

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE  
TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES QUARTERLY MEETING  
2009 Township Drive  
Commerce Township, MI 48390  
Tuesday, October 22, 2024, 7:00 p.m.**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Supervisor Gray called the Township Board of Trustees Quarterly Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:** Present: Larry Gray, Supervisor  
Melissa Creech, Clerk  
Molly Phillips, Treasurer  
Rick Sovel, Trustee  
George Weber, Trustee

Absent: Bob Berkheiser, Trustee  
Vanessa Magner, Trustee

Also Present: Katelyn Massey, HR/Finance Director  
Jim Dundas, Fire Chief

**ITEM 1: Public Comments**

Supervisor Gray opened Public Comments. Seeing none, Supervisor Gray closed Public Comments.

**ITEM 2: Bruce Aikens – 5 & Main Update**

Supervisor Gray introduced Bruce Aikens. Bruce Aikens said residential is speeding along and sewer and power are maintaining their schedules. Grading and land balancing is happening now. A project of this scope required a \$5 million infrastructure investment and allows him to move forward in phases and also allows him to obtain financing. Some of the phases will be closed on this spring with construction starting next fall. He's been working on the hotel and the mix of retail which includes an up-scale market, restaurants, and residential.

He said COVID delayed the project and some of his committed tenants leased in other projects. The project will have 2 main phases, each made up of multiple smaller phases. At this point he is getting tenant commitments and once there are enough tenants committed then it's possible to obtain financing.

**ITEM 3: 2025 Budget Discussion**

Trustee Sovel said that unfortunately there's been a rather large increase in cost for the health insurance plan. Usually the Township budgets for an 8% to 10% increase and this year it came in at a 30.3% increase which equals an increase in the Township's premium of \$251,671.56, based on current staffing levels. The Fire Department

**ITEM 3: 2025 Budget Discussion continued**

accounts for over half of the premium increase. He will be reaching out to partners to try to contain some of these premium costs. The Township needs to select an HMO, a PPO, and the HSA plan. The Board needs to approve the plan selection and then open enrollment can begin for the employees. He proposed that the Township move forward with Simply Blue PPO with the \$250.00 deductible, Simply Blue PPO HSA, and the Blue Care Network HMO 20% Plan. He reminded the Board that the Township has already agreed to pay 90% of the premium with the employees paying 10%.

**MOTION** by Sovel, supported by Weber, to approve the Township healthcare plans for 2025 as Simply Blue PPO with the \$250.00 deductible, Simply Blue PPO HSA, and the Blue Care Network HMO 20% Plan with the Township paying 90% of premium costs and the employees paying 10% of premium costs.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Supervisor Gray said the Board needs to look at the 2 new proposed job descriptions for the Associate Planner position and the Code Enforcement Manager. The HR Department rewrote the Associate Planner job description and included specific job duties and responsibilities.

**MOTION** by Weber, supported by Sovel, to accept the Associate Planner job description and provide the Township Supervisor the authority to begin the job search.

Trustee Sovel asked if a salary range has been created for the position. Supervisor Gray answered that it was initially \$55,000 and the Director would like to increase it to \$60,000 for 2025 and it was included in the Planning Department's proposed 2025 budget at \$60,000.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Supervisor Gray said he would also like the salary to be \$55,000 to \$60,000 for the Code Enforcement Manager position. The job description was also updated.

**MOTION** by Gray, supported by Creech, to approve the job description for the Code Enforcement Manager position.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Supervisor Gray asked the Trustees to look at all the evaluations he did on the directors and to rate the directors based on meets, exceeds, or is below standards.

The Board discussed the evaluations and salary increases for the directors.

**ITEM 4: Other Matters**

Trustee Weber –He said Public Act 233 is getting more press. This is the one where the state legislature took away all local authority regarding renewable energy such as windmills and solar panels. Several municipalities are contributing to the fight against this act and he doesn't know if the Board has had any discussions regarding this. He wants to know if the Board should discuss it with the Township attorney.

**ITEM 4: Other Matters continued**

Treasurer Phillips said she learned last week that Groveland, Springfield, and either Addison or Independence Township have joined the law suit against the State. She offered to reach out to the Groveland Treasurer for more information.

Supervisor Gray will also reach out to the MTA.

Trustee Weber- The Outrun Hunger event is soon.

Treasurer Phillips- Heads up that Oakland Schools is no longer doing our tax bill printing. We are jumping through a lot of hoops trying to find someone who will print a 10,000-page PDF file onto our color-coded tax statements. It means we lose the back page; which no one reads anyway. Do any Board members have thoughts on this?

Trustee Sovel asked how that affects any SAD notices included in the tax bill mailings. Treasurer Phillips answered those are printed by a different company and can still be included in the mailing. She is waiting on quotes from 2 companies but she anticipates that the cost will increase significantly with best guesses at this point in time at around 25%. Last year the Township paid \$18,500 and she projected \$25,000 for this year.

Clerk Creech asked if the bills have to be color coded?

Treasurer Phillips said that color coding decreases confusion and errors made by tax payers.

Trustee Sovel suggested getting 2 quotes, one for color coded and one for non-color coded bill printing. Treasurer Phillips said she will do so.

Treasurer Phillips- She is still working with Jay James to verify the garbage roll. He is working on verifying that ones that have multiple garbage's are actually duplexes.

Trustee Sovel- Priority Waste has been on time for 2 weeks in a row. On Hazardous Waste day, people have asked why they don't take electronic devices. Clerk Creech said those items aren't considered hazardous and they were taken in the past as a courtesy. Trustee Sovel would like the Township to find a company willing to take electronic devices and have them participate in hazardous waste day.


Supervisor Gray- Priority Waste is back on track. I'm only getting a call or 2 a week now. They did move from a 4 day pick up week to a 5 day pick up week, Monday through Friday.

The next meeting is November 12, 2024.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** by Creech, supported by Phillips, to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

  
Melissa Creech, Clerk  
Charter Township of Commerce