

MINUTES

THE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF BUCHANAN, in compliance with Michigan’s Open Meetings Act, hereby gives notice of a special meeting of the Buchanan City Commission to be held in the Chamber of City Hall.

** Requests to be added to the agenda as a “Scheduled Matter from the Floor” should be submitted in writing to the City Clerk at least 5 business days prior to the scheduled meeting during which the speaker wishes to appear, and the approval of such requests remain within the discretion of the Mayor. If denied, the speaker may nonetheless speak during the “non-agenda items only” public comments section of the agenda.*

** Those who are unable to appear during a meeting but who still wish to share public comment may submit such comments in written form to the City Clerk at least 4 hours in advance of the meeting.*

** Individuals with disabilities may request necessary reasonable accommodations by submitting requests to the City Clerk, preferably at least 24 hours in advance.*

** Written requests and comments may be submitted to the City Clerk either in person or via mail to Buchanan City Hall, 302 N. Redbud Trail, Buchanan, MI 49107, or via email to clerk@cityofbuchanan.com*

I. Call to Order

Denison called the meeting to order at 8:01 A.M.

II. Roll Call

Present: Mayor Sean Denison, Mayor Pro Tem Mark Weedon, Commissioner Cameron Downey, Commissioner Larry Money, Commissioner Patrick Swem

City Staff: City Manager Heather Grace, City Clerk Kalla Langston, City Bookkeeper Courtney Baham

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

None

IV. New Business

Agenda was amended to add in VI. Executive Comments. Motion made by Weedon, seconded Money to approve the amended agenda. Roll Call vote carries unanimously.

A. Treasurer Position

The HR subcommittee each gave their recommendations on the 2 candidates. Discussion between Commissioners and City Staff about each candidate qualifications.

Motion made by Weedon, seconded by Money to authorize the City Manager to make an offer of employment to Deborah Perez.

Yes: Weedon, Money, Denison

No: Downey, Swem

Motion Carries

B. Closed Session-

1. Consider Entering Closed Session pursuant to MCL 15.268 Sec.8(1)(d) and (h) to consider the purchase or lease of real property.

Motion made by Denison, seconded by Weedon to enter closed session at 8:44 AM. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

2. Consider Re-Entering Open Session

Motion made by Weedon, seconded by Money to re-enter open session at 8:55 AM. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

3. Consider Action based on Closed Session Discussion

Motion made by Weedon, seconded by Downey to approve the recommendation made in closed session for the City Manager. Roll call carried unanimously.

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

None.

VI. **Executive Comments**

A. City Manager Comments

Grace thanked Swem and Downey for being a part of the HR committee. We could have not gotten to this point without their willingness to join. Also thanked the Commission at large for coming to the special meeting to address this. This is a position that is important to the team and the longer its open the more it costs the taxpayers for paying consultants. The comments that were made today have been very helpful and she appreciates the feedback and support for the new hire. Grace would like her to come to the next meeting for her to introduce herself to the Commission. Again, you can never make a guarantee about a person, but Grace feels strongly that she will be the final capstone to making this team what it is.

B. Commissioner Comments

Money, dittoing Grace by thanking Swem and Downey for taking the time on the HR subcommittee. I appreciate everything this commission has done. I think everything we're doing is for the better.

Downey, wanted answers about Plante Moran invoicing. He believes they don't add up or match up from the invoice and calendar. He would like to show Grace and maybe she can help fill in some of the gaps. Grace is more than happy to follow up on that and get further information. All the commissioners would like more of an understanding of what the charges are.

Swem, believes it's a loud statement to move against the recommendation of the interview committee from the Commissioner standpoint. He was disappointed at that, for him we will be weighted heavily of the success of this individual. It is a very big deal.

Weedon, understanding where Swem comes from on the other side. Weedon is not apologetic for it he trusts that the interviews and the experience you had dictated your vote, and respects that. He was on the fence as usual. He believes it was a right decision since he is a team manager. We all must eat that if it's a mistake as a city. Wishes Ms. Perez the best and hopes she brings things to the table as much as we anticipate we think she will. I hope that 2 no votes are solidified by her handling the position.

C. Mayor Comments

Denison is directing his comments to his fellow commissioners this morning. It's been weighing on his mind. He believes the commission needs to do some reflecting on themselves. He is very proud of the things they have done as a Commission and of the people that we have hired; Rich and Heather have proven themselves and couldn't be happier with the outcome. But as leaders and a City Commission we don't have anyone other than the voters to give us a job review or to tell us how we're doing. And it falls upon us to do some self-reflecting and be humble enough to say what are we doing right, what are we doing wrong and what could we be doing better. So, I ask us as a commission are we being the best commission we can be? Are we being the best bosses and managers we can be? And I think we must

be humble enough to say we don't know everything. We all want wants best for the City and were pushing very hard to be effective and getting things done and we do have a strong agenda. With several projects, we are working on. I'm very proud of that however I'm seeing things that are raising red flags for me and it concerns me. Concerned enough to be talking about this morning. There are 2 red flags, one of them being overworked employees. I'm seeing emails from staff at all hours of the night, which worries me. I'm hearing that employee are working all night and day without going home. I'm hearing people working late evenings and Sunday.

The other red flag is when the city administration brings us their plans to improve their jobs, we are not listening. I have always tried to hire smart, talented people with skills and if they don't have skills but have work ethic, I can teach them skills. And I am proud to say that we have done that. We have hired good people here. As a manger the next thing I try to do is provide the equipment, the resources, to allow those people with skills to be effective at there job. And if I do that everyone wins. The last thing I try to do as a manager is respond to situations when something happens. I try to put myself in the position of how I would want my manager to react. The only reason why I am saying this is because it has worked for me in the past as a manager. How does that tie into the City, my concerns are not just with sitting Commission or these employees it has to do with setting a precedent with future Commissions and City staff. In my view the role of City Commission is to set legislative and policy trajectory of the City. We hire good people, which I believe we have done that. We aim the ship where we want it to go, which we have done that, they are working toward the things we want them to work toward. And we need to get out of there way. Running the city is what they do, its not what we do. None of us have municipal experience, they do, and we need to put weight behind what there telling us. When they ask for things, we need to listen. I believe we are micromanaging the people we selected to run the City and were ignoring there pleas for help. Last week Jill asking us for less window hours to complete work and it's not because they want to have a party, they want to be able to get their work done. I have serious concerns about burning people out or frustrating them to the point where they leave then we must start at ground zero again. We have put a lot on there plate and were asking them to do a lot. We need to hear their pleas for help and listen to them when they come to us. If we can stop micromanaging and let them do their jobs, I think two things will happen. One they will get more done because they are not chasing everything we have them doing. Which will let them focus and get things done. Two I think for moral reasons that they will not be so stressed at work, if they are happier at work, they are going to be more productive. There are times when I can feel the stress in Grace's voice because she's being pulled in every different direction with the target constantly changing. At some point we are stepping over dollars to get to dimes in some sense. I think that if we could just back off City administration and staff and let them do what they do. They will call us when they need our input or help, rather than us constantly telling them we want them to do this and that. We need sit back and think how were working as a commission. I think were good, but I think we can be better. Please consider how we can be.

VII. Adjourn

Motion made by Weedon, seconded by Money to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 AM. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

Kalla Langston, City Clerk

Mayor Sean Denison