



Date: 4/30/2026  
To: City Commission  
From: Kalla Langston-Weiss, City Clerk  
Subject: Summary of Minutes for Board/Commission - March 2026

### **One Buchanan**

The One Buchanan Board reviewed several committee updates, including a successful Mental Health Forum that received strong community feedback and led to discussion about continuing mental health programming in future years. Members also discussed the upcoming One Book, One Buchanan selection process, a possible rescheduling of a Give Back Night, participation in the June 13 concert concessions, and an August 15 Farmers Market bake sale. Marketing materials, including a new tablecloth, were received and used at events. The board reviewed the 2026 scholarship process and approved two \$500 scholarships, awarding Danica Taylor as the primary recipient and Evelyn DeGraff as a second recipient. Additional approvals included \$100 for Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber membership, up to \$50 for blank checks, \$75 for a One Buchanan scarecrow, and \$124.68 to reimburse Jennifer Popielski for Mental Health Forum snacks. The board also agreed to support Adam's t-shirt sales and provide brochures at the June 28 Pride Festival rather than hosting a separate booth.

### **Downtown Development Authority (DDA)**

The Downtown Development Authority met and approved the draft TIF and Development Plan, recommending it move forward to the City Commission for adoption. The DDA also approved the proposed Marketing RFP and several funding requests, including \$20,000 for The Common Summer Concert Series, \$1,212 for Buchanan Business Boosters publication advertising, and \$2,000 for Run Buchanan for the Parks. The Board discussed whether to create a Common oversight subcommittee for organizations such as the Common Committee, Farmers Market, Tin Shop Theatre, and Fine Arts Council, but postponed consideration until December 2026 and discussed instead receiving regular reports from funded organizations. Updates were also provided on the Buchanan Equity loan matter, Sip Buchanan planning, and monthly finance reports.

### **Planning Commission**

The Planning Commission met and continued discussion on several Unified Development Code updates, including fencing, lighting, screening, landscaping, tree preservation, sign regulations, parking standards, clear sight lines, and the possible creation of a Planned Unit Development process. Staff also provided an update on the Master Plan process, noting that the public survey remains open, approximately 135 responses have been received, and the June 9 Planning Commission meeting is expected to be used as a public open house/workshop. The Commission generally

supported continued refinement of ordinance language for fences, lighting standards, screening requirements, green infrastructure, and landscaping thresholds. Sign ordinance discussion focused on refining language for vehicle signs, illuminated window and door outlines, roof signs, and possible “iconic sign” provisions. Under new business, the Commission discussed clear sightline measurements, parking and loading standards, and the value of creating a PUD process to allow more flexibility for mixed-use and larger-scale developments. The Commission also discussed the Downtown Design Review Committee, including its decision-making role, appeal process, consistency of standards, painted brick concerns, and the possibility of adding alternate members. Staff will continue refining these items and bring proposed language back for further review.

## **BARB**

Buchanan Area Recreation Board meeting, members reported that local parks were generally in fair condition and preparing for spring cleanup, heard from Sinclair Recreation about Kathryn Park playground equipment and approved a burgundy, blue, and chartreuse color scheme, and expressed support for exploring pickleball as part of Buchanan’s recreation plan if funding becomes available. The board also finalized plans for the May 2 Spring Clean Up, including requests for DPW brush pickup and mulch and a short opening speech from the City Manager or Mayor, recommended Brian Kill for a three-year board appointment ending in June 2029, received board training from Clerk Langston-Weiss on meeting practices and subcommittee transparency.

## **Buchanan Tree Friends**

The board approved the April agenda and March minutes, reviewed a current balance of \$4,792 plus \$5,000 in the City budget, and approved applying for a \$25,000 IRA/DNR grant to support planting, removals, and equipment, despite low priority status after prior funding. Members also discussed recruitment materials, tribute tree planning, spring planting logistics for multiple city sites with a volunteer planting date of April 26, fall planting on 3rd Street, ongoing budgeting coordination, Arbor Day planning at Buchanan Middle School, and future fundraising and volunteer efforts. Old and new business included Tree City recognition, development of recommended and prohibited tree lists for the City, promotion of the Michigan Community Tree Species Selection Guide, a volunteer opportunity with Trees Across Berrien, and possible rescheduling of meetings to the fourth Tuesday beginning in July 2026

## **Friends of McCoy Creek Trail**

At the April 16, 2026 Friends of McCoy Creek Trail Board meeting, members approved the prior minutes and agenda, received public comment about possible future support from the Huizenga Family Foundation for extending the trail toward the Indiana-Michigan River Valley Trail, reviewed finances including dues income, 501(c)(3) application costs, and 5K race planning, and heard updates from City Manager Tony McGhee on grant efforts, construction corrections, trail-extension issues, and ownership questions affecting the route near Lehman’s Farmhouse and Chunks. The board also

discussed trail signage and nonfunctioning QR codes, scheduled inmate work crews and a cleanup day for April 25, noted upcoming events including Salmon Scramble and Trek-or-Treat, reviewed community bench and tree projects, and agreed that brochures need updating and reprinting before the next meeting on May 21, 2026, at City Hall.

### **Buchanan Area Fine Arts Council**

The Buchanan Area Fine Arts Council met on April 6, 2026, at the Tin Shop Theatre. The Council reviewed updates on upcoming productions, including *Welcome Back to Ivy Gap*, May Reader's Theatre, and *Disney Descendants*, with auditions scheduled in early May and performances planned for July 31 through August 3. The Council also discussed ongoing facility and marketing items, including upstairs prop storage, signage progress, and postcards/brochures being ready to print. A proposed December show by Stephen Kaldwell was accepted pending written details. The Council also reviewed grant-writing procedures and noted that the City should be informed before any State of Michigan or similar grant applications are pursued to avoid conflicts with City grant efforts. The Council briefly nominated Raquell George as vice president, but that vote was later rescinded due to a conflict of interest with her role as City Commissioner. The meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM.

### **Southeast Berrien County Landfill Authority**

The Southeast Berrien County Landfill Authority held its regular board meeting on March 18, 2026. The Board approved the consent calendar, including the agenda and February 18 meeting minutes, and received reports from the Finance and Operations Committees. The Board approved the February 28 balance sheet, income statement, and check registers for February 28 and March 5. The Operations Committee recommended, and the Board approved, the purchase of a spare SBR pump from Kennedy Industries for \$20,855 and repairs to the Hub and Auxiliaries for Unit #12 from Total Energy Systems for \$21,368. General Manager comments included that Kras would coordinate a tour date for the Brehen Landfill location for April 29, 2026, that secondary cell water gain should not be a major issue unless another wet year occurs, and that the next month's leachate disposal would likely be high. The meeting adjourned at 6:00 PM.

### **SMCAS**

The Southwestern Michigan Community Ambulance Service Board reviewed and approved the February 19, 2026 meeting minutes, February 2026 Financial Reports, and the check register, including Checks 29746–29788 totaling \$91,227.26 and ACH expenditures totaling \$112,449.19. The Safety Committee had no update, and Brian Scribner presented both the February aging report and the Director's Report. Key updates included that the service is fully staffed, the newest ambulance order is expected to arrive in June, Redde HR and Paylocity rollout efforts are underway with

site visits and weekly meetings, merger discovery is continuing, call volumes increased, and on-time performance was reported at 91%. No action items were listed.

### **DRC**

The Design Review Committee met on April 9, 2026, at City Hall and reviewed an application for exterior modifications to 108 W. Front Street for the future Brick & Bloom business. The Committee discussed proposed changes including replacement of the front door, window replacements, removal of the awning, signage, rear deck and rear overhead door improvements, ADA-accessible rear entrance, and painting of the building exterior. After discussion, the Committee approved the proposed modifications with conditions, including using original door hardware where possible, using 4/4 replacement windows if possible, ensuring sign wording fits appropriately, and not painting any limestone. The motion passed with two yes votes, one no vote, and one abstention. The Committee also reviewed draft Downtown Design Review Committee bylaws and related Unified Development Code sections but postponed both items to the next regular meeting for further review. The meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM.

**Friends of Oakridge Cemetery- No meeting**