



PUBLIC HEARINGS & REGULAR MEETING OF THE BUCHANAN CITY COMMISSION

MONDAY, APRIL 13, 2026 – 7:00 PM

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

MINUTES

I. Call to Order Public Hearing # 1

The Public Hearing # 1 was called to order by Mayor Weedon at 7:00 PM.

II. Roll Call

Present: Weedon, Swem, Vigansky, Money, George

III. Opening of Public Hearing # 1

Motion made by George, seconded by Money to open the public hearing #1 at 7:00 PM. The roll call vote carried unanimously.

IV. Statement of Purpose and Announcement of Rules

A. The purpose of the public hearing is to hear public comments on proposed amendments to Sections 71-5 Zoning district established; Section 71-14.A – Figure 71-A Buchanan Zoning Map; creation of Section 71-16.H Establishment of zoning districts and regulations; Section 71-18 Uses – Table 71-J Use Matrix – Accommodations- Article V Definitions and any other sections of the Unified Development Code that may be necessary to fully implement and a Short-term rental overlay district consistent with Ordinance 2025.09/443, as adopted in the City of Buchanan Code of Ordinances.

Mayor Weedon recited the Statement of purpose and announcement of rules.
No comments were made.

V. Close of Public Hearing # 1

Motion made by Vigansky, seconded by Swem, to close the public hearing #1 at 7:02 PM. The roll call vote carried unanimously.

VI. Call to Order Public Hearing # 2

The Public Hearing #2 was called to order by Mayor Weedon at 7:02 PM.

VII. Roll Call

Present: Weedon, Swem, Vigansky, Money, George

VIII. Opening of Public Hearing # 2

Motion made by Money, seconded by Swem to open public hearing #2 at 7:02 PM. The roll call vote carried unanimously

IX. Statement of Purpose and Announcement of Rules

A. The purpose of this public hearing is to gather comments on the proposed ordinance aimed at regulating, rehabilitating, and promoting the active use of vacant and underutilized buildings. This ordinance seeks to discourage nonconforming storage uses outside designated storage zones. It will also establish definitions, procedures for registration, requirements for a local responsible agent, inspection protocols, maintenance

guidelines, activation processes, fee structures, enforcement measures, hardship relief options, and appeals procedures.

Mayor Weedon recited the Statement of purpose and announcement of rules. No comments were made.

X. Close of Public Hearing # 2

*Motion made by Vigansky, seconded by George, to close the public hearing #2 at 7:04 PM.
The roll call vote carried unanimously*

XI. Call to Order the Regular Meeting

The Regular Meeting was called to order by Mayor Weedon at 7:04 PM.

XII. Recognition

A. White Cane Proclamation

CITY OF BUCHANAN-PROCLAMATION-WHITE CANE AWARENESS WEEK-May 2–10, 2026
WHEREAS, individuals who are blind or visually impaired contribute meaningfully to the social, economic, and civic life of our community; and

WHEREAS, the white cane is a symbol of independence, confidence, and self-reliance for people who are blind or visually impaired, enabling safe and independent travel; and

WHEREAS, White Cane Awareness Week serves to educate the public about the rights, abilities, and needs of individuals who are blind or visually impaired, and to promote understanding and inclusion; and

WHEREAS, the Lions Club has a long-standing commitment to supporting vision care, preventing blindness, and advocating for individuals who are blind or visually impaired; and

WHEREAS, the Buchanan-Galien Lions Club has requested that the City recognize White Cane Awareness Week to help raise awareness and encourage community support; and

WHEREAS, it is important to recognize and uphold laws that ensure the safety and rights of pedestrians who use white canes or guide dogs; and

WHEREAS, increasing awareness helps foster a more inclusive community where all residents can navigate public spaces safely and with dignity;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mark Weedon, Mayor of the City of Buchanan, Michigan, do hereby proclaim May 2 through May 10, 2026, as WHITE CANE AWARENESS WEEK in the City of Buchanan, and encourage all residents to recognize the importance of accessibility, to respect the rights of individuals who are blind or visually impaired, and to support the efforts of the Buchanan-Galien Lions Club in promoting safety, awareness, and inclusion throughout our community.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Buchanan to be affixed this 13 day of April, 2026.

XIII. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

XIV. Invocation

Invocation was given.

XV. Roll Call

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

Absent: None.

City Staff: City Manager Tony McGhee, City Clerk Kalla Langston-Weiss, Chief of Police Harvey Burnett

XVI. Approve Agenda

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

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

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

A. Minutes

1) Consider approving the Public Hearing & Regular Meeting Minutes from March 23rd, 2026.

2) Consider approving the Workshop Meeting Minutes from March 17th, 2026.

B. Department Head Reports- Consider accepting monthly reports.

C. Brownfield Authority Appointments- Consider the appointments of Mayor Pro Tem Patrick Swem, Commissioner Dan Vigansky, City Treasurer Deborah Perez, Emma Lysy, and Bryan Virgil to the Brownfield Authority for the following terms:

1 year- Dan Vigansky

2 year- Emma Lysy

2 year- Bryan Virgil

3 year- Patrick Swem

3 year- Deborah Perez

Motion was made by Swem, seconded by George to approve the consent agenda as presented. Voice votes carry unanimously.

XIX. Scheduled Matters from the Floor (if any)

A. Water & Sewer Rate Presentation- Andy Campbell, CPA with Bendzinski & Co.

A presentation was given on the Water and Sewer Funding Plan outlining significant capital improvement needs, regulatory requirements, and rate impacts; summary: the City faces over \$20 million in water system needs and must continue 8% annual rate increases to maintain infrastructure and compliance. Staff explained that the sewer system is in relatively better condition due to recent investments while the water system requires substantial future work; summary: sewer improvements are largely caught up, but the water system still has major long-term costs ahead. Discussion included grant opportunities such as the State Revolving Fund and congressional earmarks, along with the challenges of qualifying for funding; the City will aggressively pursue grants, though eligibility limitations may reduce success.

XX. Reports by: Departments, Committees, Boards

A. Clerk Department- Voter Education Campaign and City Commissioner Filing Deadlines. Langston- Weiss provided a report on the upcoming 2026 election cycle, including a planned voter education campaign utilizing community outreach, social media, and public engagement efforts, and announced that nominating petitions are available with a filing deadline of April 21, 2026.

XXI. Unfinished Business

A. Ordinance 2026.04/448- Consider the second reading and enactment of Ordinance 2026.04/448, an ordinance to provide for and regulate short-term rental uses and amend

the unified development code of the City of Buchanan to provide for a short-term rental overlay district and to protect public health, safety, and welfare.

Ordinance 2026.04/448, which amends the Unified Development Code to align with the previously adopted short-term rental ordinance by establishing a short-term rental overlay district and correcting inconsistencies between the zoning code and prior ordinance language. Staff clarified that the ordinance does not introduce new regulations but rather serves as an administrative update to ensure consistency between adopted policies and zoning provisions.

The motion was made by Vigansky, seconded by George to approve the second reading and enactment of Ordinance 2026.04/448 as the request meets the required standards under section 71-35.B.2 of the Unified Development Ordinance for a text amendment. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

- B. Ordinance 2026.05/449**- Consider the first reading of Ordinance 2026.05/449, the ordinance is to regulate, rehabilitate, and promote the active use of vacant and underutilized buildings; to discourage nonconforming storage uses outside storage zones; to establish definitions, register, local responsible agent, inspection, maintenance, activation, fees enforcement, hardship relief, appeals; and to protect public health, safety, and welfare. Additionally, scheduling the second public hearing for the second reading of Ordinance 449 for May 11th, 2026.

The ordinance is intended to encourage rehabilitation and active use of properties while discouraging prolonged vacancy and nonconforming storage uses. Key components of the ordinance include the creation of registration requirements for qualifying properties, designation of a local responsible agent, inspection and maintenance standards, activation plans for reuse, fee structures for noncompliance, and enforcement provisions including appeals and hardship relief options. Staff emphasized that the ordinance is designed to promote reinvestment and reduce negative impacts associated with vacant structures while providing flexibility for property owners who demonstrate progress toward reactivation. Discussion included concerns regarding enforcement, particularly in cases involving foreclosures or financial hardship, and clarification that activation plans and exemptions may be used to accommodate such situations.

Motion made by Money, seconded by Swem to approve the first reading of Ordinance 2026.05/449, as presented and scheduled public hearing #2 for May 11th, 2026. Roll call votes are carried unanimously.

XXII. New Business

- A. Resolution 2026.04/03**- A Resolution setting the schedule of fees and changes for Oak Ridge Cemetery.

Cemetery fees were updated to reflect current costs.

Motion made by George, seconded by Vigansky to approve Resolution 2026.04/03, as presented. Roll call votes are carried unanimously.

- B. Resolution 2026.04/04**- A Resolution to submit to the electors a proposal for the renewal of a millage for public transportation purposes (Niles Dial-a-Ride) at the August 4, 2026, Primary Election.

The millage proposal was delayed pending further coordination.

Motion made by Swem, seconded by Money to postpone Resolution 2026.04/04 to the April 27th Regular Meeting. Roll call votes are carried unanimously.

- C. Resolution 2026.04/05**- A Resolution to negotiate the summer school tax collection fee.

Motion made by Swem, seconded by Vigansky to approve Resolution 2026.04/05, as presented. Roll call votes are carried unanimously.

- D. Seasonal Portable Restroom Rental & Service Bid**- Consider approving the Bid to Kerkstra Portable Restroom Service.
The bid was for seasonal park restroom service.
Motion made by Swem, seconded by George to approve the bid to Kerkstra, as presented. Roll call votes are carried unanimously.
- E. RAP Grant**- consider authorizing the City Manager to execute the RAP Grant Agreement from MEDC.
This is to move the city forward by accepting a grant supporting downtown improvements.
Motion made by Swem, seconded by Vigansky, to authorize City Manager McGhee to execute the RAP Grant Agreement. Roll call votes carried unanimously.
- F. Professional Engineering Services Agreement**- Consider approving the USDA-RD Phase 2 project planning document and preliminary engineering agreement.
Preliminary engineering work for upcoming infrastructure projects.
Motion made by George, seconded by Vigansky, to approve the USDA-RD Phase 2 project planning and preliminary engineering agreement, as presented. Roll call votes carried unanimously.
- G. DDA Plan Amendments**- Consider authorizing Clerk Langston to proceed with the notification requirements for the DDA Plan Amendment, as recommended by the Downtown Development Authority, with the Public Hearing to be scheduled for May 26th, 2026, at 7:00 PM.
The DDA approved by Resolution to proceed with the DDA Plan Amendment to the City Commission.
Motion made by Money, seconded by Vigansky to authorize Clerk Langston to proceed with notification requirements for the DDA Plan Amendment and schedule the Public Hearing for May 26th, 2026. Roll call votes carried unanimously.
- H. Budget Amendments**- Consider approving Budget Amendments #2 (FY2025-2026).
Motion made by Swem, seconded by George, to approve Budget Amendments #2, as presented. Roll call vote carried unanimously.
- I. Expenditures** - Consider approving the expenditures for April 13, 2026.
Motion made by Vigansky, seconded by George, to approve the expenditures in the amount of \$76,538.72. Roll call votes carried unanimously.

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

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

Alice Kring from the Fine Arts Council addressed the Commission regarding concerns about parking access behind the Tin Shop Theatre, noting the impact on operations, lack of prior communication, and potential safety concerns related to emergency access.

A representative from Berrien County Cancer Services announced an upcoming fundraiser scheduled for May 21 and provided information about services offered to residents, including support programs and outreach efforts.

Jerry Flenar from the McCoy Creek Trail Group provided an update on trail progress, noting that the trail is approximately 99% complete, and highlighted recent events and volunteer contributions.

Dr. Redding from ALR announced a job fair and open house event, inviting the public to attend and learn more about employment opportunities.

XXV. Executive Comments

A. City Manager Comments

City Manager McGhee provided updates on the downtown project, noting that final punch list items are expected to be completed by mid-May, including tree planting, striping, and light pole painting. He also addressed concerns regarding parking near the Tin Shop Theatre, explaining that restrictions are due to increased activity in the area and structural limitations of the culvert, which is not designed for vehicular traffic. He further noted that upgrading the culvert to support vehicles would require a significant capital investment that is not currently feasible.

B. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner George raised concerns regarding the use of electric bicycles, scooters, and motorized bikes within the city, noting unsafe behavior such as failure to stop at stop signs and operation on sidewalks. He also promoted upcoming community events, including Cleanup Day on May 2, Run Buchanan, Sip Buchanan, and Cruise Buchanan, and encouraged community participation and volunteer involvement.

Commissioner Vigansky commented on the increasing volume of FOIA requests, noting that they create a significant administrative burden on staff and are often for information that is already publicly available. He encouraged residents to seek information through available resources or by contacting commissioners directly before submitting formal FOIA requests.

Mayor Pro Tem Swem commented on the importance of long-term infrastructure planning, noting that past generations did not consistently invest in capital improvements, which has contributed to current system challenges.

Commissioner Money expressed support for the financial planning approach presented, acknowledging the difficulty of rate increases but recognizing their necessity to maintain system reliability and avoid higher future costs.

C. Mayor Comments

Mayor Weedon provided closing remarks, noting that the Commission had covered a significant amount of business during the meeting and acknowledging the length and complexity of the discussion.

XXVI. Adjourn

Motion made by Vigansky, seconded by Money, to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 PM. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

Kalla Langston-Weiss, City Clerk

Mayor Mark Weedon