



REGULAR MEETING OF THE BUCHANAN CITY COMMISSION
MONDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2026 – 7:00 PM
CHAMBER OF BUCHANAN CITY HALL - 302 N REDBUD TRAIL, BUCHANAN MI

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

Mayor Weedon called the Regular Meeting of the Buchanan City Commission to order at 7:00 PM.

II. Recognition

III. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

IV. Invocation- Nate Babcock

Invocation was given.

V. Roll Call

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

Absent: None

City Staff Present: City Manager Tony McGhee, City Clerk Kalla Langston-Weiss, Planning & Community Development Director Kristen Gundersen, Director of Public Works Mike Baker, Chief of Police Harvey Burnett

VI. Approve Agenda

Motion made by Commissioner Money, seconded by Commissioner Swem, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

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

There were no public comments.

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

A. Minutes- Consider the Regular **Amended** Meeting Minutes from September 28th, 2026.

B. Department Head Reports: Accept monthly reports.

C. Board and Committee Appointments: Appointment of Heather Strasser as an Alternate Member of the Downtown Design Review Committee and Dustin Strasser to the Zoning Board of Appeals, each for a three-year term.

The Commission briefly discussed the Downtown Design Review Committee appointment and agreed to leave the item on the Consent Agenda.

*Motion made by **Mayor Pro Tem** Swem, seconded by Commissioner George, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, with the September 28, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes amended to include additional comments from Commissioner George. Motion carried unanimously.*

IX. Scheduled Matters from the Floor (if any)

X. Reports by: Departments, Committees, Boards

The Commission acknowledged the reports included in the meeting packet. Commissioner Vigansky raised questions regarding licensing requirements for motorized vehicles and electric bicycles. A brief discussion followed regarding the classification and registration requirements for electric bicycles and mopeds.

XI. Unfinished Business

XII. New Business

A. Amendment to As-Needed Sidewalk Repair Contract with Astrong Construction: *Consider authorizing the City Manager to amend the existing As-Needed Sidewalk Repair contract with Astrong Construction for up to an additional 4,000 square feet of sidewalk removal, disposal, replacement, and related work at \$15.00 per square foot, in an amount not to exceed \$60,000, increasing the total authorized contract amount to \$116,200*

McGhee presented a proposed amendment to the existing As-Needed Sidewalk Repair Contract with Astrong Construction. The amendment would authorize up to an additional 4,000 square feet of sidewalk removal, disposal, replacement, and related work at \$15.00 per square foot, for an additional amount not to exceed \$60,000.

McGhee explained that the City's 50/50 Sidewalk Replacement Program had been well received by residents and that the additional authorization would allow the City to continue addressing outstanding sidewalk repairs. He noted that the proposed pricing was consistent with current market rates and that upcoming work would include an emphasis on school routes.

The Commission discussed the success of the program, resident participation, future funding, and the possibility of continuing the program in subsequent budget years.

Motion made by Commissioner Vigansky, seconded by Commissioner George, to authorize the City Manager to amend the existing As-Needed Sidewalk Repair Contract with Astrong Construction for up to an additional 4,000 square feet of sidewalk removal, disposal, replacement, and related work at \$15.00 per square foot, in an amount not to exceed \$60,000, increasing the total authorized contract amount to \$116,200.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Weedon, Vigansky, Money, Swem, George. Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Riverfront Park Bid Award – St. Joseph River Access Site Improvements (Phases 1 & 2): *Consider awarding the base bid for the St. Joseph River Access Site Improvements (Phases 1 & 2) to Astrong Construction LLC in the amount of \$619,100 and authorizing the City Manager to execute the contract and related documents, subject to final review of required bonds, insurance, and contract documents.*

McGhee presented the bid recommendation for Phases 1 and 2 of the St. Joseph River Access Site Improvements. The project includes improvements to the boat launch, installation of an accessible canoe and kayak launch, boardwalk improvements, protective structures, and associated parking and site improvements.

McGhee explained that the project had been rebid following an initial round of bids that exceeded the City's budget. Working with the engineering team, modifications were identified to reduce costs while maintaining the project's intended improvements. The revised bids were within the established budget.

The Commission discussed the competitive bidding process and the City's purchasing policies.

McGhee explained the requirements for obtaining quotes and sealed bids and the procedures used to ensure transparency in the bidding process.

Motion made by Commissioner Money, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Swem, to award the base bid for the St. Joseph River Access Site Improvements (Phases 1 & 2) to Astrong Construction LLC in the

amount of \$619,100 and authorize the City Manager to execute the contract and related documents, subject to final review of all required bonds, insurance, and contract documents.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: George, Weedon, Vigansky, Money, Swem. Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Resolution 2026.10/20 – Water Supply System Improvements and Notice of Intent to Issue

Revenue Bonds: *Consider adoption of Resolution 2026.10/20 authorizing the City to proceed with water supply system improvements, including lead, galvanized, and other service line replacements, and authorizing publication of a Notice of Intent to issue Water Supply System Revenue Bonds in an amount not to exceed \$2,500,000.*

McGhee presented Resolution 2026.10/20, authorizing the City to proceed with water supply system improvements, including lead, galvanized, and other service line replacements, and authorizing publication of a Notice of Intent to Issue Water Supply System Revenue Bonds in an amount not to exceed \$2,500,000.

McGhee requested that the motion also include authorization to engage Dickinson Wright as bond counsel for an amount not to exceed \$21,500.

The Commission discussed the anticipated financing terms, including the possibility of approximately 10% loan forgiveness and a 0% interest rate, pending final confirmation from the State. Discussion also included state and federal requirements for lead service line replacement, available funding opportunities, and the importance of long-term infrastructure planning.

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Swem, seconded by Commissioner Money, to adopt Resolution 2026.10/20, authorizing the City to proceed with water supply system improvements, including lead, galvanized, and other service line replacements, and authorizing publication of a Notice of Intent to Issue Water Supply System Revenue Bonds in an amount not to exceed \$2,500,000, and to engage Dickinson Wright as bond counsel in an amount not to exceed \$21,500.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Weedon, Vigansky, Money, Swem, George. Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

D. Expenditures: *Consider approving the Expenditures in the amount of \$172,919.59*

The Commission reviewed expenditures totaling \$172,919.59.

Commissioner Vigansky requested clarification regarding the purchase of emergency tourniquets for the Police Department. City Manager McGhee explained that the equipment was intended for officers' emergency response kits and emphasized the importance of having lifesaving equipment readily available.

Commissioner Vigansky also raised concerns regarding the financial and administrative costs associated with ongoing Freedom of Information Act requests and related legal expenses. He requested that staff compile an estimate of the costs and staff time associated with these matters for public awareness.

The Commission discussed the financial impact of FOIA processing, legal review, and related litigation on City resources. Mayor Pro Tem Swem noted that discussions had taken place with other municipalities and representatives of the Michigan Municipal League regarding similar challenges faced by local governments. He indicated a preference for waiting until after the scheduled November 4 court hearing before issuing a formal public statement regarding ongoing litigation.

Commissioners expressed concern regarding the use of taxpayer funds and the amount of staff time required to process requests. It was clarified that legal review was being utilized to ensure compliance with FOIA requirements. Staff indicated that an approximate accounting of related costs and time could be provided.

Motion made by Commissioner Vigansky, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Swem, to approve expenditures in the amount of \$172,919.59.

*Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Vigansky, Money, Swem, George, Weedon. Nays: None.
Motion carried unanimously.*

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

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

Police Chief Harvey Burnett reported on the department's participation in the annual Faith in Blue initiative, during which officers visited several area churches to strengthen partnerships with local faith-based organizations.

Bruce Larson invited the community to attend a presentation at the Buchanan District Library on November 5, 2026, at 6:00 PM, regarding the annual Buchanan historical calendar. The presentation will include information about the calendar's creation and local history.

Mary Gilbert asked the Commission candidates to identify the greatest challenges facing Buchanan over the next four years and the potential barriers to addressing those challenges.

An additional public comment reminded residents of upcoming Halloween activities and encouraged contributions of candy for community events.

XV. Executive Comments

A. City Manager Comments

B. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Vigansky thanked SMCAS and the Buchanan Police Department for their assistance during a recent personal emergency. He also reminded residents not to blow leaves into the roadway and encouraged attendance at the Pears Mill water wheel rededication.

Commissioner George thanked the Buchanan Chamber and event organizers for the successful Chili Walk and recognized downtown businesses and the Police Department for their response to the recent scarecrow incident. She congratulated City staff on Buchanan's recognition as a finalist for the Michigan Municipal League Community Excellence Award and reminded the community of the Fire Department blood drive scheduled for October 16.

In response to a question raised during public comment, Commissioner George identified continued infrastructure improvements, particularly streets and sidewalks, as major challenges facing the City over the next four years. She emphasized the importance of continuing to advance these projects throughout the community. She also asked about the City's leaf collection process, and staff explained the use of vacuum equipment for collection.

Commissioner Swem reminded residents that Trek the Trail and Halloween activities would take place on October 31. He congratulated recipients of the Buchanan Chamber's annual awards and discussed changes to the Chamber's leadership and future focus. He also thanked those involved in the City's Michigan Municipal League presentation and encouraged fellow Commissioners to begin considering priorities for the upcoming budget and strategic planning session.

Commissioner Money congratulated Chunk's on another successful season.

C. Mayor Comments

Mayor Weedon thanked City Manager McGhee, City Clerk Langston-Weiss, and the City team for their work preparing for and participating in the Michigan Municipal League Community Excellence Award presentation.

In response to the question raised during public comment, Mayor Weedon identified housing availability, rising development and financing costs, and continued street and sidewalk improvements as significant challenges facing the City over the next four years. He discussed the importance of maintaining a variety of housing opportunities and continuing the City's long-term infrastructure planning efforts.

Mayor Weedon also reflected on the progress made in improving the City's planning, budgeting, and meeting processes.

XVI. Adjourn

Motion made by Commissioner Money, seconded by Commissioner Vigansky, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:48 PM.

Kalla Langston-Weiss, City Clerk

Mayor Mark Weedon