

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE
TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
May 12, 2026
2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390**

CALL TO ORDER Clerk Creech called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

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

Also Present: Hans Rentrop, Township Attorney
Jason Mayer, Giffels Webster Engineers
Dave Campbell, Planning Director
Jim Dundas, Fire Chief
Emily England, Parks and Rec/Senior Director
Katelyn Massey, HR/Finance Director
Jay James, Building Official
Sgt. Matt Leggat, Oakland County Sheriff's Office
Natalie Hiney, HR/Finance Assistant
Ben Sebrowski, Director of Technology
Mark Schoder, Maintenance Director
Max Griffin, Assessment Administration Services, LLC
Andy Miller, Deputy Building Official

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Phillips, supported by Creech, to approve the April 14, 2026 Regular Township Board Meeting minutes, the April 14, 2026 Closed Session minutes, as submitted and the April 28, 2026 Quarterly Township Board Meeting minutes with a correction to Page 13, Item 6 OTHER MATTERS, change "The camera bids came in at \$20,000." to "The camera bids came in \$20,000 higher than budgeted."

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 1:5-12 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Phillips, supported by Creech, to approve the May 12, 2026 agenda, as presented. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

ITEM 2:5-12 PUBLIC COMMENTS

Interim Chairperson Sovel opened Public Comments and advised the public that speaking time is limited to three (3) minutes. This is for public comments only and not for comments regarding the public hearings on the agenda.

Hal Wolfe, 8717 Buffalo Drive, Commerce Township, Michigan said he attended the Planning Commission meeting discussion on data centers in the Township took place. He wants there to be a clear difference between industry and A1 data centers. He said that he had worked at Williams International and they have a data center and they are self-contained and they take care of their own. There will be a millage proposal on the August ballot to assess 1.5 mill on every piece of property in the county. House Bills 5529-5532, 5581-5585, are in the State House right now. These bills would strip out local zoning control.

Interim Chairperson Sovel closed Public Comments.

ITEM 3:5-12 BOARD APPOINTMENTS

A. Mark Giromini – Appointment to the Parks and Recreation Committee for a 4-Year Term Ending May 31, 2030

Mark Giromini was present.

Trustee Berkheiser asked Mr. Giromini what he would bring to Commerce Township.

Mr. Giromini said he is on the Wolverine Lake Council and liaison to their Parks and Recreation Committee. He would like to see more engagement between Wolverine Lake and Commerce Township. He would like to see shared ideas and concerns.

Trustee Weber said Mr. Giromini is one of the most highly respected members of the Wolverine Lake Council.

MOTION by Berkheiser, supported by Phillips, to Appoint Mark Giromini to Parks and Recreation Committee for a 4-Year Term Ending May 31, 2030.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 4:5-12 CONTRACT AWARDS AND AGREEMENTS

A. Pontiac Trail and Beck Road Water Main Contract Award

Jason Mayer Giffels Webster said a total of 7 bids were received. He recommends the contract be awarded to the low bidder, Bidigare Contractors.

Trustee Berkheiser asked what the projected amount of the project was.

ITEM 4:5-12 CONTRACT AWARDS AND AGREEMENTS (Pontiac Trail and Beck Road Water Main Contract Award continued)

Jason said the construction estimate was \$1,390,000.

Trustee Weber would like to see the amount of the original budget, time frames and final costs included in his summary of projects.

MOTION by Weber, supported by Creech, to approve up to \$1,202,000 for the Pontiac Trail and Beck Road Water Main Project. The contract shall be awarded to the low bidder Bidigare Contractors. Funds to come from the Water Fund.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 5:5-12 INTRODUCTIONS

A. Code of Ordinances Amendment 1.077 – Water Cross Connection

Township Attorney Hans Rentrop said F&V Operations is requesting a further amendment to Code of Ordinances Amendment No. 1.077 to establish standards for testing and certification of backflow prevention assemblies as part of the Township's cross-connection control program.

MOTION by Berkheiser, supported by Weber, to Introduce an Ordinance to Amend the Code of Ordinances, Charter Township of Commerce, Oakland County, Michigan to be Known as Code Amendment Ordinance No. 1.077. Post and publish according to law.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 6:5-12 PURCHASES

A. Parks Security Cameras

Director of Technology Ben Sebrowski and Parks and Rec/Senior Director Emily England were present to recommend the purchase of Parks Security Cameras from Integrated Controls and Equipment (ICE). Total equipment and installation cost is \$71,650. Ongoing costs are \$160 per month for cellular connectivity. There is a 1-year warranty on installation/equipment directly from ICE and a 10-year warranty on equipment from the manufacturer. The cameras will be placed at Victory Park (Mickies Dog Park), Bicentennial Park, Dodge Park (Scarlet's Smile), and Richardson Center (Pickleball Courts). The goal is to eventually, if needed, expand cameras in all Township parks using the same vendor. This will enhance public safety, deter vandalism, support law enforcement and improve real-time situational awareness through modern, scalable surveillance technology.

MOTION by Berkheiser, supported by Creech, to approve the purchase and installation of Parks Security Cameras from Integrated Controls and Equipment (ICE) (Quote 8012 Dated 4/1/2026) at a cost not to exceed \$72,000.00. Funds to come from Parks.

Discussion Trustee Weber –

- Is a 30-day retention of footage enough time? Ben answered yes, it is. We can archive it forever as long as we retain the footage within 30 days.

ITEM 6:5-12 PURCHASES (Parks Security Cameras continued)

- Router monthly fee of \$40-\$50. Is that normal? Ben answered yes. The fee is a cellular charge.
- Licensing is \$100 on an annual basis or we could buy a 5-year license. Ben said we should budget for five years if everything works to our satisfaction after the first year.
- Warranty is 1-year parts and labor and it says there is up to a 10-year warranty from the camera manufacturer but it is based on the license. Will the license we buy give us the 10-year coverage? Ben said yes, the cameras have to be continually licensed which we need to do to save footage in the cloud. The license gives us unlimited firmware updates and upgrades the AI features.
- How far away could you recognize a person vandalizing the park. Ben said the images are very good.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

B. BS&A Cloud Tax, Assessing, and Special Assessment Modules

Director of Technology Ben Sebrowski and Assessor Max Griffin discussed the Township's contracts with Oakland County to use their BS&A databases for Tax, Special Assessments, and Assessing. Oakland County is still on their old .NET platform that BS&A is planning to sunset. This is forcing the county to move towards BS&A's cloud platform. It has been made clear to us that Oakland County plans to pass the costs of their migration on to the CVTs that remain on their shared database. We are proposing that we begin the process of moving off of the shared Oakland County database onto our own, standalone instances of these three modules. Attached is a migration quote from BS&A. We need to move to our own standalone version.

Ben said the funds would come out of the Building Department Budget. They are asking for \$11,900 due upon execution and the next payments could come from the 2027 budget.

MOTION by Berkheiser, supported by Creech, to approve the Proposal for Software and Services for BS&A Cloud Upgrade at a cost not to exceed \$12,000. Funds to come from the Building Department Budget. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

ITEM 7:5-12 OLD BUSINESS

A. Proposed Abandonment of a Portion of Marshalsea Drive and a Portion of Mario Drive – Tabled 2-10-2026

MOTION Weber, supported by Creech, to remove Proposed Abandonment of a Portion of Marshalsea Drive and a Portion of Mario Drive from the Table.

Long voted no

MOTION CARRIED

Building Official Jay James said the property owner decided not to move forward.

ITEM 7:5-12 OLD BUSINESS (Proposed Abandonment of a Portion of Marshalsea Drive and a Portion of Mario Drive – Tabled 2-10-2026 continued)

Planning Director Dave Campbell said the petitioner asked for the one year hold because he has to have a survey done and obtain a legal description. The Road Commission for Oakland County approved his request for a one-year hold.

No action taken

ITEM 8:5-12 NEW BUSINESS

A. Bogie Lake Residential Conditional Rezoning Agreement

Planning Director David Campbell said the petitioner proposes to conditionally rezone the assemblage of properties from R-1A & R-2 to R-1D to develop a 46-unit single family residential site condominium. The Planning Commission recommends approval.

Jim Maher, President, Bogie Lake Holdings, LLC was present along with Mike Noles, Sr. Vice President, The Umlor Group

Trustee Berkheiser does not see a benefit to Commerce Township and its residents to approve the rezoning.

David Campbell said they are offering to put in a dog park for the benefit of the residents of the neighborhood. He said 4 of the 7 properties are currently zoned for duplexes and the other 3 properties are zoned for large lot single family. The developer's team may contend they are proposing something of a middle ground between the duplex zoning and the large lot zoning in the form of the single-family small lot zoning, which is more consistent with the Township's Master Plan.

Discussion ensued on the amount of traffic from the number of homes/duplexes if the zoning was changed or stayed the same, fire suppression for homes vs emergency gates (secondary access).

Trustee Weber said the it was the desire that we not have emergency gates because they were more difficult to maintain.

Mike Noles, Umlor Group, representing Jim Maher said this is compliant with the Township's Master Plan. The Master Plan calls for 49-50 units and we are proposing 46 units. Commerce Township requires rezonings of this nature to be conditional. This is not a PUD, RUD, or PRO zoning where it's a requirement to bring a public benefit so that you can trade off ordinances. This is a straight zoning. We are going to meet all of the R-1D requirements for this site. Benefits to the community are the dog park (not required under R-1D straight zoning), getting rid of an eyesore (obsolete building) on the property and two residential houses on the property, pedestrian connectivity, sidewalks on both sides of the road and across the frontage. Each home will have fire suppression systems.

Trustee Berkheiser – How is the dog park a benefit to the community?

ITEM 8:5-12 NEW BUSINESS (Bogie Lake Residential Conditional Rezoning Agreement continued)

Mr. Noles – R-1D zoning does not require a public benefit for a condition of a rezoning.

Trustee Berkheiser – I disagree with you. The first requirement of a conditional rezoning is it will benefit public interest. Traffic is also a concern. I realize you had a traffic study done but have you driven there at 7:00 am or 3:00 pm? Traffic is terrible.

Interim Chairperson Sovel said he is concerned about density.

MOTION by Weber, supported by Phillips, to approve PCZ#25-01 a conditional rezoning petition by Bogie Lake Holdings, LLC for Bogie Lake Residential, a single-family site condominium residential development of 46-units upon the property consisting of seven parcels on the south side of Bogie Lake Road. All seven properties would be conditionally rezoned from R-1A (One Family Residential) and R-2 (Attached Residential) to R-1D (One Family Residential).

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Weber, Phillips, Creech, Long, Gray

NAYS: Berkheiser, Sovel

MOTION CARRIED

B. Zoning Map Amendment 3.068

Township Attorney Hans Rentrop said based on the above Motion to rezone the property, the Zoning Map needs to be amended.

MOTION by Weber, supported by Phillips, to approve an Ordinance to Amend the Zoning Map of the Charter Township of Commerce, Oakland County, Michigan as Adopted by Zoning Ordinance 3.000, to be Known as Zoning Amendment Ordinance No. 3.068.

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Weber, Phillips, Creech, Long, Sovel, Gray

NAYS: Berkheiser

MOTION CARRIED

C. Resolution – West Nile Virus Fund Expense Reimbursement Request

MOTION by Berkheiser, supported by Creech, to approve the Resolution Authorizing West Nile Virus Fund Expense Reimbursement Request.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 8:5-12 NEW BUSINESS (continued)

D. Resolution – Authorizing Ballot Language for a New Pathway Bond

Township Attorney Hans Rentrop said this is the final version.

MOTION by Berkheiser, supported by Weber, to approve the Resolution of The Township Board of The Charter Township of Commerce Authorizing Ballot Language for a New Pathway Bond.

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Berkheiser, Weber, Creech, Long, Sovel, Gray

NAYS: Phillips

MOTION CARRIED

E. Byers Boardwalk and Bridge

Emily England Director of Parks and Recreation/Senior Services said the Parks and Recreation Committee recommends moving forward with repairing and upgrading the bridge at Byers.

Trustee Berkheiser said the bridge has holes in the decking. There is 6-8" between the railing height of the bridge and the railing height of the boardwalk leading away from the bridge. There are safety issues with the old bridge. The steel frame of the bridge is thought to be in good shape, we thought it would be beneficial to the park for safety reasons and matching aesthetics.

Trustee Weber said the walkway that was built is brand new and rock solid. Do we want to tear down the railing purely for aesthetics? I think the bridge needs to be replaced. I think the new wood of the bridge will match the new walkway. Don't you think after a couple of years of weathering it won't be as aesthetically unpleasing?

Trustee Berkheiser said this Board decided they did not like the spindles going down, they thought it was hiding the park. I think the bridge needs to match the boardwalk.

Trustee Long said he was the one that brought the aesthetics to light. It looks like a privacy fence and does not match the historic settlement. I also brought up the fact there is a prison fence around the historic cemetery. That is why I suggested we pick 2-3 people to be on a sub-committee to review aesthetics, I think we should give this a shot. We can always revisit it later in a different budget year. I would like to see no action at this time. I would support option 2 or 3 but I prefer to take no action at this time.

MOTION by Berkheiser, supported by Phillips, to move forward with the Byers bridge and boardwalk Option 2: Replace the decking and handrail on the existing bridge and install the same handrail profile at a cost not to exceed \$15,000. Funds to come from Parks.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 8:5-12 NEW BUSINESS (continued)

F. Consent to Change of control – Priority Waste, LLC

Township Attorney Hans Rentrop said Global asset manager, TPG, will be acquiring a controlling equity interest in Priority. This requires the prior written consent of the Township, as the change in equity ownership constitutes an assignment per the language of the “Contract for Residential Solid Waste, Recycling, and Yard Waste Collection, Transportation, Processing and Disposal Services” (“Original Contract”), entered in 2019 between the Township and GFL Environmental USA Inc. (later assumed by Priority). The language of the Consent to Change of Control is consistent with the terms of the original contract.

Mr. Brett Quitquit, Manager of Municipal Sales for Priority Waste, said there will be no change in management or at the higher up level. TPG will invest money with them so they can hire more people, purchase parts to repair trucks, etc.

Maintenance Director Mark Schoder is requesting 25 trash containers and 25 recycle containers to replace what was taken from the parks.

MOTION by Berkheiser, supported by Creech, to approve the Consent to Change of Control, Priority Waste. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

G. Fire Station 2 Repaving Project

Fire Chief Jim Dundas is asking the Township Board to approve replacement of pavement for parking lot and sidewalks for Fire Station 2.

MOTION by Long, supported by Berkheiser, to approve the replacement of pavement for parking lot and sidewalks for Fire Station 2. Funds to come from the Fire Department 2026 Budget for Capital Improvements.

Trustee Long is there a way to be discreet and not let the bidders know in our meeting minutes or elsewhere how much money is available. Discussion ensued.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

H. Resolution – Authorizing Issuance of Special Assessment Bonds – Island Club Paving SAD

Township Attorney Hans Rentrop said this Resolution authorizes the issuance of bonds.

MOTION by Sovel, supported by Phillips, to approve the Resolution to Authorize Issuance of Special Assessment Bonds, Series 2026 (Limited Tax General Obligation) (Federally Taxable).

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Sovel, Phillips, Creech, Weber, Berkheiser, Long, Gray

NAYS:

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 8:5-12 NEW BUSINESS (continued)

I. Resignation Letter – Molly Phillips, Township Treasurer

MOTION by Creech, supported by Berkheiser, to accept the resignation letter from Treasurer Molly Phillips effective June 30, 2026 at the close of the business day.

Discussion – Trustee Long said this comes with great mixed emotions, we are happy for you but it is sad for the citizens. I have known every Treasurer in Commerce Township since I was a small child. There were good ones and there were mediocre ones, and you, by far, for the past 60 years have been the best!

Trustee Berkheiser said Molly has done a great job.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 9:5-12 ORDERS AND ADD ONS

MOTION by Phillips, supported by Creech, to approve the orders and add ons.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 10:5-12 OTHER MATTERS

Trustee Long –

Congratulations to Treasurer Phillips. There is a list of registered accountants and public accountants for all municipalities listed with the State of Michigan. We purchased that list and received excellent candidates to interview. This is how we found and hired Molly Phillips as Treasurer. I think we need to see if there are qualified candidates, including internal employees for the position of Treasurer. I think we owe it to the residents to see who is the best person for the job and show transparency.

Treasurer Phillips –

Aside from my experience at the Township, when I was appointed by the Township Board to take Sue Gross's place, thank God I had the presence of mind to keep Deputy Treasurer Karen Stamper. She taught me everything I know. I have done my best to leave the Township in a better position than it was when I found it. It was a really difficult first year, making heads or tails of the mistakes that have been made previously, balancing everything out and doing everything that needed to be done. I walked in blind. I never worked for a government before. I worked very carefully to make sure that I was trying to leave the Township in a position better than it was when I got here. I think if you hire somebody from the outside, and they come in, and they say oh, I have a buddy who can be my Deputy Treasurer, part time, like the one person that didn't get the job offered like I did, I think you're going to make a big mistake.

Trustee Berkheiser –

Since Trustee Long brought it up, I do agree that we should be open and transparent in our selection of candidates to interview whether it be from internal employees or outside candidates.

ITEM 10:5-12 OTHER MATTERS (continued)

Trustee Weber –

Walled Lake Planning Commission meeting is tonight and they are looking at the old school property at Maple and Pontiac Trail. This is a large piece of property behind Murray's. The proposal is for 6 buildings and a total of 96 apartments.

Interim Chairperson Sovel –

In 2016, when Vanessa resigned from the Clerks position, a Motion was made by Berkheiser, supported by Phillips, to hire Melissa Creech as the Township Clerk.

Treasurer Phillips said it was based on the fact that Missy had been working with Vanessa and shadowing her, doing the same job and had been through the same training together.

Interim Chairperson Sovel - I agree if you keep your Deputy in your team, it's very beneficial for the Township. I don't want to risk our finances with millions of dollars out there to hire someone that doesn't know what they are doing.

Trustee Long – If Katelyn surfaced to the top, she would be a much stronger leader as a Board member by going through the process.

Treasurer Phillips –

The continuity program also has Katelyn still here, if there are questions that need to be answered or directions for the next Finance and Human Resources Director. That's not an easy job either.

ITEM 11:5-12 ADJOURNMENT

As there were no other matters to come before the Board.

MOTION by Sovel, supported by Long, to adjourn at 9:05 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY



Melissa Creech, Clerk
Charter Township of Commerce