

CALL TO ORDER

The regular July 11, 2013 meeting of the Buchanan Township Board of Trustees was called to order by Supervisor Jane Mitchell at 7:00 pm.

Members Present: Jane Mitchell, Supervisor; Cathy Ganus, Clerk; Janet Dehring, Treasurer; and Lynn Ferris and Thomas VanAntwerp, Trustees.

Members Absent: None.

Others Present: Tim Gray, SMCAS Director; Larry Lamb, Niles City Fire Chief; Brian Wisneski, Gerbel & Company; two (2) township residents, eight (8) staff, and no members of the press.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The *Pledge of Allegiance* was led by Fire Chief Tim Jesswein.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the June 20, 2013 meeting was approved as presented.

ADDITIONS / CORRECTIONS TO AGENDA

None.

BRIEF PUBLIC COMMENT – AGENDA ITEMS

None.

SHERIFF'S REPORT

There was no representative present to give the report.

GERBEL & COMPANY AUDIT PRESENTATION

Brian Wisneski of Gerbel & Company, PC presented the audit report for fiscal year ending March 31, 2013. Wisneski advised that the audit was very clean (which is what is expected) and the Township is in good financial shape.

SMCAS PRESENTATION – “BREAKING DOWN THE WALLS”

Tim Gray from SMCAS and Larry Lamb from Niles City Fire presented the “Breaking Down the Walls” PowerPoint presentation regarding the creation of a joint Fire/EMS district between Buchanan Township, Niles Charter Township, Bertrand Township, Buchanan City, Niles City, and Milton Township, which includes 250 square miles of coverage area.

[Dehring arrives at 7:10 pm.]

Gray and Lamb stressed that this presentation is a concept plan only. They are seeking a grant in the amount of \$3.2 million for a consultant review of the plan to see if the plan has merit. The cost for the consultant is expected to be in the \$65,000 range and the remaining funds would go towards purchasing the equipment currently held by all of the municipalities. Ganus questioned the fact that Buchanan Township has just renewed the special voted fire millage for Buchanan Township residents and this would not expire until

SMCAS PRESENTATION – “BREAKING DOWN THE WALLS” (continued)

2017. Gray advised that the process is expected to take some time so that question will be addressed after an assessment has been provided by the consultant. Ganus also questioned whether it would be legal for the Fire/EMS district to purchase the equipment and pay the Township as the equipment was purchased with special voted fire millage funds which are designated for fire service only – the Township could not simply place those in the General Fund. This issue will have to be addressed after the consultant review.

Goals, cost savings, new organization strengths, and service improvements were addressed. It was noted that there is a potential savings for the City of Buchanan in that should a Fire/EMS district be created, this would negate the City’s need to construct a new fire station. Bertrand Township will also receive a benefit as they would then be able to sell an asset in their business district, which would give them a return on their investment as well as get the property on the tax rolls (fire station two).

Gray and Lamb then answered questions from the audience as well as the Board. Questions ranged from full-time firefighters to EMS personnel and benefits for same. Paid on-call firefighters will all be retained under the proposed plan.

CORRESPONDENCE

*SWMPC “Our Wetlands at Work” – 07.17.2013 – 6:30 pm – Love Creek Nature Center – Open to the Public
Scrap & Abandoned Tire Recycling Collection – July 29-31, 2013 – 8:30 am to 12:00 each day
City of Buchanan “Celebrate the Water” – July 15, 2013 – 6:30 pm @ Centennial Park*

TREASURER’S REPORT

Motion by Dehring, second by Ganus, to approve General Fund check # 8726 to and including check # 8754 totaling \$31,258.18 as well as Fire Fund check # 5286 to and including check # 5314 totaling \$12,762.92. Roll call vote showed unanimous approval, motion carried (5-0).

REPORTS

Fire Report – Tim Jesswein

Motion by Mitchell, second by Ferris, to appoint Josh Fager as a probationary firefighter for a one (1) year period. Voice vote showed unanimous approval, motion carried (5-0).

Planning Commission Update – Janet Dehring

Dehring advised that the Planning Commission is working on proposed ordinance text amendments regarding wineries, breweries, and distilleries as well as an amendment to include a rural salvage district.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Invoice from City of Buchanan – Lift Station Repairs

Ganus had previously received an invoice from the City of Buchanan regarding lift station repairs in the amount of \$5,600.90; however, no backup documentation was included. Contact was made with the City and the information was emailed a week later by City Treasurer Juli O’Bryant and a couple errors were noted from the first invoice. An additional invoice in the amount of \$1,146.25 was also included in the emailed version.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS (continued)

Invoice from City of Buchanan – Lift Station Repairs (continued)

Previously when Township lift stations needed work, the City would notify the Township in advance and then the company performing the work would invoice Buchanan Township directly; however, this is not the current protocol. There is no communication between the City of Buchanan Public Works and the Township.

Ganus expressed displeasure with the fact that the invoices ranged in date from September 5, 2012 to current. It is understandable that if there is an emergency situation that repairs would be made; however, a follow-up courtesy call to the Township is not unreasonable. The entire package of invoices were all services that were incurred in the previous fiscal year. VanAntwerp volunteered to draft a letter to the City for the next meeting.

Motion by VanAntwerp, second by Mitchell, to approved the payment of the invoices from the City of Buchanan for Township lift station repairs and monitoring in the amount of \$6,933.25. Roll call vote showed the following: VanAntwerp, yes; Mitchell, yes; Dehring, yes; Ferris, yes; Ganus, no. Motion carried (4-1).

NEW BUSINESS

Revised Costs – Berrien County Road Commission – Reed Road Project

Previously the Township Board approved the quotation from the Berrien County Road Commission for the Reed Road project which entailed pulverizing the existing pavement and adding an eight-inch gravel base. Total cost for the project was \$40,000. The Road Commission has since reviewed the soil borings and felt that a geotextile blanket needed to be used to prevent the silty loam from contaminating the proposed gravel base course, which resulted in an increase in the amount of \$15,003.80.

Motion by VanAntwerp, second by Mitchell, to approve the amended cost of the Reed Road project in the total amount of \$55,003.80. Roll call vote showed unanimous approval, motion carried (5-0).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Boater's Safety – Buchanan Township Fire Department – July 13, 2013

CITIZEN COMMENTS – NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Mitchell advised she had received an official report from a Berrien County Sheriff's Department representative that there were 22 investigations handled with no known traffic issues arising out of the Red Bud Motocross Nationals event. This year the traffic flow was coordinated in a way that it took approximately one and one half hours as opposed to two and one half to three hours in the past after the races were over.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:56 pm.

Cathy A. Ganus
Buchanan Township Clerk