

City of Buchanan Commission Minutes
January 25, 2021

The regularly scheduled meeting of the City Commission was held via electronic meeting on Monday, January 25, 2021, and was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Mayor Sean Denison. The Mayor led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Recognition

None

Roll Call

Present: Mayor Sean Denison, Commissioners Cameron Downey, Larry Money, Patrick Swem, Mark Weedon

Absent: None

City Staff: City Manager, Heather Grace; City Clerk, Barbara Pitcher; Interim Treasurer/Bookkeeper, Stephanie Powers; Director of Public Works, JT Adkerson; Fire Chief, Mike Adams; Police Chief, Tim Ganus; DPW Staff, Mike Baker; Community Development Director, Rich Murphy; City Attorney, Richard Racht

Guests: 26 online guests including Corilee Scanlon, Don Ryman, John Phoehner, Alan Robandt Mack Green, Alice Kring, Penny Slocum, Dan Vigansky, Kim Moyer, Dixie Detgen, Kenley Penner, Britni McDole, Julie Capron, Jen Tabor

Agenda

Denison stated the addition of two agenda items under New Business; item II.D. Banner Request, and item II.E. Joint Work Session of the City Commission and Planning Commission.

Downey moved, seconded by Weedon to approve the agenda as amended. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

Public Comments (agenda items)

- **Alice Kring** – Spoke regarding the history of the Fine Arts Council and the Tin Shop Theater, requesting the Commission consider continuation of the Theater lease
- **Dan Vigansky** – Spoke in opposition to renting space for the DPW.

Public Hearings/Special Business

None

Consent Calendar

- Approve Minutes: Regular City Commission Meeting, January 11, 2021; Joint Work Session of the City Commission and Planning Commission, January 5, 2021; Fine Arts Council Meeting, December 7, 2020;
- Approve Invoices/Expenditures January 25, 2021 in the amount of \$1,548,983.95.
 - • \$1,443,989.80 is for the progress payment to Davis Construction for the WWTP Oxidation Ditch

Money moved, seconded by Denison to accept the consent calendar as presented. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

Scheduled Matters from the Floor

Plante Moran – Kenley Penner and Britni McDole from the municipal accounting firm Plante Moran presented the results of the City's most recent annual financial audit.

Reports by: Departments, Committees, Boards

Fire Department – Fire Chief Adams presented the department's annual report.

Unfinished Business

Tin Shop Lease Request from Buchanan Fine Arts Council – The Buchanan Fine Arts Council has submitted a request for the City Commission to consider extending their lease of the Tin Shop Theatre under the same terms as previous years. The lease expired in April of 2020. The current terms indicate a term of 60 months and do not seem to include an amount of rent or consideration. This matter was postponed at the last meeting, until such time as the City Attorney has a chance to review the contract and make a recommendation regarding the terms. Attorney Racht indicated more work is necessary and more information will be available to the Commission by the next meeting.

There was no motion on the item.

Guys and Dolls Lease Extension Request – Virginia Reed of Guys and Dolls has requested a one-year extension on her lease at Ross Sanders, which expired on August 31, 2020. She wants to continue the current terms, which are rent of \$450 per month, tenant to pay for water and electric, and the City to pay for heat and replacement or repair of HVAC units. This matter was postponed at the last meeting, until such time as the City Attorney has a chance to review the contract and make a recommendation regarding the terms. Attorney Racht indicated more work is necessary and more information will be available to the Commission by the next meeting.

There was no motion on the item.

Treasurer Position – Larry Nielsen has shared another update regarding the Treasurer position posting, recommending that the Commission consider paying to re-post the position on the MML website through the end of January, and that if no additional applications are received at that time, that the Commission consider naming Acting Treasurer Stephanie Powers as the City's official City Treasurer.

Grace suggested partnering with a CPA firm to support Powers while she gains the knowledge and experience necessary through formal training as well as job shadowing with other Treasurers; approximately two years. Grace stated she is extremely confident in Power's ethics and ability to fully take on the Treasurer role given the opportunity as discussed. The Commission would like to see a cost benefit analysis and expressed that Larry Nielsen's services should be discontinued at this time.

Swem moved, seconded by Money to postpone until cost benefit analysis for engaging a CPA firm can be reviewed. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

New Business

408 River Street – An opportunity regarding a potential lease or sale of property that could be used to store DPW equipment was presented involving property at 408 River Street, owned by G2

Developments of Michigan, LLC (7 Engines). City Manager Grace met with Rob Spengler of the G2 board over the weekend and would like to explore various options the week of January 25.

There was no motion on the item.

700 E. Third Street – At the request of the Commission, Manager Grace entered into negotiations with Bill Green regarding his building at 700 E. Third Street, to see if the property might be available for use by the City to store DPW equipment until a new DPW building can be constructed. A 2-year lease at \$15,000 per month for the first year, with monthly costs adjusted in the second year as per the consumer price index, with an option to purchase at the end of the lease for a total price of \$1.5 million.

Weedon moved, seconded by Money to not move forward with a lease agreement. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

Edgewater Bank Lease – The City Attorney reviewed this lease and advised Manager Grace there when a tenant gives notice of breach, it is a requirement by the City to mitigate damages by seeking another tenant. Grace indicates she is hesitant to do so as the Commission needs to determine the long-term plan for the property, such as leaving the Police Department in the building and leasing the other portion to a commercial tenant, or selling the property.

Swem moved, seconded by Weedon to postpone a decision on the Edgewater Bank Lease until after the Joint Work Session of the City Commission and Planning Commission on February 4, 2021. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

Banner Placement – Consider the placement of a banner advertising the Boy Scouts Annual Swiss Steak Dinner fundraiser on February 6. This year's event will be take-out only.

Money moved, seconded by Downey to approval banner placement for the Boy Scouts Annual Swiss Steak Dinner fundraiser. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

Joint Work Session – Consider scheduling a joint work session of the City Commission and Planning Commission on Thursday, February 4, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. via electronic meeting.

Denison moved, seconded by Swem to schedule a joint work session of the City Commission and Planning Commission on Thursday, February 4, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. via electronic meeting. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

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

Virtual Capital Convention Meeting – The Michigan Municipal League (MML) is inviting elected municipal officials to attend the 2021 Capital Convention. Pricing ranges from \$75-\$150 per attendee, depending on how many sessions are attended. Tuesday March 16th – 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Wednesday March 17th 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Information will be shared regarding legislative updates, the state budget, Covid-19 updates, and much more.

Urban Design Studio Steering Committee- A proposed list of potential Steering Committee Members, as well as potential Stakeholder Group Leaders, has been discussed and prepared administratively upon the recommendation of Professor van Maur. Since not all potential members have been contacted yet, the list will be presented prior to the meeting, after all potential members have privately verified their

interest in potentially being involved in the project.

MEDC on Updated Covid-19 Restrictions – The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) shared a communication indicating that Covid-19 Restrictions in Michigan will be modified as of February 1st in the following way:

- Indoor Dining will be allowed, with certain precautions;
- Non-residential gatherings of up to 10 people from two households will be allowed.

Public Comment (non-agenda items)

- **Penny Slocum** – Shared appreciation for the City Manager and the Commission.
- **Dan Vigansky** – Spoke regarding Scheduled Matters from the floor; if an item doesn't arrive by Wednesday before the agenda, it doesn't go on the agenda.
- **Jen Tabor** – Stated it was great to hear Commission's conversation.

Executive Comments

- **City Manager Grace** – Shared and update on the walking tour with Andrews students – featured on ABC57. It is especially nice to see their top story focused on economic development in Buchanan. Thanked Murphy and students.
- **Commissioner Swem** – We have a lot of work ahead of us. Complete the survey if you haven't. Noted great attendance from the community and thanked them for their support.
- **Commissioner Downey** – None.
- **Commissioner Weedon** – Stated he appreciates everyone's input. The Commission needs time to make decisions. Dialogue and feedback makes us better.
- **Commissioner Money** – Stated it is great that the community is taking the opportunity to voice their opinions. The City can be proud of the Commissioners they elected.
- **Mayor Denison** – Responded to Dan Vigansky's comment regarding last minute additions to the agenda. Requests should be submitted in writing to the Clerk and the approval of such request remain within the discretion of the Mayor. As much as he doesn't like getting last minute information, all the information is an indication that of how busy things are downtown. There is a lot going on and a lot of interest in Buchanan and every time ABC57 or any other media shows up in town, all it does is spike interest. Bring it on! Let's do more. It's exciting. Buchanan is moving in the right direction. Thanked everyone for attending.

Adjourn

Downey moved, seconded by Money to adjourn. Roll call vote carried unanimously. Mayor Denison adjourned the meeting at 8:37 p.m.

Barbara A. Pitcher, City Clerk

Mayor Sean Denison