CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE
TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES SPECIAL MEETING
2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, MI 48390
Tuesday, October 13, 2026, 5:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER: Clerk Creech called the Township Board of Trustees Special Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

At the request of Supervisor Gray, Clerk Creech would like the Board to appoint Trustee Rick Sovel as Interim Chairperson.

MOTION by Creech, supported by Gray, to appoint Trustee Rick Sovel as Interim Chairperson for tonight's meeting. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

ROLL CALL: Present: Larry Gray, Supervisor
Melissa Creech, Clerk
Katelyn Massey, Treasurer
Rick Sovel, Trustee
Bob Berkheiser, Trustee
Robert Long, Trustee
George Weber, Trustee

Also Present: Dave Campbell, Planning Director
Jim Dundas, Fire chief
Mario Gibbons, Ordinance Manager
Natalie Hiney, Interim HR/Finance Director
Jay James, PE Building Official
Ben Sebrowski, IT Director

ITEM 1: Public Comments
Interim Chairperson Trustee Sovel opened Public Comments.
Seeing none, Interim Chairperson Sovel closed Public Comments.

ITEM 2: 2027 Township Budget Discussion
Interim HR/Finance Director Natalie Hiney presented the proposed 2027 budget for the HR/Finance Department. She said there were minimal changes and those were mostly to reflect the increase in insurance costs.

Trustee Berkheiser asked if she needs to fill the HR/Finance Assistant position?

Interim Director Hiney said yes, absolutely.

ITEM 2: 2027 Township Budget Discussion continued
IT Director Ben Sebrowski presented the proposed 2027 budget for the IT Department. Going forward he said he would like to include penetration testing on the Township's networks to identify any potential vulnerabilities and he wants employees to adopt the use of a password manager to combat password fatigue. Additionally, one server and firewall are slated to be replaced and he wants to replace the old camera system at fire station no. 3. His proposed budget also includes regularly schedule PC replacement and he wants to upgrade the WIFI infrastructure at Township Hall. Currently there is a dead zone in the Clerk's Department.

Ordinance Manager Mario Gibbons presented the proposed 2027 budget for the Ordinance Department. He would like to bid out the grass cutting contract and update CLEMIS access. Additionally, he added 2 new vehicles because the one currently shared by the ordinance enforcement officers is a 2009 Equinox. The funds for the purchase of a new vehicle would come from the Building Department's budget.

Planning Director Dave Campbell presented the proposed 2027 budget for the Planning Department. He said the proposed budget remains mostly the same as the 2026 budget with the addition of a few increased amounts for items such as dues, fees, and subscriptions. Additionally, he would like to change the associate planner position to a planner coordinator which would have more of a clerical role and a lower task expectation in the department.

PE Building Official Jay James presented the proposed 2027 budget for the Building Department. He said most of the items are contractual.

Fire Chief Jim Dundas spoke about the costs of adding 6 additional fire fighters to the department.

Both Trustee Berkheiser and Trustee Sovel presented separate and different spreadsheets regarding fund balance and costs over time in order to determine if the fund balance supports hiring 6 fire fighters and future capital outlay costs at 2.6 mills or 2.8 mills.

A discussion followed regarding the extremely high cost of equipment, the current millage end date, the benefit to residents, whether to phase in hiring more fire fighters, the ALS service, whether to look at refurbishing equipment rather than buying new equipment, and if a 20-year equipment replacement schedule makes sense for the amount of use the equipment receives.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Sovel, supported by Creech, to adjourn the meeting at 6:53 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Melissa Creech

Melissa Creech, Clerk
Charter Township of Commerce