for the City of Buchanan.

Consider adoption of Resolution 2021.09/237 Authorizing the Implementation of Recommendations Necessary to Receive Redevelopment Ready Communities Certification from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC).

Denison explained the RRC report and the work ahead of the City. He addressed the issue of an email from a member of the public, not on the original report distribution list, who felt the need to contact the MEDC with a laundry list of complaints. He expressed that this individual's actions, as well as the board member who provided the report and email contacts, were counterproductive.

Murphy said this is a way for the State to give us a roadmap and help those who help themselves. He will be participating in training for the next 9 weeks. The goal is to become certified. By statute, the Commission must authorize to move forward.

Motion made by Commissioner Swem, Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Weedon to adopt Resolution 2021.09/237 authorizing the implementation of recommendations necessary to receive Redevelopment Ready Communities Certification from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). Roll call vote carried unanimously.

D. Purchase of City Phone

Consider the sale of the City-issued iPhone 11 Pro Max to Barbara Pitcher upon her resignation, for the trade-in value of \$430.

Motion made by Commissioner Money, Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Weedon to authorize the sale of the City-issued iPhone 11 Pro Max to Barbara Pitcher upon her resignation, for the trade-in value of \$430. Roll call vote carried by majority.

Voting Yea: Mayor Denison, Mayor Pro Tem Weedon, Commissioner Downey, Commissioner Money

Voting Nay: Commissioner Swem

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

A. Southwest Michigan Tourist Council

In a letter included in the agenda packet, the Council reflects on 2020 and looks forward to plans for 2021.

B. Volunteers Needed for Tree Planting - October 16

ReLeaf Michigan, a non-profit tree organization, is partnering with the City of Buchanan, Buchanan Tree Friends, St. Joseph River Basin Commission, the Indiana DNR, Davey Resource Group, and the MDNR – Urban and Community Forestry Program to plant 50 trees on Saturday, October 16, 2021, at Buchanan City Hall and along East Front Street, Buchanan Middle School, and 3rd Street. Trees

provide many benefits to communities such as shade, improving economic vitality of commercial districts, absorbing stormwater, and reducing carbon in our atmosphere.

Funding for the program is provided through a US Forest Service Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant awarded to ReLeaf Michigan to support and expand local capacity to manage community forest and trees. Tree locations were determined based on the results of a tree canopy assessment, which identified areas where trees would have the most environmental, economic, and aesthetic impact.

Masks are recommended. Volunteers are asked to wear closed-toe shoes, comfortable clothing and bring a shovel and work gloves if they have them. The group will meet at Buchanan City Hall, 302 N. Red Bud Trail at 8:45 a.m. to sign in and enjoy refreshments. Volunteers will then watch a planting demonstration from ReLeaf Michigan's tree experts.

Event occurs rain or shine. No planting experience is necessary, and families are encouraged. Join us for the morning and leave an environmental legacy that will add to the beauty and health of your community for generations. We hope to see you there!

Special thanks to city officials and the Buchanan Tree Friends for their much-appreciated collaboration to enhance this wonderful community.

Where: Buchanan City Hall, 302 N. Red Bud Trail, Buchanan, MI 49107

When: Saturday, October 16th from 8:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Sponsors: ReLeaf Michigan (www.ReLeafMichigan.org)
City of Buchanan
St. Joseph River Basin Commission
US Forest Service
Davey Resource Group
Indiana DNR
MDNR – Urban and Community Forestry Program

Cost: This event is free! RSVPs are appreciated. RSVP to www.ReLeafMichigan.org/rsvp

For questions, call Ann Tuite (312) 662-3149 or email treefriends@cityofbuchanan.com.

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

Norma Ferris - Expressed excitement that the Dial-A-Ride contract is complete. Riders have tickets and will be getting new brochures.

XII. Executive Comments

A. City Manager Comments – Not present

B. Commissioner Comments

Money - Welcomed Nick Pensari and thanked Chief Ganus for his due diligence in getting a new officer here. Wished the best of luck to Pitcher in her new endeavors. Wished a happy anniversary to Mike Baker.

Swem - Asked Murphy to take notes and give them to the City Manager as he was hoping to get an update on where we are with the City Attorneys regarding the City Manager's review process. Things he wants discussed - not necessarily as part of her review - are the progress on the Master Plan action plan, progress on RRC action plan, and 2023 Infrastructure plan, 2022 DPW building,

fire and police strategy for their buildings, and the Brownfield Board. Also wanted to ensure the Tyler Ganus is on the next agenda to present a resolution on behalf of the Landfill.

Weedon - Wished best of luck to Pitcher and thanked her for her time. He knows she put in a lot of hard work and many, many long hours to get the Commission as much information as she possibly could, and really appreciates the help she provided to get to this point.

Commissioner Downey had no comments.

C. Mayor Comments -

Stated he likes to keep these meeting as laid back as possible and likes feedback but asks people be respectful and not talk or shout over one another. He spoke regarding Vigansky's public comment and later eruption stating he and the City Manager decided not to put the item on the agenda because it really wasn't relevant. The issue had already been decided and the Commission would be spinning its wheels to cover the same things over and over. Vigansky was notified why his request was not granted. Encouraged people to show up to plant trees. Thanked Chief Ganus Thanked Pitcher and acknowledged she put in a lot of hard work and a lot of time which is appreciated.

XIII. Adjourn

Motion made by Commissioner Money, Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Weedon to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 p.m. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

Barbara A. Pitcher, City Clerk

Mayor Sean Denison