



BUCHANAN DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA)

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 08, 2025 – 5:00 PM

CHAMBER OF BUCHANAN CITY HALL - 302 N REDBUD TRAIL, BUCHANAN MI

MINUTES

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 by Paniagua at 5:00pm.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Paniagua led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Roll Call

Present: Antisdell, Capron, Finan, Paniagua, Terry, Weedon

Absent: Reed, Renfro, Williams

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

IV. Approve Agenda

Terry moved, seconded by Weedon, to approve the agenda as presented. Voice vote carried unanimously.

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

None.

VI. Approve Minutes

A. *Consider approving the minutes from September 10th, 2025.*

Paniagua has spoken with Clerk Langston-Weiss about adding additional information to item 8. B, so they'll need to postpone approval.

Terry moved, seconded by Antisdell, to postpone approving the minutes until we have further information. Voice vote carried unanimously.

VII. Unfinished Business

A. *TIF Plan Development- Dan Fette*

Fette has spoken with the Assessor and the State Tax Commission. The Tax Commission's advice is to not drop personal property off the roll, as doing so would alter the baseline values, which can only be done when adopting a new TIF plan. This will lower the revenue a little bit, though based on reports Fette has run, the DDA will still bring in \$107,935 this year.

Fette introduced the next question, of how to spend the money. There is a tacit agreement for the DDA to contribute to the cost of the downtown infrastructure project, roughly 65% of the TIF, with the

remainder available for programmatic spending. Based on the previous TIF plan, this would include loan and granting programs for businesses and a variety of marketing and community activities like the Farmer's Market and the Common Concert Series.

Fette distributed a draft plan. Finan asked if what they were sent included completed projects. Fette clarified that it included projects that were completed as well as those that were undertaken and then stopped. Fette will go over the income and expenses reports, as lot of what was in there was proposed infrastructure work that is now being completed as part of the downtown infrastructure project.

Next year the DDA should bring in about \$112,000 in TIF revenue, in addition to the approximately \$116,000 they'll start the year with. He added expected expenses and other placeholder values. These includes \$5,000/year for marketing, \$6500/year to support the Farmer's Market, \$6500/year to support the Common, a façade granting program for downtown businesses of approximately \$10,000/year, and he added a potential building improvement loan program.

McGhee asked about the money the DDA already had on hand and if that should be spent first or spread out. Fette answered that a considerable amount of that money is in investments while booked against a considerable amount of liability. He will need to first figure out what that liability is. If they can ascertain what the liability is and the releases against them, then yes, they would be able to spend that down.

Antisdel asked what the nature of the liabilities was. Fette reiterated that he did not know but would try and find out. Antisdel also asked if the \$65,000 number was a placeholder and if was for one year or was recurring. Paniagua answered that it escalated with the revenue take and was recurring. The Investments are about \$200,000, and the liabilities are about \$192,000 per the auditors. Fette speculated the liabilities may go back to when the Andrews Farm TIFA was dissolved. This DDA will be bringing in more than more DDAs in the county.

Fette spoke more to a potential building improvement loan program for downtown businesses and the financial position of the DDA. The next step is to get clarity on the liabilities and identify priorities. Finan asked if the infrastructure spending was for the current project or future ones, Fette's understanding is that it's for the current work being done.

Antisdel asked why the DDA has to pay for the downtown infrastructure project. McGhee answered this had been presented to all DDA applicants in their interview, that the City would continue to capture funds previously earmarked for the infrastructure project. Antisdel said he did not remember that conversation from his interview and expressed that he felt the City was taking money from the DDA as it had in the past. Finan felt is was consistent with their goals and that they need to decide on their priorities. Fette reiterated that the numbers are placeholders and that the DDA would have a favorable amount to work with.

Antisdel asked about the negative capture. Fette spoke to how the DDA Act calculates revenues. As some parcels go up in values, others go down, leaving an offset between the two. There was growth in real property and loss in personal property. This is what he'd asked the State Tax Commission about, and their advice was that removing the personal property would amount to an amendment of the TIF, which would trigger a state law that would require them to reset their baseline entirely.

Antisdel feels that serving their customers is what's most important. Finan asked about the DDA taking on the LiveBuchanan 501c3. Fette answered that it is generally difficult for a public authority created by statute to absorb a 501c3 private nonprofit. Speaking to Antisdel's points about serving their customers, Fette said that there are three ways a DDA can support their downtown business, and that's through creating a more amenable downtown through infrastructure improvements, you can

created a downtown that people want to come to through marketing, and you can do direct contributions to business activity through grants or loans.

Fette thinks a longer session in a workshop will be beneficial for getting into the plan and assigning priorities.

VIII. New Business

A. *Branding & Promotion Committee and Sub-Structure*

McGhee and Paniagua had discussed that the marketing committee had two focal points in marketing and events. The Chamber is currently planning event, would it make sense to partner and/or coordinate with them?

Paniagua felt any promotional events should be coordinated with the City, the Chamber, and the DDA and felt there should be a small group focused on events and promotions. Antisdel asked for a list of Chamber events. Weedon spoke in favor of dividing marketing and promotion into two subcommittees.

Finan noted that there'd already been instances of conflicting priorities within the subcommittee as it is and wondered if further splintering wouldn't help them keep consistent communication and a common goal. She also worried about individuals developing a marketing RFP where the committee had been planning to develop one together. She believes the DDA should focus on a common strategic goal and worries about distrust of the DDA in the community.

Weedon agreed that all DDA members should be involved in discussions. Finan added that Paniagua had communicated to her that he had no intention of discussing the marketing RFP with the marketing committee. Paniagua said there is work that needs to be done before it goes to the full board, Finan said that that work should be done with the committee. Paniagua said he got nothing back from the marketing committee. McGhee will get example RFPs together for the next marketing meeting.

Antisdel feels there should be a committee focused on marketing and another focused on promotion. Weedon feels the DDA should involve the Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber in events as well. There was discussion on the advantages of planning events and promotion separating.

McGhee addressed some questions. The DDA can spend money as they currently have an active TIF plan that they are operating under. That plan includes marketing. He also updated the DDA on the liabilities with an email from the Bookkeeper, which let them know that the liabilities were from when the DDA was believed to be dissolved, and that they would be reversed in the upcoming audit.

B. *Downtown Ribbon Cutting (either November 21st or 26th)- assign two board members to work with the planning group.*

Capron asked if the DDA should have a point person for coordinating the Ribbon Cutting event between the DDA, the Buchanan Chamber, and the Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber. Terry and Capron volunteered. There was discussion on the date. The 21st was decided on because it is a Friday, and there is already a lot happening the week of the 28th.

C. *Discussion on partnering with the Chamber given the overlap in membership and service area.*

IX. Communications

A. *DDA Projected Tax Capturer*

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

None.

XI. Staff/Committee Comments

McGhee updated the DDA that paving would start Friday. The last remaining sidewalks will be coming out before being poured in stages. Notices have gone out.

Finan asked about meeting to set DDA priorities ahead of meeting with Fette. It was decided that the strategic session would be Thursday the 23rd at 3pm before meeting with Fette at 5pm.

XII. Adjournment

Weedon moved, seconded by Antisdell, to adjourn the meeting at 6:15pm.