



DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA)
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2026 – 5:00 PM
CHAMBER OF BUCHANAN CITY HALL - 302 N REDBUD TRAIL, BUCHANAN MI

AGENDA

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**
- II. Pledge of Allegiance**
- III. Roll Call**
- IV. Approve Agenda**
- V. Public Comments - Agenda Items Only** *(3-minute limit)*
- VI. Approve Minutes**
 - A. *Consider the Regular Meeting Minutes from February 11th, 2026.*
- VII. Unfinished Business**
 - A. **TIF & Development Plan**: *Review and consider approving the draft TIF & Development Plan.*
 - B. **Marketing RFP**- *Consider the proposed Marketing RFP to go to bid.*
- VIII. New Business**
 - A. **Farmers Market Presentation**
 - B. **Sip! Buchanan**- *DDA contributing to Sip! Buchanan*
 - C. **Buchanan Equity**- *review of existing loan and direction to staff.*
- IX. Communications**
 - A. **Downtown Flowers**
 - B. **Munchie Monday Flyer**
 - C. **Monthly Finance Reports**
 - D. **Photography Downtown**-*Communication email from Dustin Tam, interest in photographing for DDA efforts.*
- X. Public Comment - Non-Agenda Items Only** *(3-minute limit)*
- XI. Staff/Committee Comments**
- XII. Adjournment**



DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA) REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2026 – 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

Mast called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Mast led in the pledge of allegiance.

III. Roll Call

Present: Capron, Hein, Jones, Williams, Reed, Weedon, Mast, Finan (arrived at 5:05pm)

Absent: Fletcher

City Staff Present: City Manager, Tony McGhee, City Clerk Kalla Langston-Weiss, Planning and Community Development Director Kristen Gundersen, City Accounting Specialist & HR Coordinator Courtney Baham

IV. Approve Agenda

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

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

Clerk Langston-Weiss shared correspondence from Alan Robandt and Joe Paolucci regarding RFPs.

Robandt additionally commented that money should be spent on a professional photographer and they should not exclusively cater to a local market.

VI. Approve Minutes

A. Minutes

- 1) Consider approving the Regular Meeting Minutes from November 12th, 2025.
- 2) Consider approving the Special Meeting Minutes from December 3rd, 2025.
- 3) Consider approving the Regular Meeting Minutes from December 10th, 2025.

Capron moved, seconded by Hein, to approve minutes as presented. Voice vote carried unanimously.

VII. Unfinished Business

A. TIF & Development Plan: Review and consider approving the draft TIF & Development Plan.

Fette presented the draft TIF & Development Plan. They will update with confirmation of the residential modulation, maps, and including relevant attachments from the City’s master plan.

Capron asked about hiring an executive director. Fette answered that it had not been budgeted for, and that at the moment City Staff administer the DDA. In time, if needed by the DDA, a part or full time director could be looked into, though a full time director for a DDA of our size wouldn't be typical. Weedon mentioned that the Chamber has partnered with the Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber and some kind of partnership with the DDA could potentially address that question as well.

Fette shared that the current draft is very heavy on marketing, wayfinding, and downtown signage based on previous feedback. He advised bidding out the marketing in order to see what the actual cost will be and budgeting based on that.

There was discussion of event and development budgeting and what groups contribute.

McGhee suggested a line item for common area improvements in the Downtown, such as benches.

VIII. New Business

A. Resignation of Treasurer - *Consider accepting Treasurer's resignation from the DDA.*

Weedon moved, seconded by Reed, to accept Treasurer's resignation from the DDA. Voice vote carried unanimously.

B. Appointment of Treasurer - *Consider accepting nominations for the position of Treasurer.*

Capron moved, seconded by Jones, to appoint Hein as Treasurer. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

C. Common Concert Series: Michael Rowland & Randy Hendrixson.

Hendrixson was in attendance to represent the Common Concert Series. He presented a brief history of the Common and the community organizations that came together to make it. Downtown businesses rely on the traffic from big event, and the Concert Series brings thousands to Buchanan each summer.

Historically, the City has given the Concert Series \$10,000 annually and the DDA had helped with marketing. They are requesting \$20,000 from the DDA this year. Additionally major upgrades and updates are needed for the Common building. Their current budget for the concert season is \$50,000 and they have received donations for half that.

There was discussion on what upgrades were being pursued and their cost, as well as their endowment and funding. Hendrixson spoke to different strategies at improving the Common space.

D. Marketing RFP: Discussion and Consideration of Draft Marketing RFP.

McGhee presented the draft marketing RFP, which was set up last year by the newly reconstructed DDA. There was discussion of the initial marketing strategy and who the DDA's marketing efforts would target.

Williams mentioned a previous marketing report done by the Cornerstone Alliance and Place + Main about spending leakage and capacity in Buchanan. McGhee will present a final draft at the next meeting.

E. Horizons Leader Publication Ad- *Consider the Horizons Passion in Progress Ad by Leader Publications.*

Horizon had space and asked if the DDA would be interested in advertising. The DDA agreed there wasn't time, especially with their still needing a marketing plan.

F. Michigan Downtown Association Membership: *Consider joining the Michigan Downtown Association Membership.*

Gundersen introduced the MDA Membership. The DDA in St Joseph, where Gundersen previously worked, was a member and found it useful. It is \$250 annually. Capron asked if the training was open to all members, Gundersen confirmed it was.

Capron moved, seconded by Finan, to join the Michigan Downtown Association at a cost of \$250 annually. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

G. Finance Reports: *Monthly Reports.*

Baham presented the DDA's monthly balance sheet, there was only one expense.

H. DDA Banking- *Consider the change of the DDA bank account number to City's current cash management account.*

The City's auditors recommended this change as an operational best practice.

Weedon moved, seconded by Capron, to change the DDA bank account number to the City's current cash management account. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

I. Sip! Buchanan- *Consider collaboration with the Buchanan Area Chamber of Commerce on the Sip! Buchanan Event.*

Hein introduced the Sip! Buchanan event that the Buchanan Area Chamber of Commerce is putting on in May. It has been a goal of the Chamber to bring more events downtown. It is a wine, beer and spirits walk, and will also feature a classic car show and other events for all ages.

Hein is inquiring if the DDA would like to collaborate with them on the event. McGhee suggested forming a subcommittee to help with logistics.

Williams left the meeting at 6:19pm.

Reed moved, seconded by Hein, to create a subcommittee for the Sip!Buchanan event in partnership with the Chamber.

There was discussion on when to meet. McGhee recommended setting a weekly standing meeting at City Hall, with Friday at noon being available. Mast, Hein, and Finan will be on the subcommittee.

Roll call vote carried unanimously.

J. Munchie Mondays-*Discussion*

Munchie Mondays is a summer food truck event that was started by LiveBuchanan. The City and the Chamber have also supported the event. Mast likes the event as it has brought visitors to Buchanan on a day when other restaurants are not open. Langston-Weiss handles the permits for food trucks and suggested changing the hours to focus on lunch, which the board agreed with.

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

Dennis Mori spoke about the Downtown Business Boosters. The group started during the downtown infrastructure project and continues with the goal of driving business downtown. They have a Valentine's Day event, including specials and pop-up events.

They will also have a Saturday St. Patrick's Day event in March, including a duck race and kid's events in downtown businesses. They are looking to support existing organizations and grow as a volunteer group.

X. Staff/Committee Comments

Langston-Weiss shared the end of year Farmer's Market report.

XI. Adjournment

Mast adjourned the meeting at 6:35pm.

Kalla Langston-Weiss, City Clerk

Mayor Mark Weedon

Memorandum



Date: March 5, 2026
To: Buchanan Downtown Development Authority
From: Tony McGhee
Subject: Draft Marketing Services Request for Proposal

Attached for your review is a draft Request for Proposals (RFP) for market analysis, marketing strategy, and media services focused on increasing targeted foot traffic to Buchanan's Central Business District.

This draft is intended as a starting point for discussion and refinement by the DDA, rather than a final document. The goal is to provide a framework that the Board can react to, adjust, and ultimately tailor to best meet the DDA's objectives and available resources.

The intent of this proposed approach is two-fold. First, the tiered budget structure is designed to allow the DDA to compare costs, deliverables, and levels of service at different investment levels. By seeing what is achievable at multiple price points, the Board can make a more informed decision about scope, priorities, and value. Second, by asking respondents to describe their approach and methodologies, the RFP is structured to encourage creative and strategic thinking from proposers. This may result in ideas, tools, or approaches not previously considered by the DDA, and provide insight into how different firms would address Buchanan's market, attraction potential, and downtown character.

The draft also reflects several best practices commonly used by downtown development organizations, including:

- Emphasis on data-driven market analysis to inform marketing decisions;
- Integration of branding, digital presence, media placement, and performance tracking;
- Flexibility to adapt strategies based on measurable outcomes; and
- A clear evaluation framework to support transparent selection.

Memorandum

Staff believes this approach balances structure with flexibility and positions the DDA to receive meaningful, comparable proposals while still leaving room for innovation and refinement.

We look forward to the Board's feedback on the draft, including scope, budget tiers, evaluation criteria, and any additional priorities the DDA would like to see reflected before the RFP is finalized and released.

Please feel free to share comments or questions during the meeting or in advance, as appropriate.

Request for Bids



Project Name:	Discover Buchanan
Project Location:	City of Buchanan – Central Business District
Issue Date:	TBD
Bid Due Date:	TBD

GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Buchanan Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is seeking proposals from qualified firms or consultants to provide market analysis, marketing strategy, and media services intended to drive targeted foot traffic to Buchanan’s Central Business District (CBD). This initiative is part of a broader effort to enhance the visibility, vibrancy, and economic vitality of downtown Buchanan.

Buchanan is located in a region that experiences substantial tourism, particularly during the spring, summer, and fall months. Despite being in close proximity to several popular destinations within the region, the community is not currently capturing a proportionate share of visitor activity and spending. The DDA’s goal is to close this gap by leveraging targeted marketing strategies and coordinated promotional efforts to draw highly targeted visitors to the CBD and encourage them to engage with local businesses, events, and experiences.

The DDA seeks a partner that can assist in understanding the regional visitor market and develop a practical marketing strategy that converts regional tourism into increased visitation and economic activity within Buchanan’s downtown.

SCOPE OF WORK

The selected firm or consultant will work collaboratively with the DDA to complete the following components.

1) Market Analysis

Conduct a market analysis to better understand regional tourism patterns, consumer behavior, and business mix opportunities in Buchanan’s Central Business District.

Respondents must provide pricing and scope for two levels of market analysis services.

Request for Proposals

- **High Level Market Assessment**
This assessment should provide a general overview of regional tourism trends, visitor demographics, and potential visitor markets that may be targeted for Buchanan’s downtown. The analysis may utilize existing regional data sources and publicly available tourism information to provide a high level understanding of opportunities for increasing visitation and engagement in the CBD.
- **In Depth Market Assessment**
This assessment should include a more detailed analysis of regional visitor behavior, target market segmentation, competitive positioning, and specific opportunities for Buchanan’s downtown businesses. This level of analysis may include deeper data analysis, stakeholder engagement, consumer surveys, comparative community analysis, or other research methods that would provide actionable insights to inform marketing strategy and future business recruitment efforts.

Respondents shall provide a separate scope of work and cost estimate for each level of market analysis so the DDA may evaluate and select the appropriate level of service.

2) Marketing Strategy Development

Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy designed to:

- Promote Buchanan’s downtown businesses, experiences, and events
- Target both local residents and regional visitors
- Identify and establish a differentiated brand identity for Buchanan’s downtown
- Recommend specific strategies for converting regional tourism traffic into visits to the CBD

3) Marketing and Promotional Campaign Implementation

Execute marketing and promotional activities which may include, but are not limited to:

- Designing, developing, constructing, and operating a dedicated promotional website titled DiscoverBuchanan.com, (*THIS IS A PLACEHOLDER NAME UNTIL BOARD SELECTS WHAT THEY WANT IT TO BE*) including content highlighting businesses and experiences located within the CBD
- Identifying and negotiating opportunities for internet, print, radio, television, and outdoor media placements that direct targeted visitors to the Discover Buchanan website

Request for Proposals

- Utilizing social media platforms as appropriate, including content development, posting, monitoring, and responding to interactions related to Discover Buchanan messaging and promotions
 - Developing and deploying brand messaging that supports the identity and positioning of Buchanan’s downtown
- 4) Performance Tracking and Reporting
- Track key performance indicators such as audience reach, engagement levels, website activity, visitor interaction, and feedback from downtown businesses. Utilize available analytical tools to evaluate the effectiveness of marketing strategies and adjust campaign approaches as necessary.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must include:

- 1) Firm Background & Qualifications
 - Overview of the firm or consultant, including history, team, and core competencies.
 - Experience with marketing, media purchases, promotions, website development and general business experience;.
 - Relevant examples of similar work.
- 2) Approach & Methodology
 - Description of your approach to conducting both the high level and in depth market analysis
 - Description of your approach to marketing strategy development, digital content strategy, platform selection, and advertising placement
 - Explanation of how your strategy will capture regional tourism traffic and convert it into visits and spending within Buchanan’s downtown
 - Identification of the tools, data sources, and performance metrics that will be used to evaluate effectiveness
- 3) Market Analysis Pricing

Provide separate pricing and scope descriptions for:

 - High Level Market Assessment
 - In-Depth Market Assessment
- 4) Tiered Budget Options

Proposals may outline deliverables and level of service provided at any of the following tiers:

 - Tier 1: \$1,500 per month

Request for Proposals

- Tier 2: \$3,000 per month
- Tier 3: \$5,000 per month

Each budget tier should specify:

- Scope of work
- Frequency of social media content and engagement
- Extent of advertising or boosted content
- Reporting and analytics provided
- Additional services within the tier

REFERENCES

At least two references from previous clients for whom similar work has been completed.

TERM OF CONTRACT

The initial contract term shall be one year, with the option to renew for up to two additional one year terms based on satisfactory performance and mutual agreement between the parties.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated on:

- Demonstrated experience and qualifications
- Creativity and effectiveness of proposed strategies
- Understanding of Buchanan’s market and tourism potential
- Scope and value at each price tier
- Clarity and completeness of proposal
- References and past performance

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- **Deadline for submission:** [Insert Date]
- **Submit via email to:** [Insert Contact Email]
- **Subject line:** “DDA Discover Buchanan Proposal – [Firm Name]”

Please submit your sealed bid by to:

Kalla Langston-Weiss, City Clerk
302 North Red Bud Trail
Buchanan, MI 49107

**For any questions regarding the project,
please contact:**

Tony McGhee, City Manager
tmcghee@cityofbuchanan

Request for Proposals

PLEASE INCLUDE AS THE LAST PAGE OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

PROPOSAL SUBMITTED BY: (PLEASE PRINT)

Company Name

Phone Number

Address

City, State Zip code

Contact Person/Person Submitting Proposal

Email

Signature of Person Submitting Proposal

Date

From: [Tony McGhee](#)
To: [Dustin Tam](#)
Cc: [Kalla Langston](#)
Subject: Re: Interest in photographing for DDA efforts
Date: Monday, February 23, 2026 12:30:51 PM

Thank you for reaching out. We will include information as an item on the next DDA agenda. We are just at the beginning of our marketing and branding efforts with the group, so the timing of the email is good with where they are.

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From: Dustin Tam <dustinjtam@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2026 12:25 PM
To: Tony McGhee <TMcGhee@cityofbuchanan.com>
Subject: Interest in photographing for DDA efforts

Hello,

My name is Dustin Tam, and I am a photographer based in downtown Buchanan. I spend much of my time walking this town with my camera, documenting its architecture, its light, and the people who give it character.

Alan Robandt recently approached me and mentioned there is interest in strengthening Buchanan's visual presence to help attract visitors. After reviewing the New Buffalo Explored website, I believe my work fits naturally within that direction while offering a distinct perspective rooted here.

I am a street and fine art photographer focused on small town communities. My work emphasizes visual harmony between people and place, often through minimal, high contrast imagery that feels authentic rather than staged. Buchanan already has the substance. My role is to reveal it clearly and cohesively.

I would welcome the opportunity to create a curated body of images for the DDA and city to use across web, print, social media, and promotional materials, highlighting storefronts, public spaces, local businesses, and everyday moments that define this town.

Attached are examples of photographs I have taken in Buchanan. My full portfolio can be viewed at <https://instagram.com/still.joy.photography>.











I care deeply about this community and would be proud to contribute to how it is presented. I would be glad to discuss scope and next steps at your convenience.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

-Dustin Tam
(Still Joy Photography)