

CALL TO ORDER

The regular March 5, 2015 meeting of the Buchanan Township Board of Trustees was called to order by Supervisor Malinda Cole-Crocker at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Malinda Cole-Crocker, Supervisor; Cathy Ganus, Clerk; Janet Dehring, Treasurer; and Lynn Ferris and Thomas VanAntwerp, Trustees.

Members Absent: None.

Others Present: Juli O'Bryant, City of Buchanan Treasurer and Bill Housand, City of Buchanan Wastewater employee; three (3) township residents; no staff; and no members of the press.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The *Pledge of Allegiance* was recited by those in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the February 19, 2015 regular meeting was approved as presented.

ADDITIONS / CORRECTIONS TO AGENDA

None.

BRIEF PUBLIC COMMENT – AGENDA ITEMS

None.

SHERIFF'S REPORT – No one present.

CITY OF BUCHANAN UTILITY BILLING 7% RATE INCREASE

Juli O'Bryant and Bill Housand from the City of Buchanan were present to provide an overview on the utility billing rate increase of seven percent (7%) for both Buchanan City and Buchanan Township residents.

O'Bryant went over the proposed revenues and expenditures for the upcoming year. VanAntwerp questioned why the fringe benefit packages were 43.61% of the sewer budget package and 50.17% of the water budget package because typically fringe benefits equate to approximately 25-30% of the overall budget.

O'Bryant advised that each year the Water and Wastewater Departments provide their anticipated budgets based on a visioning session for the upcoming year. This year it is estimated that approximately \$2,000,000 will be required to operate the Water and Wastewater plants efficiently. As a result of an increase in expenditures, the City felt it was necessary to apply an increase of seven percent (7%) across the Board for all users of the system. It should be noted that Buchanan Township residents pay seventeen percent (17%) more in water and sewer rates. Ferris questioned this. Housand explained that it is based upon the fact that the City of Buchanan residents have made the initial infrastructure investment when the plant was built and at that time Township residents were not receiving water and sewer services; therefore, Township residents were assessed a greater percentage to assist in the infrastructure repair/replacement for use of the system.

CITY OF BUCHANAN UTILITY BILLING 7% RATE INCREASE (continued)

O'Bryant provided an example using a baseline of 5,000 gallons of water consumption as follows:

City Residents				Township Residents			
Revenue Type	Current Rates	Proposed Rates	Increase	Revenue Type	Current Rates	Proposed Rates	Increase
Water	\$ 3.50	\$ 3.75	\$ 0.25	Water	\$ 4.08	\$ 4.37	\$ 0.29
Sewer	\$ 6.32	\$ 6.76	\$ 0.44	Sewer	\$ 7.40	\$ 7.92	\$ 0.52
Ready-to-Serve (residential)	\$ 18.10	\$ 19.37	\$ 1.27	Ready-to-Serve (residential)	\$ 21.18	\$ 22.66	\$ 1.48

Currently Buchanan Township supplies 12% of Buchanan City's customer count (228 out of 1,900 customers).

Motion by VanAntwerp, second by Ferris, to approve the proposed seven percent (7%) increase to Buchanan City water and sewer rates including ready-to-serve effective July 1, 2015 as presented. Roll call vote showed unanimous approval, motion carried (5-0).

CORRESPONDENCE

Benton Charter Township Building Code Reference Standards Update

As reported earlier, the State of Michigan is requiring all jurisdictions that perform their own inspections to prove they have access to the State's reference standards code books. A full set of said books costs in excess of \$30,000. Cole-Crocker advised that 30 communities within Berrien County have expressed interest in pooling together to purchase a set of books to be placed in a centrally located area within Berrien County with each of the 30 communities having access to the reference standards code books.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Motion by Dehring, second by Ganus, to approve General Fund check # 9510 to and including check # 9537 totaling \$25,732.48 as well as Fire Fund check # 5787 to and including check # 5807 totaling \$5,137.90. Roll call vote showed unanimous approval, motion carried (5-0).

REPORTS

Fire Report - Cathy Ganus - on file

Pumper truck # 630 is having differential issues. One of the differentials is completely out of service and the other is grinding. Costs for repairs total \$3,503.92.

Motion by Ganus, second by VanAntwerp, to approve the repair of the differentials in pumper truck # 630 per the quotation provided by Great Lake Repair, Inc. in the amount of \$3,503.92. Roll call vote showed unanimous approval, motion carried (5-0).

SEBCL Report - Mindy Cole-Crocker

Cole-Crocker advised that the new pumps purchased in November, 2014 for pushing more leachate to the City of Buchanan Wastewater Treatment Plan are not working as well as the old pumps. The service company who installed the pumps has advised the Landfill to replace an air valve with the understanding that the air valve had never been replaced and was the likely culprit for the pumps not performing efficiently. The air

REPORTS (continued)

SEBCL Report – Mindy Cole-Crocker (continued)

valve was replaced on March 3, 2015; however, it did not correct the pump problem. A recommendation was made to change the size of the impellers within the pumps.

Berrien County Road Commission Township Annual Meeting Update – Mindy Cole-Crocker

Cole-Crocker advised that she and Ganus attended the Berrien County Road Commission Township Annual Meeting on March 4, 2015. The Road Commission has advised that all culverts in the Township which are 18” and under will be repaired by the Road Commission at their cost. Also the Road Commission will no longer reimburse residents for damage to mailboxes thought to be cause by snow plows.

The Road Commission now has a service request module on their website for reporting service requests. Citizens as well as Township officials may use this service. There is also a mobile app available for Apple and Android users. The website address is <http://www.bcroad.org/Service Request.html>.

Ganus questioned if the Road Commission was going to reinstitute the mowing of road sides within the Township as there had been several areas this past year with vision obstruction due to high grassy areas. They advised that their equipment had failed and they anticipate replacements will be put into service this year and they will be implementing this once again.

The Road Commission also provided a projected 2015 road improvements listing as well as a projected 2016 road improvements listing. Fiscal year 2015-20 proposed road improvement equate to Township share of \$41,900, Road Commission share of \$76,500, with the final amount being \$121,600, which is a project involving N. Main Street, which is to be paid with by NATS funds.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

FY 2015-2016 Draft Budget Presentation

General & Fire Fund

Ganus went over the draft budgets for the General Fund and the Fire Fund. Discussion ensued. Final budget presentations will be provided prior to the March 19, 2015 Annual Meeting of the Electors. Tentatively the General Fund shows revenues and expenditures of \$492,046.95 and the Fire Fund shows revenues and expenditures of \$154,564.07.

Planning Commission Appointment / Re-Appointment

Motion by Dehring, second by Cole-Crocker, to appoint Scott Albright to the Planning Commission for a one-year term expiring 04.01.2016 and re-appoint John Pitz to the Planning Commission for a two-year term expiring 04.01.2017. Voice vote showed unanimous approval, motion carried (5-0).

Chemical Bank – Online Banking & Direct Deposit

Ganus reported that she would like to begin using direct deposit for payroll purposes. She has made contact with Chemical Bank. There is a base fee of \$4.98 per month to use the direct deposit feature as well as a transaction fee of \$0.30 per employee paid. This fee would be charged to the Township, not the employee. (Example: average payroll of 30 employees would be \$4.98 plus \$9.00 for a total of \$13.98 per month). This is an attempt to rectify the check reconciliation process as there are checks carried as unreconciled due to the

NEW BUSINESS (continued)

Chemical Bank – Online Banking & Direct Deposit (continued)

employee not cashing their payroll check in a timely manner. Chemical Bank has assured that there are separation of duties options in place wherein the clerk could initiate the payment and then the treasurer would release the funds. Ganus has created a direct deposit agreement form for each employee to complete.

Buchanan Township Planning Commission Private Road Recommendation

At the regular February 25, 2015 meeting of the Buchanan Township Planning Commission, the Commission made a motion of recommendation that the Buchanan Township Board of Trustees revisit the private road ordinance. This ordinance was previously introduced to the Board of Trustees in 2006 as a police power ordinance; however, at that time the Board felt that the ordinance was too restrictive and requested that Township counsel review and revise; however, this has not happened.

Ganus questioned whether Deputy Treasurer Tina Darnell was currently taking notes for the Planning Commission. Dehring had previously served as Secretary to the Planning Commission; however, William Braun was appointed as secretary at the February 25, 2015 PC meeting.

At the beginning of the PC meeting, Ganus was present to swear-in new board members. At that time Dehring had not arrived to take minutes so the PC requested Ganus to take the minutes. Ganus offered to be notetaker once again; however, Ferris stated he was opposed to paying someone to take notes when there was a secretary on the Board being paid to do this. Ganus advised it was very difficult to participate in meetings and take minutes as well and this has always been the process, at least since her election in 2004. Dehring will assist Braun in the note taking as she currently serves as the Township Board representative to the PC.

Appointment of Gerald DiPietro as Planning Commission Representative to Zoning Board of Appeals

Motion by Ganus, second by Dehring, to appoint Gerald DiPietro as the Planning Commission representative to the Zoning Board of Appeals with term expiring 04.01.2018. Voice vote showed unanimous approval, motion carried (5-0).

RFP Contracted Lawnmowing Services

This item was not discussed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Daylight Savings Time this Saturday/Sunday Move clocks ahead 1 hour and change your smoke alarm batteries
- Buchanan Township Board of Review Appeal Hearings March 9th and March 12th
- Buchanan Township Firefighters Fish Fry – April 11, 2015 3:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

CITIZEN COMMENTS – NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Township resident Mario Palmisano questioned why the Township was reviewing a dangerous and exotic animals ordinance.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Cathy A. Ganus
Buchanan Township Clerk