



BELLEVILLE - AREA INDEPENDENT

Vol. 30.48 Thursday, November 28, 2024 Serving the Communities of Belleville, Sumpter and Van Buren **F R E E**



Photo courtesy of Chloe Michael, Van Buren Township Communications Dept.

The newly elected Van Buren Township Board of Trustees and its appointed deputies was sworn in by 34th District Court Judge Lisa Martin before the Nov. 19 meeting. From left are Trustees William Frazier and Bryon Kelley, Deputy Treasurer Sean Bellingham and Treasurer Sharry Budd, Judge Martin, Supervisor Kevin McNamara and Deputy Supervisor Dan Selman, Clerk Leon Wright and Deputy Clerk Brittany Beaudry, and Trustees Kevin Martin and Donald Boynton, Jr.

VBT board backs off approval of 5-acre pond at Elwell/Martz roads

By Rosemary K. Otzman
Independent Editor

After making and seconding a proposed motion to approve a five-acre, agricultural irrigation pond on 30 acres at Martz and Elwell roads, the Van Buren Township Board of Trustees backed off approval.

They voted instead to table the request and get more information.

Ron Akers, director of municipal services, presented the request of Todd Waller for the excavation, removal, and off-site hauling of roughly 93,000 cubic yards of soil to create a five-acre pond for agricultural purposes.

Director Akers said the removal of the soil off-site requires the approval of the board and the bond permit needs to be approved by the planning commission. The recommendation for approval was based on staff reports and the Right to Farm Act.

Supervisor Kevin McNamara asked if a five-acre pond wasn't big for a 30-acre site. He also asked what the soil was like and was told it is sandy loam soil. He said that sandy soil is expensive to buy and everyone is going to sell their sand.

Akers said they can change the ordinance next year, but the request currently meets regulations.

Treasurer Sharry Budd said that is a lot of water for 28.8 acres.

"Do we have the right to reject it?" Supervisor McNamara asked. "My worry is another guy might want to do the same thing. If someone hits a good vein of sand..."

The previous motion to approve was withdrawn and a motion passed to table the motion to the next meeting so Waller can be present to discuss it.

In other business at the one-hour-12-minute meeting, the board:

- Was informed that Carol Bird, who served Van Buren Township for 40 years,

passed away the previous day. Later Clerk Leon Wright said in 1997 he opened a store downtown Belleville and he was right next to Carol Bird's real estate firm. "She was a genuine, good person," he said;

- Approved Chloe Michael's personal service agreement as a full-time member of the Communications Department. She had served in the position part-time for 18 months;

- Approved the Washtenaw Area Mutual Aid Council Interlocal Agreement for the fire department;

(continued on page 3)

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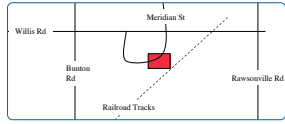
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SECOND FRONT PAGE

VBT Board

(continued from page 1)

- Approved the reappointments of Penny Young, Harry Roesch, Elaine Gutierrez, and Gina Dorazio (alternate) to the Board of Review with terms to expire Dec. 31, 2026;
- Approved the 2024 Policies and Procedures updated and Earned Sick Time Act;
- Held a public hearing to receive comments on the creation of a special assessment district for Walden Woods Subdivision Phases Four and Five for street lighting operational costs. No public spoke at the public hearing and the board later approved the creation of the special assessment district and approved the special assessment roll. It will be \$4,998 spread over 42 lots per year;
- Approved purchase of a John Deere X754 Series Tractor with specified options for the amount of \$30,004.10 from John Deere of South Lyon. Director Larry Luckett said with the addition of the Iron Belle Trail there have been maintenance challenges on E. Huron River Drive. With this equipment they will have software, a boom, and a snow blower and this will serve the township well since they are adding more links of the Iron Belle Trail ;
- Approved purchase of a boom mower attachment purchase for the amount of \$72,400 from John Deere of South Lyon. Director Luckett said this attachment cuts from the side of the road. He said currently they can only cut so far on the easement and they'll be able to reach farther and cut sideways now. He said residents talk to him about safety at intersections. Supervisor McNamara said the county does its best and the township is helping. "If you have line-of-sight problems, call us," he said. "It's not that much extra work for us." He said the township had a solid, balanced budget and now they are buying some of the things they need;
- Approved purchase of a 2024 Ford Escape and a 2025 Ford Explorer from Atchinson Ford for a total amount of \$69,536. Supervisor McNamara said they've been giving old vehicles to the seniors, but now these new vehicles will go to the seniors so they can have a little bigger vehicle and be able to haul stuff around. He said the township just sold 18 old vehicles at auction and most didn't run any more. He said they also sold two BMW motorcycles that the police didn't use any more. Luckett said it is costly to maintain old vehicles;
- Approved a proposal from Allied Fence and Security Systems, Inc., to install a four-foot-tall fence around the detention pond at Quirk Park in the amount of \$27,980. Treasurer Sharry Budd said she had concerns about the pond near the

splash pad and she was promised if there looked like there would be a problem, they would put up a fence. Luckett said the pond that is part of the new construction was designed as a dry pond, but they found when the splash pad overflows it becomes a wet pond. He said kids were playing near it over the weekend, so they decided to put in a fence;

- Approved selection of Erie Construction, LLC for the construction of the Iron Belle Trail, Section D, for \$1,940,337 with a 10% contingency for a total of \$2,134,370.70. This link of the trail starts in Van Buren Park and includes a foot bridge over Willow Creek to Denton Road. This is fully funded by grants;

- Approved special land use request for a gasoline station and drive-thru restaurant for Symmetry Management to be located at the Northwest corner of Ecorse and Haggerty roads. This was recommended by the planning commission;

- Approved a proposal from Fishbeck to design the sidewalk project on the north side of Tyler Road for \$53,360. "It would break my heart to see the people walking on Tyler Road and some in wheelchairs," said Clerk Wright, noting they are working toward a walkable community. Supervisor McNamara said Wayne County Community College will put in a sidewalk to meet up with the VBT sidewalk. He said the sidewalk will go from Quirk to Morton Taylor and beyond and the DDA will pick up part of it;

- Approved the Annual Exemption Opt Out for 2025 for health insurance;

- Heard Clerk Leon Wright announce the township new domain is VBTMI.gov, but the .com address is still active;

- Heard Clerk Wright thank everyone who worked on the general election, which had a lot of challengers, both Republican and Democrats. He said he wanted to get a voting total of 70%, but he got just 69.55%;

- Heard Human Resources Director Nicole Sumpter note that she doesn't have to order a new nametag at the board table for new trustee Will Frazier, since his mother's former tag still works. It says "Trustee Frazier"; and

- Heard a resident tell about noise pollution on I-94 at Diamondback when the motorcycle clubs gather on Wednesday and at 12, 1 o'clock in the morning they leave one by one, trying to outdo each other. Everyone in the area is disturbed. "I wanted to confront them, but I was told not to, but to call police." McNamara said he would talk to the resident about it, but he doesn't know what he can do.

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VBT planners discuss Pulte Homes proposal for 2.5 hrs. before OK

By Rosemary K. Otzman
Independent Editor

The Van Buren Township Planning Commission discussed for more than 2.5 hours the Pulte Homes proposal to build 88 single-family homes on the vacant corner of Walden Woods subdivision, before giving the projects the approval to move forward.

The development would be at the northwest corner of Tyler and Morton Taylor roads and in the past that area had been approved for 200 apartments and a 10-acre commercial strip as part of the 142-acre Walden Woods PUD (planned unit development). Walden Woods currently has about 300 homes.

After much discussion and a legal opinion, it was decided this Cedarchase development was an amendment to the former PUD under another owner, even though Van Buren Township now does not grant PUDs. On Oct. 1 the township board approved the PUD Amendment.

Near the end of the long, Nov. 13 meeting, commissioner Jackson Pahle noted that Pulte Homes came to the township in June of 2022 to begin this project and the commission needs to go forward.

Commissioner Pahle said the township should start to reconsider its regulations and, "We are making it way too hard to build housing."

He said approving housing construction will "help all of us," noting the township's grandchildren won't have to move to Texas and North Carolina to live, where they are building "way, way faster."

Commissioner Medina Atchinson, who has been a long-time advocate of building homes in the township so residents don't have to move to other communities for more suitable housing, asked a Pulte representative at the end of the meeting if Pulte has purchased the 32-acre site in question. Joe Skore, vice president of land acquisition for Pulte Homes, replied, "We don't close until we have approvals."

There were three requests on the agenda regarding Pulte Homes, two that needed to be sent on to the township board for final approval and one for PUD preliminary site condominium approval, which is a commission only decision. The final approval was dependant on the first two being sent on to and approved by the township board – special land use for the PUD Amendment and preliminary site condominium approval.

Bill Anderson of Atwell, representative of Pulte, said all the homes will be built and developed by Pulte Homes on 50'x125' lots with two parks, a pocket park and a play area and nine acres of open space.

Pulte will pave Morton Taylor Road north from Tyler to Heatherfield Blvd. and this is part of Phase I.

He said Pulte will clean out the county drain that cuts through the site and put sidewalks throughout the development and along Tyler and Morton Taylor roads.

He said Pulte has redesigned all the houses to be built to conform to VBT's ordinances. There are four home designs, with 16 different concepts of those homes, in colors of brown and navy blue. They will have brick on all sides of the first floor.

It is a farmhouse design of 1,800 to 2,600 square feet with prices beginning in the mid \$300,000s and delivered in the mid-\$400,000s.

Planner Vidya Krishnan said the Amended PUD development is less-intensive in use than the original plan, which was approved in 2000 and never completed. Morton Taylor Road was not paved as promised.

"I'm all for it," said commissioner Atchinson. "Is it affordable housing?"

Director of municipal services Ron Akers replied, "Not sure. I don't believe so."

Joe Skore of Pulte said it most likely is not affordable and "attainable" housing is more subjective.

"Planners don't get into affordable or attainable" which is based on median income and SEMCOG numbers, Krishnan said. And "affordable" doesn't fit any bracket," she said.

Atchinson asked where their customers will be coming from and Skore said probably along the I-275 corridor, north of Van Buren Township, where the jobs are.

Pahle said he did a Google search and a median home in VBT is \$374,000.

Skore said there are no side-entry garages.

Commissioner Jeff Jahr made the motion to recommend to the township board special land use approval for the PUD Amendment. Atchinson seconded and it was passed unanimously.

Then the commission considered a preliminary site plan for the condos and Krishnan went through nine pages of her planner report that ended with her recommending approval. This, too, must go to the township board for final approval.

She said the township wants a traffic light at the Tyler/Morton Taylor crossing and Pulte has requested that from the county but has not heard back.

She said the density bonus for farmhouse-style homes at Cedarchase is 18.91%. She said there is a problem with the Cedarchase sign being closer to the street than allowed and Pulte could seek an amendment from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Krishnan said there is no interior lighting

(continued on page 10)

O P I N I O N S

Editorial

Thanksgiving calls us to look around, be grateful

We've finally seen our first bit of snow, the weather is getting chillier and the winds fiercer. Thanksgiving is here, with Black Friday shopping at hand and Christmas just around the corner.

Although Thanksgiving Day isn't the only day to be grateful for our many blessings, it is a good day to concentrate on what we have instead of what we do not have.

No matter how humble our dwelling, we probably have a place to stay with a roof over our heads and warmth around us. Some do not and there are places to go if you need a place to stay.

There are families who are suffering and individuals and groups who are looking for them to help them. Let a church or a police department know you need help. Don't be shy. There is help.

As to food, several local food pantries reach out with food and are especially happy to keep our community members well fed. The pantry at the First United Methodist Church in Belleville gives food out at the first request, before the needed recommendation. There are Forgotten Harvest give-aways in VBT and Sumpter.

And you can donate a new toy to Toys for Tots or the Goodfellows in Belleville / Van Buren or Sumpter Township. These are two separate groups run by volunteers to help the children in their communities. There are Toys for Tots donation boxes all around the community, including the library, Remax, and Independent. Goodfellow donations can go to the Belleville and VBT police departments and Ace Hardware in Sumpter.

EXTRA THINGS I KNOW

...By Rosemary K. Otzman

When I drove into the city on Savage Rd./E. Columbia Ave., to attend last week's 7:30 p.m. meeting of the city council it was dark out and I noticed the American Flag at Five Points was not lighted.

The light for the flag is on the roof of city hall, right over the chief of police's office, and I knew at one time the police were in charge of the flag.

I met the new DPS Director Melissa Frierson and asked her about the flag. She took a note of it and said she would check. Then I asked Police Chief Faull and she said she'd get an electrician to fix it. I said I didn't know if it was broken or whether a new light bulb was needed.

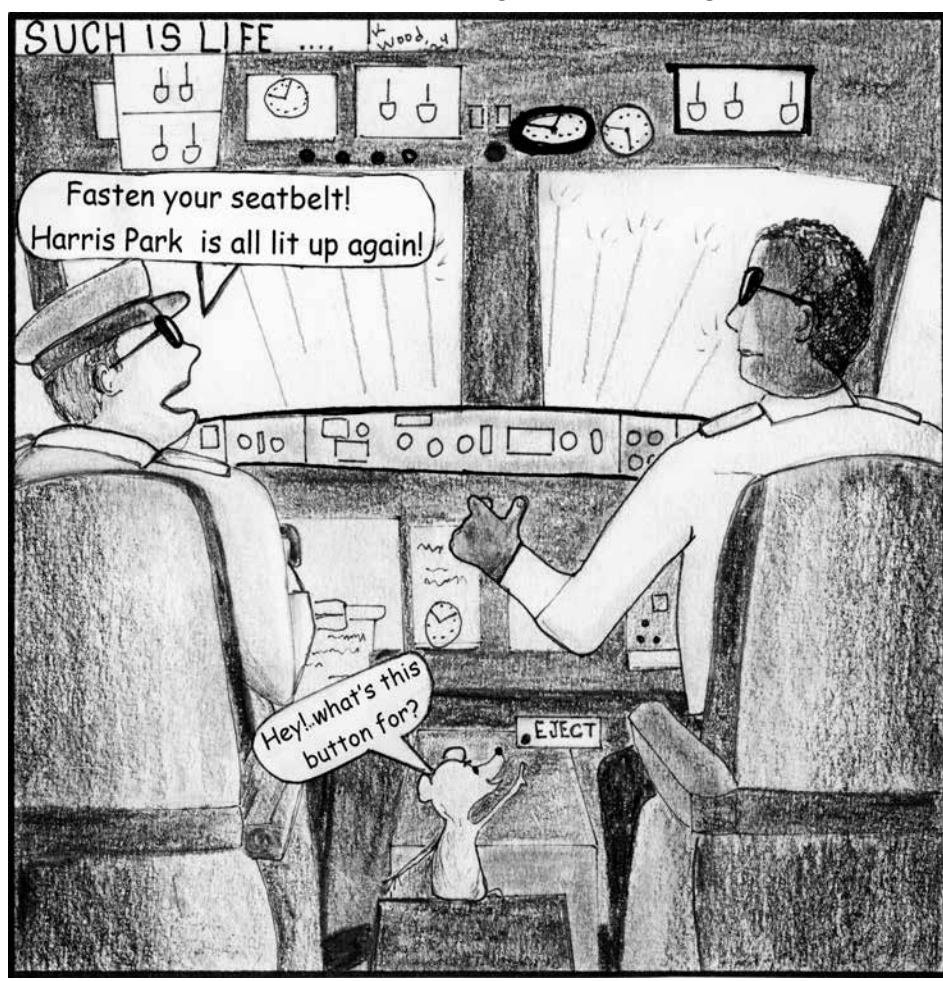
I told them I knew the VFW would be in to talk about it if it stayed dark too long.

That's when Mayor Ken Voigt, who is a retired Belleville Police officer, said before there was a light, the police used to take down the flag every sunset and put it up every sunrise. He said that's how he learned to properly fold the flag. He said Mayor Bev Steinhauer got the light put up, so they didn't have to put it up and down anymore.

The city of Romulus will light its official Christmas tree at 6 p.m. Friday, Nov. 29, at Romulus Historical Park, with activities to begin at 5 p.m. Van Buren Township lit its Christmas tree on Nov. 20 with a big party at Harris Park.

Canton Township's Winterfest will feature a tree-lighting ceremony at 6 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 7 following its holiday parade.

The city of Belleville's Christmas tree, that Santa used to light after the holiday parade, was cut down when renovations were made



to the Belleville Area Museum. Another tree, at Doane's Landing, was donated so the city could have a Christmas tree. That, too, was removed. So, there is no tree lighting ceremony in Belleville.

The Belleville Winter Fest parade, with Santa riding in the fire engine at the end, starts at 5:30 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 7, at BHS and heads to Five Points and then downtown where Santa gets the Key to the City and meets with children at the library. The parade theme is "Classic Christmas Movies."

Members of the city council on Dec. 6 and 7, will be judging the trees that have been decorated in the yards of residents and other outdoor private decorations, so the city does have Christmas trees.

We deliver *Independents* on Thursday mornings and last Thursday we were a tad late getting to Keystone Academy for our delivery. Bad timing. There are more than 700 students at Keystone and no bus service, so students have to be driven to school by a family member or friend. We figure 500 cars or so drop off in the morning and pick up in the afternoon.

We were blocked in our parking space for 45 minutes while cars lined up waiting for the school to open and accept students, and so we just relaxed and watched the show. At one point, a man in a Ford Thunderbird drifted ahead in the line and gently bumped the rear car fender in front of him. He could have been a grandfather of a student. The

lady driving the car in front of him was obviously a young mother. She jumped out of the car, got all the information and made several calls on her cell phone. Soon, Sumpter Police Sgt. Beth Egerer showed up and talked to them both and then went into the school. The damage had to be minor because we couldn't see anything, but then we didn't go up and look.

Once the doors to the school opened and students were allowed inside in groups, the traffic started to move ahead. Those in the traffic-bump lane were forewarned the lane was closed by large, closed umbrellas sticking out of traffic cones. That caused some disruption, but not much.

We were able to get into a lane that would turn right on Bemis and get moving again.

A grandfather I know who took his grandchildren back and forth to Keystone each day said that this time waiting in the car with your grandchild is quality time. He said you can discuss how you expect the child to work in school and other subjects. You can tell your child you love him when he gets out of the car to go into the school. He's absolutely right. Lots of pluses to waiting in line with a loved one.

Those who drive and wait have told me they do it because they want their children to have the best education possible.



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Letters

Thank you, Boy Scout Troop #793, for help

To the editor:
 I'd like to thank Boy Scout Troop #793 for helping the Veterans of Foreign Wars on Oct. 26 to break down several broken old picnic tables that were piled up in a corner of the property.

They removed the metal parts for scrap which will be turned in for money to help fund activities for their troop. The wood parts of the tables were cut up for the VFW to use in holding a flag retirement ceremony.

It was good to have a group of young strong persons to help us out with this project. Many thanks!

I also want to bring your attention to our new ad in the *Independent* reminding you that our post building and pavilion is available for you to hold your next celebration or event. Common events include holiday, birthday, and graduation parties. We also are a good venue to hold a memorial.

For cost and more information, you can call me at (734) 660-0797.

Lori Day
 VFW Building Manager

Thank the people of Belleville for kindness

To the editor:
 Here at Thanksgiving, I want to thank the people of Belleville for all the kindness they have shown me at Tim Horton's. There is always someone to help my wife Linda get me up and out of a chair and out the door.

I am thankful for all -- too many to name -- but I will name Marty at the Firestone store, Tim at Sumpter Hardware, Mike at the old Pro Hardware, the ladies at Gloria Jean's and The Bait Shop, Anna at Loranger's, and Rosemary at the *Independent*.

Happy Thanksgiving to all.

Mickey Widener
 Van Buren Township

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ANNOUNCEMENT
 Karen's Place has a new Nail Tech.
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Animal Magic visits library on Saturday

To the editor:
 Animal Magic is doing something different the day after Black Friday. We'll be at the Belleville Area District Library on Saturday, Nov. 30, from 3:15 to 5:45 in the afternoon with our 2025 calendars.

Here's the cool thing: For every calendar you purchase (only \$20), you get a free photo (with your camera) of you holding SSSanta SSSnake, Mrs. Claus, Rudolph, Candy Cane, etc. Your choice... these will all be very uncommon snakes that are not found anywhere in the world in nature, only in captivity! There will be some other surprise animals there as well, including the world-famous Nico!

This is not sponsored by the Belleville library, but 100% sponsored by Animal Magic, and all the proceeds go towards our licensed, nonprofit, no-kill exotic animal rescue.

The large alligator we helped the SWAT team recover last week during the drug raid will definitely not be in attendance!

We'll also have many brand-new, animal-related gifts available for purchase at extremely low prices that would make wonderful holiday gifts.

We accept cash, checks, Venmo, PayPal, debit cards, credit cards, and your firstborn!

After talking it over with Misty, we take back the part about your first-born child. We accept everything else.

No need to RSVP, we just hope to see a lot of you at the library next Saturday afternoon.

Please share the heck out of this letter because it's the cheapest way to get one of our 2025 calendars and a free photo. Limited supply of calendars...we had 250 last week and we are now down to under 100.

Mark Rosenthal
 Animal Magic

St. Anthony Men's Club holding \$10,000 raffle

To the editor:
 The St. Anthony's Men's Club of Belleville, MI, is holding its 55th-annual raffle. Grand prize is \$10,000 and only 300 tickets were printed. Ticket prices are \$100 each. The drawing is to be held Feb. 2, 2025, between two and three o'clock at the St. Anthony Parish Center.

Second prize is \$1,000; third, fourth, and fifth prizes are \$500 each.

You need not be present to win. Buy one before they're gone.

For tickets, contact me via phone at (734) 699-8563 (leave message, if needed) or email petepitzen2@att.net subject "tickets."

Pete Pitzen, raffle chairman
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More Letters

McBride to provide 9 Thanksgiving meals

To the editor:

This Thanksgiving season, McBride Middle School's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), with special support from McBride Middle School PTO Vice-President Chales Mickl-Grigsby, has launched a heartfelt initiative to support McBride families in need. With the help of dedicated McBride staff and generous contributions from students, the school is set to provide complete Thanksgiving meals to nine families within the school community.

The drive has been a school-wide effort, with students enthusiastically bringing in non-perishable food items to create food baskets. To motivate participation, students earned points for their donations, competing for a chance to win a pizza party for their class. This friendly competition has fueled excitement and increased contributions, ensuring that each basket is filled with essential holiday items.

In addition to the student donations, the PTO has committed to purchasing turkeys for each of the nine families, ensuring they receive a full and hearty Thanksgiving meal.

We wanted to make sure every family feels the warmth and joy of the holiday. It's

truly inspiring to see our school community come together to support one another.

The Thanksgiving Food Drive is part of McBride Middle School's ongoing commitment to fostering a supportive and caring environment. By working hand-in-hand, the PTO, staff, and students have shown the power of community spirit and the importance of giving back.

This season, McBride's efforts will help bring joy and gratitude to nine families, reminding everyone of the true meaning of Thanksgiving.

Jessica Radcliff
PTO Secretary and teacher at McBride

Things to do in the Belleville area...

- **Friday, Nov. 29** – The Van Buren Eagles on Beck Road present a dinner at 5 p.m., meat raffle/auction at 6:30 p.m., and a two-person band.
- **Sunday, Dec. 1** – Advent by Candlelight and Hymn-fest at St. Paul Lutheran Church, 19109 Craig St., New Boston. Starts at 3 p.m. with light refreshments immediately after. This is a free event and open to all.
- **Wednesday, Dec. 4** – Second-annual Santa Paws from 5 to 7 p.m. at Harris Park on Belleville Road. Have your pet's picture taken with Santa. Sponsored by the Van Buren Township Downtown Development Authority.
- **Thursday, Dec. 5; Friday, Dec. 6;**

Saturday, Dec. 7; and Sunday, Dec. 8 – It's Winter Fest in Belleville, with lots of activities, including an evening parade on Saturday and fireworks following over the lake. Sponsored by the Belleville Area Chamber of Commerce.

• **Friday, Dec. 6** – Van Buren Eagles on Beck Road presents Music Bingo at 7:30 p.m., with Karaoke/DJ to follow.

• **Saturday, Dec. 7** – Festival of Holiday Trees begins at the Belleville Area Museum. It is open until Dec. 21. Hours are Tuesday, 12-4 p.m.; Thursdays, 1-7 p.m.; and Saturdays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

• **Saturday, Dec. 7** – Holiday Ornament Workshop, 1-3 p.m., at the Belleville Area District Library. No fee; preregistration required online at vanburentwp.recdesk.com. Information at (734) 699-8921,

• **Sunday, Dec. 8** – Belleville Community Chorus will present its Christmas Concert, "A Christmas Mood," at 5 p.m. at Belleville First United Methodist Church, 417 Charles St., Belleville.

• **Wednesday, Dec. 11** – Second-annual Santa Paws from 5 to 7 p.m. at Harris Park on Belleville Road. Have your pet's picture taken with Santa. Sponsored by the Van Buren Township Downtown Development Authority.

• **Wednesday, Dec. 11** – David C. Brown Pet Loss Support Group meets from 3:30 to 5 p.m. at the Brown Family Center. To share difficult emotions that are present when our companion has died or is in the later stages of life and death is near. Information: Jacqueline Dalzell, (734) 697-4500.



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Obituaries



Carol Joy Bird

CAROL JOY BIRD

(April 3, 1943 – November 19, 2024)
Carol J. Bird, age 81, longtime resident of Van Buren Township, MI, passed away suddenly on November 19th at Trinity Health in Ann Arbor, MI. Born on April 3, 1943, to Andrew and Georgetta (Root) Ignatowski in Detroit, MI. Carol graduated Detroit's Mackenzie High School in 1961. She went on to receive her bachelor's degree in education at Eastern Michigan University. After graduating, she became a teacher and taught home economics at Huron High School in New Boston. Carol was the owner and broker at Remerica Main Street Realty in Belleville for over 35 years. Carol loved being a part of her community and was active in many groups, including 25 years as a member of the Van Buren Township Downtown Development Authority, serving as Vice Chair. She was a distinguished member of the Belleville Area Chamber of Commerce and was named person of the year. Along with her husband Terry, she was a member of the Corvette Legends Club. She enjoyed planning social events and trips for the club in Michigan, Ohio, and New York. Carol loved traveling, spending time with her friends, and caring for her family.

Carol is survived by her devoted husband of 60 years, Terrell "Terry" Bird; children: Michael (Gina Dorazio) Bird of Van Buren Township, MI, and Cheryl (Michael) Kavanagh of Burlington, Ontario, Canada; grandchildren: Lily and Lucy Bird, Kaitlin (Niklas Duerrwang) and Chase Kavanagh; sister Andrea (Randy) Gorham of Vicksburg, MI; also numerous extended family, clients, colleagues, and friends. Carol was preceded in death by her parents.

According to her wishes, a dignified cremation has been planned, with a celebration of life memorial at a later date. Arrangements by David C. Brown Funeral Home, Belleville, MI (734) 697-4500.

Memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society and would be appreciated. www.davidcbrownfh.com



Albert Raymond Obeginski

ALBERT RAYMOND OBEGINSKI

(May 9, 1943 – November 20, 2024)
Albert Obeginski, age 81, lifelong resident of Van Buren Township, MI, passed away on November 20, 2024, at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, Michigan surrounded by his family. He was born on May 9, 1943, in Belleville, MI, to John and Mary (Zubel) Obeginski. After high school he married the love of his life, Sandra, and they began a family. He went to work for Ford as a hydraulic repairman, which he excelled at. Albert attended St. Anthony Catholic Church for many years and was a man of faith. He was very caring and compassionate, and also extremely generous. In his free time, he enjoyed hunting and fishing. Albert also liked to skeet shoot and trap with his son, Mark. He enjoyed gardening and Western movies. A born fixer, he would work on repairs and fix just about anything, which explains his love of clocks, he had many and they were all in good order. Most of all he was very helpful to others, giving to people he had never met and helping out those in need, even though he was a simple man who practiced a simple life. He loved his family, and it showed, and he gave to and "adopted" several more grandchildren because his heart was so big and caring.

Albert is survived by his children, Kimberly Ebmer of Lincoln Park, MI, and Mark (Mary) Obeginski of Milan, MI; his grandchildren, Jacqueline (Rene) Velasco of Lincoln Park, MI, Brandon Obeginski of Highland Park, MI, and Kara Obeginski of Washington; his adopted grandchild, E. Miyah Cooper; his great-grandchildren, Grayson, Layla and Paige Obeginski; and his close friends Jackie Pierre and Terry Babinko.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his wife Sandra in 2020, a great-great-grandson, William Obeginski; his brothers, Carl, John and Chuck Obeginski and sister, Marlene Obeginski.

A visitation will be held at the David C. Brown Funeral Home, 460 E. Huron River Drive, Belleville, MI, 48111, on Friday, November 29, 2024, from 4 p.m. until 8 p.m. and visitation and a funeral service will be held on Saturday, November 30, 2024, with visitation at 11 and service starting at 12 p.m. Mark Obeginski will officiate the service. A burial will follow at Washtenong Memorial Park Cemetery in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

ILENE M. MACKIE

(March 7, 1931 – November 19, 2024)
Age 93, of Van Buren Township. Survived by children Michael Kottke, Jimmy Kottke, Debbie (Mike) Moening; six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. David C. Brown Funeral Home.
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BACA sets trip to DIA to view special exhibit on Islamic food culture

The Belleville Area Council for the Arts (BACA) is sponsoring a bus trip on Saturday, Dec. 14, to the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) to see the special exhibit "The Art of Dining."

The exhibit illustrates food culture in the Islamic world.

Cost is \$20 per person. For an additional \$5, (\$25) BACA offers membership to BACA for the 2025 calendar year. There is no additional charge for admission to the DIA or to the exhibit.

At the museum the DIA will provide a docent to escort BACA group and explain the exhibit. The trip is open to BACA membership and to the public.

The bus will leave Van Buren Township Hall on Saturday, Dec. 14, at 11 a.m. and leave the DIA at 4 p.m., returning to Van Buren Township Hall at 5 p.m.

If you are interested in participating in the bus trip, make your check made to BACA and send to Barbara Miller, 45311 Harmony Lane, Van Buren Township, MI 48111.

Include your phone number (a must) so that you may be contacted if there are any issues with the trip. The check must be received by Wednesday, Dec. 11.

Those with questions, may call Barbara Miller at (734) 516-0025. Twenty-five participants are required. If they do not have that number, the trip will be cancelled. Your funds will be returned, Miller said.

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Michigan Press Association Op-Ed:

Time to help Whitmer finish ‘Sunshine Plan’

In 2016 when she was Candidate Whitmer, the Governor of Michigan issued “Get it Done: A Michigan Sunshine Plan.” The first item under the headline “Making State Government More Transparent & Responsive to Taxpayers” was this bullet point:

Expanding Freedom of Information Act to include the governor’s office and legislature. We are just one of two states that does not already do this. If the legislature won’t act, I will use the governor’s authority under the Michigan State Constitution to extend FOIA to the Lieutenant Governor and Governor’s Offices. Michiganders should know when and what their governor is working on.

It’s been eight years since this report was released and still Michigan remains in the basement when it comes to transparency. This is despite the efforts of two state Senators who have been pushing legislation for years to remove exemptions from the Freedom of Information Act for the Governor and the Legislature.

In 2016 shortly after a scandal involving two state Representatives resulted in their expulsion and the citizens of Michigan were still trying to sort out what had happened in Flint causing a water crisis that put the Mitten on the national news daily, then Representative Jeremy Moss (D-Southfield) and Representative Ed McBroom (R-Vulcan) introduced legislation that would shine a light on the Governor and the legislature by removing exemptions in the law that protected them from having to release information.

This legislation passed the House with an overwhelming majority. And then died in the Senate. The same thing happened again in the 2017-2018 legislative session, the 2019-2020 legislative session and the 2021-2022 legislative session.

As 2023 began there was hope that the tide would turn...the Democrats had majority in the Senate and the House and McBroom and Moss were now State Senators. Newly elected Speaker Joe Tate (D-Detroit) expressed support for removing the exemptions and advocates for transparency felt there was a good chance

sunshine in Michigan was imminent. Several additional scandals had impacted the legislature including the incarceration of a former Speaker of the House and the indictment of another.

Sadly, the bills still languish in the House Government Operations Committee after passing the Senate earlier this year, 36-2.

As the last month of this legislative session approaches, the Michigan Press Association urges citizens to let their Representative know it’s time to pass these bills and get Michigan out of the bottom rankings for accountability for government officials in our country.

Trust in government is dangerously low and the inability to have access to the records and activities of elected officials is not going to improve that trust. It’s time for the state House to take up these bills and pass them to the Governor’s desk before the end of session. Then she can fulfill the promise of her Sunshine Plan.

John T. Elchert, President
Michigan Press Association
Board of Directors
Chief Operating Officer,
Blackbird, regional office

Upcoming Meetings

- Monday, Dec. 2 – Belleville City Council, 7:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, Dec. 3 – Van Buren Township regular meeting, 6 p.m.
- Monday, Dec. 9 – Van Buren Township Public Schools Board of Education, 7 p.m., BHS
- Tuesday, Dec. 10 – Sumpter Township workshop/regular meeting, 6 p.m. Also, Belleville Area District Library board, 7:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, Dec. 11 – Van Buren Township Planning Commission, 5:30 p.m.
- Thursday, Dec. 12 – Keystone Academy School Board, 5 p.m. Also, Sumpter Township Planning Commission, 6 p.m. Also, Belleville Planning Commission, 7 p.m.
- Monday, Dec. 16 – Belleville City Council, 7:30 p.m.

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VBT Plan

(continued from page 3)

on the streets, but there is lighting on houses. The garage doors are architecturally enhanced, but there are no side-entry garage doors.

Then two hours of discussion ensued including the turning radius for the cul de sac, possible wetland designation, distance of lots from the McClaughry Drain. Most issues were brought by Commissioner Jahr and Treasurer Sharry Budd.

“Fifteen items need to be addressed,” Treasurer Budd began. “Way too much. It’s not historic farmstyle homes. I’m concerned with no side-entry garages. I have a real problem taking this to the board. That’s a dangerous intersection... too many deviations.”

Krishnan said what is proposed are “Farmhouse/Northern Craftsman Style” homes, not “historic.” She said that came across originally, but was corrected.

Jahr said he wants to know what features brought the 19% density increase.

Skore said they’ve been working with the township for two years. He said the original developer was allowed 200 units plus commercial.

“We’re asking for a reduction in density,” he said.

“We put brick on all sides and that’s a lot of brick,” Skore said. “We’ve made a significant amount of changes in the detail.” He said the drain field is a final engineering problem and Pulte is going to do the right thing.”

Commission chairman Brian Cullin said he’s afraid the backs of the houses showing along Tyler Road would look bad to drivers. Skore said there would be landscaping there, but Cullin persisted and Skore said Pulte could enhance the second floor with shutters.

He said he would do whatever the township wanted for the development.

Agenda items 4 and 5 were finally passed unanimously by the commission with stipulations that the commission would get report on how the density was figured, how many side-entry garages the current Walden Woods has. If the density calculations causes a change, the agenda items must be returned to the planning commission rather than the board.

Atchinson said that Pulte is not “Joe Shmo” and they haven’t come to VBT before and is not getting the respect it deserves. She said Pulte has done so much and its homes in Ann Arbor and Pittsfield are beautiful.

Skore said Pulte is the largest builder in SE Michigan and has developments in Canton, Orion, Bright, Ypsilanti Township and a multitude of other places, with an average cost of \$550,000. It is the third-largest builder in the country.

“We do what we say we’re going to do,” he said.

New stain for Twisted Rooster

The commission approved, on a 5-1 vote, allowing a façade modification to the existing building for Twister Rooster, 9729 Belleville Rd., with commissioner Jahr voting no.

Matt Rose, representing Rooster Ventures, said they closed a month ago on the property which will be a Morning Belle restaurant.

He said the building looks a little tired, saying the brick was stained grey by the former owner without planning commission approval and it was supposed to be red brick. The new owner wants to stain it off-white with dark grey trim.

Director Akers said trying to repaint it a natural color wouldn’t work out well.

Commissioner Jahr said it now looks like “a weathered combat bunker,” but the ordinance says the brick must be red or brown.

Planner Krishnan said it was stained over a weekend and when the township found out it was too late to do anything about it. She said putting brown on top of grey would not work and it would end up looking a lot worse than it does today. She said it already is in a non-conforming stage.

Commissioner Atchinson said the commission needs to get with the times and the Belleville Road Overlay District that requires red brick has to be looked at closely.

“We’re trying to correct a code violation ... and just sticking to red or brown is not the best,” Krishnan said.

Treasurer Sharry Budd said the building was changed when it shouldn’t have been done and the planners also allowed Culver’s to have company colors.

In other business at the Nov. 13 meeting, the commission:

- Approved temporary land use for

December 2024 through May 2025 for a mobile refueling station at Ricardo, Inc., 40000 Ricardo Dr., on the east side of Haggerty Road just north of Tyler. This is for hydrogen-fueled vehicles. The exact approval was given to Ricardo in 2016, 2018 and 2023. Ricardo chief engineer Matt Hopkins said they did not do it in 2023 and did it to two vehicles in 2018. He said this time it will be three vehicles;

- Heard Akers say the next planning commission meeting on Dec. 11 would have on the agenda a request from Cosco, an agricultural irrigation pond on Martz Road, and a discussion on housing;

- Heard commission chairman Brian Cullin ask about what is going on at the former Cork & Bottle on Sumpter Road, since they just repaved the parking lot and the building is torn apart. Akers said he didn’t know but he would check; and

- Heard Budd say Camping World has repainted its building and it is working on its updates.

Commissioner Bernie Grant was absent and excused from the meeting.

Court Watching:

Dionte Kristopher Kelly

Dionte Kristopher Kelly formerly of the city of Belleville and now of Sterling Heights, is charged with child abuse-4th degree on Oct. 20, 2021.

The charge was entered on Oct. 27, 2023 and he failed to appear for his scheduled arraignment/pre-trial on Nov. 15, 2023 or his show-cause hearing on Dec. 13, 2023.

The post office was unable to deliver court paperwork to the address given. A bench warrant was issued. On March 8, 2024 he told the court he was not doing anything about this case because it had been dropped by Child Protective Services.

He was told the 34th District Court isn’t CPS and it can’t drop this case. The bench warrant remains.

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Musings

By Janet Millard
 Independent Advertising Director



Happy Thanksgiving Day. I have found that making a turkey is so easy that we have it many times during the year when the spirit moves me. I hope you will be enjoying a big meal today and giving thanks for this wonderful country we are so blessed to live in.

Like most people I am so glad the election is over and things can get back to normal.

We are here on this planet for such a short time, let's just move on with our lives and try hard to make amends with those who think differently. You may not be able to forget, but you certainly can be civil and make the most of this incredible season. As Tiny Tim said – "God bless us, every one."

So, next Thursday starts the annual Winterfest with Popups in the 4th Street Square and 4th Street Place. This festival should certainly put you in the Christmas mood. Looking forward to all the activities and, of course, the appearance of Santa Claus.

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pets so you should take advantage of the Van Buren DDA's Santa Paws for the next two Wednesdays in Harris Park on Belleville Road. From 5 to 7 p.m. you can have your pet's picture taken with Santa. If Wednesdays don't work for you, feel free to bring your pet to the Museum when Santa visits from noon to 4 p.m. on Dec. 14 and 21. No snakes, please!

Dec. 8 brings the Winter Concert by our wonderful Community Chorus. It will be at 5 p.m. in the Belleville First United Methodist Church on Charles Street. Mark your calendars now!

The Salvation Army is scheduling volunteers for Bell Ringing. They do so much to support the residents in our tri-community that bell ringing is a great way to say thanks. This is also a good way to teach your children that volunteering, particularly at this time of year, is the best way to help those who are less fortunate. Please go to their website at RegisterToRing.com and click on Van Buren Township.

Do you have a business item you would like to see in this column? Call Janet Millard at (734) 699-9020.

Sumpter Township board meets in special session on Halloween

The Sumpter Township Board of Trustees met in special session at the community center gym at 6 p.m. on Halloween. Trustee Don LaPorte was absent and excused and no members of the public were present.

The board accepted the unexpected retirement of Finance Director Scott Holtz, effective Oct. 29; agreed to advertise for a replacement; and approved posting a help-wanted ad for a permanent part-time Human Resource/Payroll contract position. The meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

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Sumpter election included power outage at two precincts

By Rosemary K. Otzman
Independent Editor

At her last meeting as township clerk following the Nov. 5 election, Esther Hurst told the Sumpter Township Board of Trustees that the election is yet to be certified and audited, but it went off very well, even though there were problems.

She thanked her office staff, the election workers and Police Lt. Pat Gannon for putting in extra effort when they lost power on election day at the community center gym, which housed two precincts.

Voters were asked to vote and put their ballots in a box, which was watched by Lt. Gannon, who also guarded the tabulators as they were carried across the street to township hall, and for taking the final results downtown.

The ballots were tabulated after 8 p.m. in the board room, she said.

Clerk Hurst, who was chairing the regular board meeting on Nov. 12 in the absence of Supervisor Tim Bowman, said this was her last meeting as clerk after 30 years of working for the township.

She detailed all the positions she had held over the years and said, "It has been my honor to serve." She did not seek re-election as clerk because of her health.

Board members and township attorney Rob Young said kind words about Hurst and others who were leaving, including Trustee Peggy Morgan, who was not reelected; Deputy Clerk Karen Armatis, who has held several different positions at the township over the years; and Trustee Donald LaPorte who is switching to being clerk after election to that post.

Township manager Anthony Burdick, before he began his regular report, said Hurst "brought me in years ago and gave me a shot."

Police Chief Eric Luke said Hurst has been at township hall for his entire 30-year career and deputy clerk Armatis has been a constant professional who helped him even when he didn't think he needed help.

In other business at the 50-minute, Nov. 12 meeting, the board:

- Tabled the agenda item to approve the updated planning and zoning fee schedule for more information; and

removed the proposed second quarter budget amendments and also an item accepting the bid of Vigilante Security to replace and monitor monthly the township facilities' security and fire alarm systems, at \$87,592.50 for installation and \$971.10 for monthly monitoring;

- Approved with regret the resignation of fire fighter Jamie Krushlin, effective Oct. 29;

- Approved hosting the Conference of Western Wayne meeting on June 13, 2025;

- Approved purchasing a three-well, stainless-steel sink for the community center gym kitchen at a total cost of \$619 using ARPA funds;

- Approved the holiday closure of township offices from Dec. 23 through Jan. 1, with employees using four benefit-bank days;

- Approved posting and interviewing for a seasonal, part-time DPW position for 29 hours or less per week at the AFSCME hourly rate of \$23.33;

- Approved accepting the bid from Regal Construction, Inc. for \$25,250 for the police department windows, paid with ARPA funds or other available funds, if required;

- Approved accepting the bid from TNT Tree Service in the amount of \$5,500 for Banotai Park, paid with ARPA or other available funds, if required;

- Approved extending the temporary, part-time clerk's office position until Jan. 28, 2025, in order to keep the staffing at three people;

- Heard resident Mary Herring ask what is being built on the southwest corner of Bemis and Sumpter roads and was told it is a drive-through car wash. She also said her friend Amy of Van Buren Township came with her to this meeting to promote a dog park in the tri-community. Herring said she was giving the board this "seed" so they could think about it and maybe in the future it would be a thing that could be

done. Herring said Amy plans to go to the Van Buren Township board to suggest this, as well;

- Heard resident Mary Ban say the board still needs a workshop so people can discuss issues in the township. She said since the workshop has been eliminated, the citizens are not given a time for input on township decisions. She said the public comment comes before agenda items are discussed and people don't know about details of the agenda items in advance. She also said she'd like to know how that corner got approved for a car wash and she can't believe it did;

- Heard Police Chief Luke say it is a tie between Bemis/Rawsonville and Sumpter/Willow for the intersection with the most accidents for October; and

- At the end of the meeting, heard Danny who had run the gas station at the corner of Sumpter and Bemis roads for 23 years and the car lot across from Ace Hardware for almost nine years, ask the board to help him. He bought the car repair shop at 25891 Sumpter Rd. from John Chapman and he said he expects to be evicted from his car lot by the end of the month. He asked the board for permission to move his license while in the process of getting approvals so he doesn't lose his state license. Trustee Oddy and Treasurer Patterson told him he didn't sign in and couldn't speak. He said

he didn't know he had to sign in. Township manager Burdick invited him to come in the next day to talk about his problem.

Congresswoman Dingell update: Salem Post Office to remain open

Congresswoman Debbie Dingell, MI-06, shared a letter from the United States Post Service (USPS) announcing the Salem Post Office will remain open.

The Salem Post Office is a contract postal unit (CPU). The U.S. Postal Service occasionally augments local postal services by competitively contracting with a business or individual to provide postal retail services through operation of a CPU.

Most retail services are available in CPUs, including stamp purchases, mail acceptance, Post Office Box delivery, and special services such as insurance, registry, and certified services. The CPU in Salem is a Community Post Office (CPO), meaning it provides a full line of postal products and services to local customers, including post Office Box service.

"In this case, post officials studied the Salem CPO for possible discontinuance and initially decided to terminate the CPO contract," USPS writes. "However, after a more thorough review of the CPO contract, required changes to postal operations, and postal finances, Michigan 1 District Manager Richard Moreton has determined that the Salem CPO should remain open."

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Belleville DDA members dispute payment to local social media director

By Rosemary K. Otzman
Independent Editor

At the Nov. 20 meeting of the Belleville Downtown Development when it came time to approve payment of the bills there was a long discussion about the \$1,400 allocation to Kathleen Springer.

Treasurer Sabrina Richardson-Williams asked about the payment since it hadn't been on the original accounts payable list.

Assistant city manager Steve Jones, who serves as DDA Director, said he just got her bill and she helped him set up the DDA's social media site.

"We didn't approve hiring her," said DDA member Kelly McWilliams.

Jones said they don't have a longterm agreement.

McWilliams said she asked him directly earlier if he hired her and, "You avoided

the question... You can't ask us for our opinion and then go behind our backs and hire someone."

DDA chairperson Alicia McGovern said two months ago the DDA had a conversation and the majority of the board was not comfortable with Springer.

DDA member Mike Gatteri recalled that they agreed and the DDA asked Jones to reach out and find another company and if he couldn't find someone they could decide what to do.

Chairperson McGovern said they agreed Jones would look for someone out of this area and the issue would be brought back to the DDA.

Mayor Ken Voigt said they were going to look at the Visioning report they already had, but it didn't have specifics. Mayor Voigt said Jones has the right to spend

under \$5,000 without approval of the DDA board.

McGovern said the DDA didn't have that further conversation, but she knows he can spend that amount without DDA approval.

"You smacked our committee in the face," McWilliams said. She said they didn't need a local social media person.

Jones said he asked for other suggestions from the board and got none.

McWilliams said Jones gets paid for his job and she works many hours as a volunteer and this was showing disrespect for her as a volunteer.

DDA vice chairman John Winter, who was chairing the meeting because chairperson McGovern had been delayed, said, "We sit here for two hours and it should be 45 minutes. He made a decision."

Treasurer Richardson-Williams asked the DDA if they were going to approve Springer's check.

Board member Chris Donley asked if it was \$1,400 a month and Jones replied that was the setup fee and then it goes to \$800 a month for management.

McWilliams said Springer always worked for Van Buren Township and was paid by them. [KSpringer Media Management was on the accounts payable list for Van Buren Township on Nov. 19 for \$600 and \$400 for "social media ambassador and consulting."]

"We can continue or not," Jones said of the agreement with Springer.

"Steve took it upon himself to do this," said Mayor Ken Voigt. "He went ahead trying to get the job done."

McWilliams said she personally asked Jones if Springer's been hired and he said she hadn't.

"We just pay her? A donation?" McWilliams asked.

"She submitted a bill," Mayor Voigt said. "... This could have been handled better."

McGovern said to Jones, "You didn't follow through on what we talked about."

Chris Donley, chairman of the Marketing Committee, said he has been on the DDA for eight months and he came up with zero progress. He said he pushed to get something done and now they are doing Step 1 for social media marketing.

"This was a way to get the ball rolling and you have to pay to advertise on the site," Donley said.

McGovern asked who manages the site and Jones replied, "I have to manage it now."

"We can all agree to disagree," McGovern said. "I haven't seen this much discussion on the board in 13 years."

"What's really going on?" asked Richardson-Williams and Winter said it could be explained over coffee. "It's too late at night now. There's school tomorrow."

Richardson-Williams presented for approval accounts payable of \$202,365.97, which included the payment to Springer. The amount was approved by the board, 7-1, with McWilliams voting no. DDA member Valerie Kelley-Bonner was absent.

In other business at the one-hour-and-54-minute meeting, the DDA:

- Heard a half-hour presentation from Leigh Young on "Michigan Main Street," a program of the Michigan Economic Development Corp., part of a program that also runs nationwide. To get the grants offered, the DDA would have to have a full-time executive director and a dedicated budget. The goal is renaissance of healthy, vibrant downtowns. Donley asked for a copy of the slides she presented and she said she would send them. Voigt said the council had agreed to move forward on Michigan Main Street;

- Learned a city person reached out to Jones to support the city clock project at some level. Jones was directed to get the total cost of the Howard Replica clock the DDA favored and then talk to the benefactor about the level of support and bring everything back to the Dec. 18 meeting;

- Took no action on the hardware store wall repair. Jones reported the city engineer believes the lower cost option would be an effective solution and it would be under \$50,000. Voigt asked if they don't need to put in a new footing since the present footing is over 100 years old. Jones said they'll have someone cut the floor to inspect the footing and Voigt said to cut it in a couple of places. The DDA, which purchased the hardware store, is seeking the proper repair of the wall that is next to the former drug store wall, but not connected;

- Took no action, saying it needed more precise information before deciding to approve more than \$100,000 for an outdoor fitness court at Village Park to get a \$50,000 grant from the Priority Health Campaign. Voigt said the city thought it was an opportunity it didn't entirely like to pass up so it asked the DDA for help;

(continued on page 15)



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Belleville DDA

(continued from page 13)

- Agreed to go out for bids on the phragmites removal from Victoria Commons ponds. Jones said the water landscape company that services the ponds said it could burn the phragmite and follow up with chemicals at a cost of \$11,500 to start. When McGovern voiced concern about the longterm effects of the chemicals, Voigt said the state sets the rules on the chemicals. Richardson-Williams said the back pond is almost full with phragmites and resident Tara Edwards and another Victoria Commons resident were present to voice their concerns on the plants that were clogging their ponds. Voigt said that not much will be done with the ponds until spring. He said they want to make sure they get the best price;
- Heard McWilliams give a report on Economic Development and said the Fourth Street Square needs to be better maintained and, "We have to focus on keeping it clean and looking nice... It's our center and looks unmaintained a lot." She said the benches have been moved and

Jones said after Thanksgiving the benches will be pulled out, repaired, and stored for the winter. The benches were moved because they were in the way of activities, it was noted. She also said she got calls from people about the Scarecrow contest and she thinks the DDA should send out a letter to those who entered to thank them. Jones said he would send out an email blast to participants. McWilliams said the scarecrows were picked up unexpectedly and Jones said if there are things on the scarecrows people would like to retrieve the scarecrows are at the DPW lot;

- Heard Donley report on the Marketing Committee. He said he attended a meeting at the Holiday Inn Express and they talked about how to market restaurants and events in the city. The three motels, all owned by the same company, do shuttle runs into the city. He said city businesses need to formalize what they can offer for a fun night out to these transient visitors from all over the world. He also said the two-page spread in Van Buren Today magazine turned out nicely;
- Heard Richardson-Williams report for the Arts and Culture committee that she

called the high school principal and the principal called back about a project with students. The principal named two people who will call her to continue project plans. Richardson-Williams also said there is no need to hang drapes behind the art on the hardware store windows since they can be

seen. DDA members thanked artist Vera Redden and said the art looked great;

- Heard McGovern say an annual review for Jones should be set soon; and
- Heard artist Redden say she has a degree in graphic communication and design and would be glad to help the DDA.

Belleville planning commission works to revise by-laws

By Rosemary K. Otzman
Independent Editor

At the Nov. 14 meeting of the Belleville Planning Commission, city council liaison/commission vice-chairperson Julie Kissel presented her rewriting of the commission's by-laws for their review.

She provided a version that was marked in red showing the changes and additions and said she will come up with a clean copy for the Dec. 12 meeting.

Commission chairman Michael Hawkins said the by-laws need to be reviewed so everyone knows what the rules are.

Assistant city manager Steve Jones said procedures were lost and not written down and people left, explaining deficiencies in the by-laws.

Kissel said it could be a part of the by-laws that the by-laws be reviewed each January.

In other business at the Nov. 14 meeting, the commission:

- Heard Kissel report that they are still looking into the removal of a curb cut at 337 Main St. that reportedly was supposed to be a part of construction seven years ago. Kissel said there are two sections and they are hoping to get it sorted out. Assistant city manager Steve Jones said the project shouldn't have been finalized without all the work being done, but the city has tightened up the processes now;

- Heard a follow-up on the improper signage at 533 Main St. It was noted commissioner Jim Courage had a talk with the property owner and the problem is resolved;

- Heard assistant city manager Jones say the Davenport Brothers residential development at 512 Sumpter Road is on hold as they work out details of the infrastructure. He said the city engineer should have been brought in last year to look at the details of where they can hook up underground lines at the city site which is on the border of Van Buren Township. Jones said changes have been made and so Davenport will have to resubmit plans to the city before getting a new permit to build; and

- Heard Jones say that the Master Plan project is a big undertaking and he appreciates the expertise of lead consultant Jill Bahm of Giffels Webster who has worked with the city for 15-16 years. Working with her is senior planner Andrew Aamodt, who gave a presentation at the Nov. 14 meeting.

Master Plan Survey

Residents of the city of Belleville, those

who work in the city, and those with interest in the city are asked to share their information and ideas to help with the rewriting of the Belleville Master Plan.

Go to:
www.engage.giffelswebster.com/belleville-master-plan

VBT resident James Wigginton climbs tower stairs in 43th state

James Wigginton of Van Buren Township is planning to reach his goal this summer of climbing the steps of the tallest building in each of the 50 states to earn funds for thyroid cancer research and for Folds of Honor scholarships.

On Nov. 5 he climbed the building with the most stairs in Arkansas, making stairclimb #43. Staircase #42 was the 44 Monroe Building in Phoenix, AZ.

Wigginton also received permission to climb the stairs of the tallest building in Idaho, which he plans to do in the next few weeks.

He said the big news is that ConocoPhillips in Alaska called to say he not only had permission to climb their tallest building in Alaska, but they want to do a big TV and media blitz about it.

He said his goal is to finish four other climbs in the next three months, so Alaska will be number 49, in honor of their statehood.

His challenges are New Jersey, Massachusetts, Florida, and Hawaii before the end of February.

New York will be number 50, as it is planned to be an official race in June.

Wigginton, a 75-year-old Marine, continues these climbs to bring awareness and funding to Folds of Honor, a veterans' organization that has provided more than 57,000 scholarships for families of fallen or disabled military and first-responders in the last 17 years, and for the Punya Thyroid Cancer Fund which has supported doctors at the University of Michigan in research and treatment improvements that have increased the quality and length of life of stage 4 thyroid cancer patients by almost five times.

The fund was created in memory of his late wife.

**One Call Does It All...
...At The Independent
734-699-9020**

VAN BUREN TOWNSHIP
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

SANTA PAWS

You and your four-legged friend are invited to dress in holiday attire for a photo op with Santa Paws!

DECEMBER 04 and DECEMBER 11
5 to 7 pm

Santa Paws will be present at VBT DDA
10151 Belleville Rd, Van Buren Twp.

Email communications@vanburen-mi.org or call 734-699-8941 to schedule your photo op.
This year welcoming dogs.

vanburenda.com

Van Buren Township Police Dispatch Log

There were 285 dispatch calls reported by Van Buren Township police last week including the following.

Sunday, Nov. 17:

0104 – 911 welfare check, Parkwood Dr.
0112 – fight, S. I-94 Service Dr.
0407 – assist fire dept., Haggerty Rd. / W. I-94 Haggerty ramp
0456 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, N. I-94 Service Dr.
0619 – overdose, Parkwood Dr.
0620 – domestic, Denton Rd.
0818 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Robbe Rd.
xxxx – intrusion alarm, Timberview Ct.
0930 – personal injury accident, W. Huron River
1048 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Harmony Ln./Rickman Dr.
1527 – dumping complaint, Belleville Rd.
1215 – road hazard, EB Michigan Ave./bypass
xxxx – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Harmony Ln.
1255 – shooting, Martz Rd.
1545 – vehicle lockout, Hannan Rd.
1807 – private property/property damage accident, Belleville Rd.
1807 – private property/property damage accident, Belleville Rd.

Monday, Nov. 18:

0658 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Tyler Rd.
0831 – civil matter, Denton Rd.
0849 – property damage accident, W. Huron River Dr. / Rawsonville Rd.
0856 – private property/property damage accident, Westlake Cir.
1006 – hospice death, Lancaster Dr.
1018 – juvenile complaint, McBride
1114 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Westlake Cir.
1207 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Dewitt Rd.

1256 – juvenile complaint, McBride
1549 – private property impound, Westlake Cir.
1638 – retail fraud, Belleville Rd.
1643 – larceny, N. I-94 Service Dr.
1650 – retail fraud, Belleville Rd.
1704 – missing person, America
1735 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Rawsonville Rd.
xxxx – intrusion alarm, Red Oak Dr.
1857 – domestic, S. I-94 Service Dr.
1856 – fraud, N. I-94 Service Dr.
1840 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, E. Huron River Dr.
1921 – road hazard, Van Born Rd./Haggerty Rd.
1929 – retail fraud, Belleville Rd.
2019 – intrusion alarm, Marlowe Ave.
2226 – family trouble, Dewitt Rd.
2321 – mental subject, Dewitt Rd.

Tuesday, Nov. 19:

0054 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, W. Huron River Dr.
0353 – welfare check, Ecorse Rd./Belleville Rd.
0433 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Oak Ln.
xxxx – repossession, N. Cumberland Dr.
0646 – intrusion alarm, Freedom Way/Country Ln.
0624 – assist other dept., Belleville Rd.
0934 – family trouble, N. Woodbury Dr.
1042 – ordinance violation – all 7300 MICR codes, Hayes St.
1043 – ordinance violation – all 7300 MICR codes, Morton Taylor Rd.
1114 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Ecorse Rd./Belleville Rd.
1155 – unauthorized driving away of auto, N. I-94 Service Dr.
xxxx – issue gun permit, Tyler Rd.
1415 – civil matter, Ayres Ave.
1432 – ordinance violation – all 7300 MICR codes, Hawthorne Ct.
1442 – threat, Outer Dr.
1509 – retail fraud, Belleville Rd.
1503 – family trouble, N. Ponderosa Trl.
1609 – intrusion alarm, S. I-94 Service Dr.
1612 – ordinance violation – all 7300 MICR codes, Harmony Ln.

1617 – property damage accident, Rawsonville Rd.
1826 – welfare check, Anna Dr.
1727 – disorderly, N. I-94 Service Dr.
xxxx – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Salem Ct.
1822 – domestic, Bradley Dr.
xxxx – intrusion alarm, Daniel Dr.
1823 – leaving the scene of a property damage accident, Belleville Rd./N. I-94 Service Dr.
1838 – threat, Oak Ln.
1931 – personal injury accident, W. Huron River Dr./Harbour Pointe Dr.
1933 – vehicle lockout, Haggerty Rd.
1946 – road hazard, Denton Rd./Ecorse Rd.
2152 – personal injury accident, Van Born Rd. / S. Lilley

Wednesday, Nov. 20:

0643 – warrant arrest, Rawsonville Rd.
0912 – ordinance violation – all 7300 MICR codes, Patty Ln./Jeremy
0953 – juvenile complaint, McBride
1007 – threat, Outer Dr.
xxxx – repossession, Alden Ave.
1040 – ordinance violation – all 7300 MICR codes, Tavistock Dr.
1044 – ordinance violation – all 7300 MICR codes, Andover/Tavistock
1327 – neighbor trouble, Rogers Ave.
1426 – hospice death, S. Timberview Dr.
1511 – prisoner transport, S. Wayne Rd.
1612 – property damage accident, Belleville/Tyler
1706 – civil matter, Parkwood Dr.
xxxx – traffic offense, Arthur St.
1909 – neighbor trouble, Jeremy Rd.
1827 – property damage accident, Ecorse/I-275
1831 – property damage accident, Tyler/Lancaster
1947 – motorist assist, Tyler Rd.
2002 – threat, Denton Rd.
2115 – 911 welfare check, N. I-94 Service Dr.
2236 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Ecorse Rd./Belleville Rd.
2249 – motorist assist, Rawsonville I-94 ramp E. / E. I-94

Thursday, Nov. 21:

xxxx – repossession, Timberland Dr.
0034 – assist other dept., Beckley Rd.
0045 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Beckley Rd.
0135 – intrusion alarm, Morton Taylor Rd.
0244 – 911 welfare check, Locust Dr.
xxxx – assist other dept., Ecorse Rd.
xxxx – repossession, Denton Rd.
1049 – unattended death, Savage Rd.
1118 – malicious destruction of property, Hardwood Dr.
1123 – larceny from auto, Savage Rd.
1223 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Hannan Rd.
1237 – property damage accident, Quirk Rd. / N. I-94 Service Dr.
1435 – property damage accident, E. Huron River Dr. / Haggerty Rd.
1523 – welfare check, Chinkapin Dr.
1627 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, E. Huron River Dr.
1644 – malicious destruction of property, Belleville Rd.

1831 – missing person, Elwell Rd.
1922 – breaking & entering, Denton Rd.
2023 – welfare check, Bayshore Dr.
2128 – animal complaint, Lake Point Blvd.
2135 – disorderly, S. I-94 Service Dr.
2214 – intrusion alarm, Michigan Ave.
2255 – welfare check, Edison Lake Rd.
2303 – road hazard, Belleville Rd./Van Born

Friday, Nov. 22:

0136 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Hull Rd.
0832 – threat, Elwell Rd.
xxxx – repossession, Chandler
1142 – animal complaint, Martz Rd.
1200 – found property/child, Edgedale Dr.
1229 – felony assault, W. I-94/Haggerty Rd.
1317 – retail fraud, Belleville Rd.
1410 – civil matter, Haggerty Rd.
1506 – found property/child, N. I-94 Service Dr.
1518 – property damage accident, Ecorse Rd. / Visteon Way
1524 – ordinance violation – all 7300 MICR codes, Laguna Dr.
1633 – civil matter, Westlake Cir.
1638 – property damage accident, Belleville Rd.
1716 – domestic, Victoria St.
1720 – larceny, Belleville Rd.

1738 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, E. Walden Dr.
1810 – property damage accident, Belleville Rd. / S. I-94 Service Dr.
1842 – welfare check, Woodgrove Dr.
1836 – welfare check, Oak Ln.
1915 – property damage accident, Rawsonville Rd. / Michigan Ave.
1932 – juvenile complaint, Parkwood Dr.
2030 – property damage accident, Belleville Rd. / S. I-94 Service Dr.
2037 – intrusion alarm, Ecorse Rd.
2106 – family trouble, Savage Rd.
2255 – property damage accident, Belleville Rd. / N. I-94 Service Dr.
2318 – traffic offense, Rawsonville Rd. / W. Huron River Dr.
2338 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Belleville Rd.

Saturday, Nov. 23:

0002 – assist fire dept., Parkwood Dr.
0048 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Arthur St.
0200 – domestic, Colonial Rd.
0307 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Denton Rd.
0644 – property damage accident, Savage Rd.
0910 – intrusion alarm, Lake Point Blvd.
0915 – intrusion alarm, Paloma Dr.
0945 – retail fraud, Belleville Rd.
0950 – civil matter, Martinsville Rd.
1036 – retail fraud, Belleville Rd.
xxxx – welfare check, Parkwood DR.
1119 – juvenile complaint, Sylvia Dr.
1200 – assist fire dept., N. I-94 Service Dr.
1216 – intrusion alarm, Pebblebrook Dr.
1235 – intrusion alarm, Hull Rd.
1415 – civil matter, Rawsonville Rd.
1426 – family trouble, Freedom Way
1501 – intrusion alarm, Ecorse Rd.
1509 – juvenile complaint, Michigan Ave.
xxxx – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Belleville Rd.
xxxx – animal complaint, Brookside Dr.
1646 – assist fire dept., Jeannette Ave.
1959 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Red Oak Dr.
2038 – property check, Buchanan St.
2048 – neighbor trouble, Freedom Way
2137 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, N. I-94 Service Dr.
2152 – civil matter, Water's Edge Ln.
Also, on this week's log are 110 traffic stops, 24 of which are on the I-94 and I-275 freeways.

Belleville Police Dispatch Log

Sunday, Nov. 17:

0115 – assist other dept., S. I-94 Service Dr.
0922 – property damage accident, W. Huron River
1542 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Sumpter Rd./Owen St.
1711 – road hazard, Main St./High St.

Monday, Nov. 18:

0104 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Menlo Park Dr.
1114 – civil matter, W. Columbia Ave.
1154 – disorderly, E. Columbia Ave.
1655 – assist fire dept., S. Biggs Ave.

Tuesday, Nov. 19:

0538 – family trouble, Estrada
0715 – road hazard, E. Huron River Dr. / N. Edgemont Ave.
1927 – personal injury accident, W. Huron River Dr. / Harbour Pointe Dr.
2008 – assist citizen, Victorian Ln./Savage Rd.

Wednesday, Nov. 20:

1210 – juvenile complaint, Owen St.
1333 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, E. Huron River Dr.
1515 – welfare check, Owen St./Sumpter Rd.
1657 – fraud, S. Industrial Park Dr.
1844 – property check, Henry P. Smith subdivision
2310 – property check, Main St.

Thursday, Nov. 21

0209 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, W. Columbia Ave.
0901 – parking complaint, Menlo Park Dr.
1023 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, W. Columbia Ave.

1219 – private property impound, Carmell St.
1340 – misc. complaint, Pirate Puppies
Friday, Nov. 22:
1040 – parking complaint, Oxford Ct.
1054 – ordinance violation – all 7300 MICR codes, E. Waterbury Ct.
1536 – assist citizen, Loza Ln.

Saturday, Nov. 23:

0346 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Hull Rd.
There are 96 reports on this week's log and 70 of those are traffic stops.

Sumpter Township Police Dispatch Log

Sunday, Nov. 17:

0136 – suspicious person, 22000 bl. Martinsville
0311 – 911 hangup, Delaware St.
0713 – civil matter, Magnolia Dr.
0724 – civil matter, Sumpter Rd./Willis Rd.
1056 – animal complaint, 49000 bl. Wear Rd.
1421 – ORV complaint, 44000 bl. Clay Rd.
1452 – ORV complaint, Wear/Martinsville
1518 – traffic complaint/hazard, Willis Rd. / Martinsville Rd.
1558 – larceny complaint, Rustic Ln.
1757 – follow-up investigation, Wyoming St.
1801 – dumping complaint, 20000 bl. Elwell Rd.
1816 – citizen assist, 47000 bl. Wear Rd.
1849 – property damage accident, Harris Rd. / Martinsville Rd.
1931 – family trouble, Mulberry Dr.
2149 – juvenile matter, 50000 bl. Willis

Monday, Nov. 18:

0238 – juvenile matter, 19000 bl. Wilmot Rd.
0431 – follow-up investigation, 19000 bl. Wilmot
1032 – mental health call, 45000 bl. Bontekoe
1307 – mental health call, Mulberry
1525 – follow-up investigation, 24000 bl. Sherwood Rd.

1600 – fire dept. assist, Wayside Dr.
1739 – motorist assist, Oakville Waltz/Karr Rd.
1757 – traffic flee/elude, Rd.
1757 – animal complaint, 20000 bl. Martinsville
1947 – fire dept. assist, Alaska St.
2003 – suspicious person, 24000 bl. Sherwood Rd.
2112 – 911 hangup, Washington St.
2340 – fire dept. assist, Idaho St.

Tuesday, Nov. 19:

0529 – 911 hangup, Rustic Ln./Rustic Ln.
0717 – family trouble, Tulip Dr.
1234 – suspicious circumstance, Arkona/Clark
1245 – 911 hangup, 28000 bl. Martinville Rd.
1248 – civil matter, Iowa St.
1256 – suspicious circumstance, 46000 bl. Harris
1324 – civil matter, Rustic Ln.
1419 – personal injury accident, Clark Rd. / Oakville Waltz Rd.
1953 – animal complaint, Arizona St.
2005 – traffic complaint/hazard, Delaware St.
2257 – traffic complaint/hazard, Texas St.

Wednesday, Nov. 20:

0321 – suspicious circumstance, Colorado St.
1115 – civil matter, 48000 bl. Wear Rd.
1133 – suspicious circumstance, 22000 bl. Martinsville Rd.
1311 – assist other agency, 22000 bl. Sherwood
1504 – fire dept. assist, Rustic Ln.
1600 – neighbor dispute, 28000 bl. Martinsville
1606 – traffic complaint/hazard, 17000 bl. Savage
1800 – 911 hangup, Rustic Ln.
1904 – family trouble, 44000 bl. Wear Rd.
2100 – fire dept. assist, 47000 bl. Wear Rd.
2104 – family trouble, Knollwood Dr.
2316 – welfare check, Hampshire Dr.
2325 – suspicious circumstance, Alaska St.

Thursday, Nov. 21:

0016 – suspicious circumstance, Colorado St.
0048 – 911 hangup, 48000 bl. Sully Dr.
0740 – property damage accident, 47000 bl. Bemis
0935 – assist other agency, 23000 bl. Sumpter Rd.
1100 – 911 hangup, 8100 bl. Rawsonville Rd.
1203 – complaint/hazard, Sumpter/Willis
1222 – follow-up investigation, 18000 bl. Morton
1631 – suspicious circumstance, Rustic Ln.
2359 – noise complaint, Washington/Colorado

Friday, Nov. 22:

0147 – family trouble, Timberlane Dr.
0648 – juvenile matter, Wayside Dr.

(Continued on page 17)

Charter Township of Van Buren Public Notice

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF VAN BUREN BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES NOVEMBER 19, 2024

Supervisor McNamara called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Board Room. Zoom Meeting ID for public participation: 894 2765 4392. Present: Supervisor McNamara, Treasurer Budd, Clerk Wright, Trustee Boynton, Trustee Martin, and Trustee Kelley. Absent/Excused: Trustee Frazier. Others in attendance: Deputy Supervisor Selman, Recording Assistant Beaudry, Director of Community Services Renaud, Deputy Director of Community Services Dohring, Director of Water and Sewer Lawrence, Director of Human Resources Sumpter, Director of Parks Locke, Director of Public Services Lockett, Director of Municipal Services Akers, Director of Recreation Gerhart and an audience of twelve.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE AGENDA:

Supervisor McNamara outlined the items appearing on the agenda. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:** Wright moved, Kelley seconded to approve the amended agenda moving New Business Item #11: To consider approval of Resolution 2024-21: Annual Exemption Opt Out 2025 to New Business Item #1. Motion Carried.

ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA:

Boynton moved, Wright seconded to approve the Consent Agenda: Board Meeting Minutes of October 15, 2024, Prepaid List of October 17, 2024, Prepaid List of October 24, 2024, Prepaid List of October 31, 2024, Prepaid List of November 7, 2024, Election Worker Payroll list for the November 5 General Election, Voucher List of November 19, 2024, Approval of Chloe Michael's Personal Service Agreement and to authorize Supervisor McNamara and Clerk Wright to execute the agreement, Approval of Resolution 2024-24: Washtenaw Area Mutual Aid Council Interlocal Agreement, Approval of the re-appointments of Penny Young, Harry Roesch, Elaine Gutierrez, and Gina Dorazio (alternate) to the Board of Review with terms to expire December 31, 2026, and Approval of 2024 Policies and Procedures updates and Earned Sick Time Act. Motion Carried.

PUBLIC HEARING: Budd moved, Boynton seconded to open the public hearing at 6:06 p.m. to receive comment on the creation of a special assessment district for Walden Woods Subdivision Phases Four and Five for street lighting operational costs. Motion Carried.

Budd moved, Martin seconded to close the public hearing at 6:08 p.m. Motion Carried.

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E / ANNOUNCEMENTS/PRESENTATIONS:

DDA Board Member and longtime Van Buren Township resident Carol Bird passed away yesterday; the Township website domain name and email addresses will change from vanburen-mi.org to VBTmi.gov; and Clerk Wright reported a successful general election with a 69.55% voter turnout; and the Clerk thanked all the election workers and Clerk's Office staff who put in a lot of hours and hard work this election cycle.

PUBLIC COMMENT (Unfinished and New Business): None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Wright moved, Budd seconded to approve Resolution 2024-21: Annual Exemption Opt Out 2025. Roll Call Vote. Yeas: McNamara, Wright, Budd, Martin, Kelley and Boynton.

Nays: None. Absent/Excused: Frazier Motion Carried.

Martin moved, Boynton seconded to approve a request by Todd Waller for the excavation, removal, and off-site hauling of roughly 93,000 cubic yards of soil to create a 5-acre pond for agricultural purposes. Martin and Boynton then amended their motion to rescind the previous approved motion. Finally, Wright moved, Budd seconded to postpone the original motion pending further discussion. Motion Carried.

Wright moved, Martin seconded to approve the purchase of a John Deere X754 Series Tractor with specified options for the amount of \$30,004.10 from John Deere of South Lyon. Motion Carried.

Kelley moved, Budd seconded to approve a boom mower attachment purchase for the amount of \$72,400 from John Deere of South Lyon. Motion Carried.

Wright moved, Kelley seconded to approve the purchase of a 2024 Ford Escape and a 2025 Ford Explorer from Atchinson Ford for a total amount of \$69,536. Motion Carried.

Boynton moved, Budd seconded to approve a proposal from Allied Fence and Security Systems, Inc. to install a 4-foot-tall fence around the detention pond at Quirk Park in the amount of \$27,980. Motion Carried.

Boynton moved, Martin seconded to approve the selection of Erie Construction LLC for the construction of the Iron Belle Trail Section D for \$1,940,337 in addition to a 10% contingency for a total of \$2,134,370.70. Motion Carried.

Wright moved, Kelley seconded to approve a special land use request for a gasoline station and drive thru restaurant (Planning Case 23-073) for Symmetry Management to be located at the northwest corner of Ecorse and Haggerty Road. Motion Carried.

Wright moved, Martin seconded to approve a proposal from Fishbeck to perform design engineering services for a sidewalk project on the north side of Tyler Road for an amount of \$53,360. Motion Carried.

Martin moved, Kelley seconded to approve Resolution 2024-22: A resolution to establish the Walden Woods Phase Four and Five special assessment district for streetlight operation and maintenance. Motion Carried.

Wright moved, Budd seconded to approve Resolution 2024-23: A resolution to approve the Walden Woods Phase Four and Five special assessment roll for streetlight operation and maintenance. Motion Carried.

REPORTS: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS: DDA Director Coburn reminded everyone of the second annual Light up the Park at Harris Park taking place on Wednesday, November 20th at 6:00 p.m., and a resident asked if noise pollution caused by motorcyclists leaving Diamondback Saloon late at night could be addressed.

BOARD COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS: All board members thanked public for voting them in and thanked fellow board members for their support, the Board thanked Sherry Frazier for her time on the board and congratulated Will Frazier on him being elected.

ADJOURNMENT: Boynton moved, Wright seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:11 p.m. Motion Carried.

Leon Wright, Township Clerk
Kevin McNamara, Supervisor
Published: November 28, 2024

Sumpter Township Police Dispatch Log

(continued from page 16)

- 0850 – animal complaint, 43000 bl. Harris Rd.
- 0922 – 911 hangup, Magnolia Dr.
- 1021 – citizen assist, 23000 bl. Sumpter Rd.
- 1052 – property damage accident, 39000 bl. Willis
- 1100 – citizen assist, 44000 bl. Paris Dr.
- 1132 – 911 hangup, 23000 bl. Carleton West Rd.
- 1655 – fire dept. assist, 48000 bl. Willow Rd.
- 1739 – suspicious vehicle, 24000 bl. Sherwood Rd.
- 2010 – welfare check, 43000 bl. Willis Ct.
- 2142 – traffic complaint/hazard, 22000 bl. Bohn
- 2215 – alarm, 8300 bl. Rawsonville Rd.
- 2321 – noise complaint, Washington St.

Saturday, Nov. 23:

- 0026 – MISD warrant arrest, Sumpter/Willis
 - 0049 – welfare check, 19000 bl. Clark Rd.
 - 0104 – 911 hangup, Carriage Ln.
 - 0138 – citizen assist, Rawsonville/Willis
 - 0835 – family trouble, Delaware St.
 - 1015 – animal complaint, Wear Rd./Sherwood Rd.
 - 1027 – suspicious circumstance, Arizona St.
 - 1118 – suspicious circumstance, 20000 bl. Sherwood Rd.
 - 1621 – property damage accident, 17000 bl. Sumpter Rd.
 - 1806 – civil matter, 25000 bl. Sumpter Rd.
 - 1827 – 911 hangup, New Mexico St.
 - 2330 – suspicious circumstance, Wyoming St.
- Also on this week's log are 183 patrol checks, 79 traffic stops, and 20 misc. details.

Read The Newspaper On The Web!

The Belleville-Area Independent Website is Online! Visit us @ bellevilleareaindependent.com

Gov. Whitmer appoints VBT resident to School Retirement System Brd.

On Nov. 14, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer announced a list of her appointments to various state boards and commissions.

Michelle Dollis-Brady of Van Buren Township was named to the Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System Board.

Dollis-Brady is the senior director of health and welfare strategy at Corewell Health. She obtained a Bachelor of Science in business administration and marketing at Louisiana State University.

Michelle Dollis-Brady is appointed as a member of the general public with experience in actuarial science or health insurance for a term commencing Nov. 14, 2024, and expiring March 30, 2026. Dollis-Brady succeeds Alan Sonnanstine, whose term has expired.

The Michigan Public School Employees' Retirement System Board is responsible for general oversight of retirement, survivor, and disability benefits to employees in public school districts, intermediate school districts, community colleges, and certain universities.

This appointment is subject to the advice and consent of the senate.

"Today you are You, that is truer than true. There is no one alive who is Youer than You."
– Dr. Seuss, "Happy Birthday to You!"

Charter Township of Van Buren Public Notice

DECEMBER BOARD OF REVIEW CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF VAN BUREN

NOTICE TO THE TAXPAYERS AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF VAN BUREN CHARTER TOWNSHIP

The BOARD OF REVIEW of the Charter Township of Van Buren will meet at the Township Hall, 46425 Tyler Road on Tuesday, December 10, 2024 from 2:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

The purpose of this meeting will be:

- 1) To correct clerical errors or mutual mistakes of fact;
- 2) Poverty Exemptions.

Any property owner who believes they qualify should contact the Van Buren Township Assessing Department at 734.699.8946 prior to December 10, 2024.

Leon Wright
Van Buren Charter Township

Post: November 21, 2024
Publish: November 21, 2024
November 27, 2024
December 5, 2024

DTE representative explains power plans to Belleville City Council

By Rosemary K. Otzman
Independent Editor

On Monday, the Belleville City Council heard a report from Barbara J. Rykwald, DTE Energy Manager of Corporate and Government Affairs, on what improvements DTE is planning in the city.

She was invited by the council to speak about the ongoing city problems with power outages, especially in the eastern side of town.

She brought only a laptop computer and sat down facing the council and invited the five people in the audience to stand up and watch her computer over her shoulder.

She showed 48111 and Robb and Elwell roads which are getting upgrades.

Rykwald spoke of how tree limbs cause most of the power outages, with birds and animals causing a small number.

She said in 2025 they will be putting new poles and shorter, six-foot fiberglass crossarms on the poles in the city. People will see piles of poles, she said.

"You are taking steps to make our service more reliable," Mayor Ken Voigt stated and she agreed.

Mayor Pro Tem Kelly Bates, who lives in Victoria Commons, complained about the outages there and said since their power lines are underground, she doesn't know why power goes out.

Fire Chief II Chris Zweng said Belle Villa is tied into Victoria Commons and trees are a problem in Belle Villa.

Councilman Randy Priest said there are a lot of very old, bad power poles in the city and one that is near the museum is the same one seen in a picture taken in the early 1900s. Rykwald said people could send a picture of bad poles to DTE or its address or the pole number or the street crossing location.

Chief Zweng asked if DTE is going to get rid of the big generator they keep bringing into the city. He said it is a safety concern and noisy.

Rykwald said they are working on it, but it is kept to make sure people are not without power.

Councilman Priest told of how he and his wife were out of town when an electrical brownout ruined their refrigerator.

Rykwald said people should unplug their equipment and report the brownout right away.

Priest said they were not home and didn't know about the power. He asked if there wasn't a way to turn the power off completely instead of letting a brownout ruin appliances.

Rykwald said there are programs to pay people for lost appliances.

Rykwald said the public could go to DTE Power Improvement Map on line and see what is planned in the next five years in their area to improve power reliability. She said they are putting in closure devices that cut off power to a troublesome area so other areas can continue to have electrical service.

After she left, Mayor Voigt said this is the

first time DTE came out to talk since he's been on the council.

In other business at the one-hour meeting, the council:

- Heard city manager Jason Smith discuss the SEMCOG Road Safety Audit Recommendation Report and explain things that should be planned in the city to qualify for a big Safe Streets for All grant. The changes total about \$4 million and Mayor Voigt called it "pie in the sky, unless we get a really good grant." The deadline to apply for the grant is in March and results will come in April or May. He said the March grant would cover what's been done on planning, Smith said. Changes the city has endorsed include a mini-

Public hearing Dec. 2 in VBT for proposed I-94 CAV corridor

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) has completed an environmental assessment (EA) and preferred alternative (PA) for the proposed I-94 connected and automated vehicle (CAV) corridor project in Washtenaw and Wayne counties, and will conduct a public hearing to receive comments regarding the EA.

Who: Community stakeholders
Local businesses
Interested residents
MDOT and local officials

When: Monday, Dec. 2

Three sessions will be available for public participation:
10 - 11:30 a.m.
1 - 2:30 p.m.
5 - 6:30 p.m.

The same information will be shared at all three sessions. The presentations will begin approximately 15 minutes after the session begins.

Where: Van Buren Township Hall, 46425 Tyler Rd., Van Buren Township

Accessibility: Attendees who require mobility, visual, hearing, written, or other assistance for effective participation should contact Orlando Curry at (517) 241-7462 or CurryO@Michigan.gov preferably at least five business days prior to the scheduled meeting. Forms are located on the [Title VI webpage](#). Requests made after this timeframe will be evaluated and honored to the extent possible.

Project information: MDOT has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) for the proposed I-94 CAV corridor project along 39.3 miles of I-94 from Ann Arbor-Saline Road in Ann Arbor to M-10 (Lodge Freeway) in Detroit. The purpose of the proposed CAV project is to improve the corridor with smart road technology, improve pavement conditions and operations, and equip the existing inside general-purpose lane with technology that enhances road operations and supports CAVs. Vehicles will be able to

roundabout at Third Street, sign upgrades, curb extensions at Second, Third, and Fifth/High streets, plus a semi-roundabout at Five Points;

- Approved a proclamation honoring the life of the late Iona M. Merriwether who recently died at the age of 91. She cared for children of local working families and her late husband was a veteran and served with the Van Buren Township Police Department;

- Decided that the holiday light judging will be done by council members on Dec. 6 and 7, with winners honored at the Dec. 16 council meeting;

- Approved paying half of the \$5,320 needed for Snider Electric to fix the

enter the lane through access points, which are breaks between physical separation that are at least 2,000 feet long to allow for merging.

MDOT has encouraged public involvement throughout the study process with multiple in-person and virtual open houses held in 2023 and 2024.

The EA is now available for review and comment online at www.Michigan.gov/CAVProject. That website will also feature a copy of the complete transcript, including all the written and recorded oral comments received.

Public comment:

The EA document is now open for public review and comment at www.Michigan.gov/CAVProject. Printed copies of the EA document are also available for public review at designated locations listed on the project website. At the hearing, there will be opportunities to ask questions, view a presentation and publicly share your comments. A court reporter will record public comments and the formal presentation and will be available to take comments in private for inclusion in the

Doane's Landing power box that furnishes electricity for the light and irrigation. The city is asking the Downtown Development Authority to pay the other half;

- Named city manager Smith as the new Street Administrator. A former DPS director had been MDOT street administrator, but he is gone; and

- Heard city manager Smith announce an intoxicated driver hit a light pole in front of the Thai restaurant over the weekend and the city had a spare pole to replace it and they will order more spares. He also announced the Tahoe 25 police car is now up and running.

public hearing transcript.

Comments must be emailed, submitted online or postmarked by Dec. 19, 2024. Comments can also be [submitted online](#), by email to MonismaM@Michigan.gov or by mail to: Monica Monsma, Van Wagoner Transportation Building, B245, 425 W. Ottawa St., Lansing, MI 48933.

More Letters

Thank you, St. Jude, for hearing my prayers

To the editor:

Please publish this letter without my name.

Dear Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Jude:

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BHS senior Underwood flips commitment from LSU to University of MI

Bryce Underwood, a Belleville High School senior and highly acclaimed quarterback, on Thursday flipped his signing commitment from where it had been since Jan. 6 at Louisiana State University to the University of Michigan.

He and his family visited LSU in Baton Rouge on Nov. 9, the beginning of a three-day trip to campus, where he was interviewed and photographed.

Underwood announced the change on social media on Nov. 21 after a trip to Ann Arbor to talk to the Wolverines and spend the day on Nov. 20. Underwood is the nationally ranked No. 1 quarterback prospect in the class of 2025.

During his freshman and sophomore seasons at Belleville, BHS won two back-to-back state championships. During his junior year, BHS got to Ford Field for the

state final game and lost. This year the team went as far as district championships.

Alumni donors from U of M have been rigorously courting Underwood and at last report had offered him \$12.5 million to change his commitment.

Over the weekend, sportscasters said Underwood is bringing friends with him to Michigan.

Underwood's Belleville teammate, Elijah Dotson, recently flipped from Pitt to Michigan. He went to visit Michigan on Nov. 20 with Underwood.

Sportscasters referred to the "life-changing" amount of money Underwood was offered which was much more than the \$1.5 million annually that LSU offered.

If Underwood signs his letter of intent with Michigan on Dec. 4, as expected, he will have the opportunity to enroll early

at Michigan and participate in spring practices.

The only player ahead of Underwood in some national rankings is QB Tavien St. Clair of Ohio. He has been verbally committed to Michigan's archrival Ohio State since June of 2023.

A new "Bryce Underwood Shop" has been announced where fans will be able to preorder Underwood merchandise as soon as he signs on Dec. 4.

At age 14, after his first BHS varsity football season in 2021, he earned MaxPreps National Freshman Player of the Year, the first Michigan player to earn the honor. As a junior, he was named Gatorade Michigan Player of the Year.

According to a story in the most recent *Van Buren Today* magazine, Underwood was in the eighth grade in 2021 when he

received his first "letter of interest" from a college program. He wasn't even playing football when the University of Kentucky reached out to him.

At the time, Underwood was training with Donovan Dooley, founder of Quarterback University, who works extensively with the NFL, NCAA and high school quarterbacks and teams. He also was playing 7-on-7 football, an Amateur Athletic Union-style league that emphasizes the passing game.

This year's tournament

In this year's Michigan High School Athletic Association regional tournament, Detroit Catholic Central beat Belleville, 35-21. Then Cass Tech beat Detroit Catholic Central in the semi-finals, 17-14. The final for Division 1 MHSAA state championship will bring Cass Tech against Hudson's at 7 p.m., Nov. 30, at Ford Field.

Belleville District Library suffers loss of internet, phone on Nov. 12

By Rosemary K. Otzman
Independent Editor

The internet and phone lines were down all day Nov. 12 at the Belleville Area District Library, but were back in service the next day.

Library Director Mary Jo Suchy told the library board at its regular meeting on the evening of Nov. 12 that all the libraries in the Library Network had the same issue and it is due to something happening downtown.

In other business at the 37-minute meeting, the library board:

- Learned the library finally received its penal fine payment for 2024 from Wayne County in the amount of \$39,198. A letter from the Library of Michigan explaining the problems it had with Wayne County miscalculating fines was included in the meeting packet. Director Suchy said there are two kinds of fines, for criminal and for traffic offenses, and the libraries get a combination of the two based on a formula.

She said Belleville may still end up owing money once all the calculations are done by the state. Board members said the local library shouldn't suffer because of other agencies' mistakes. There are no missing funds, only years of miscalculations, the state said in its letter;

- Congratulated newly elected board member Maria Jackson-Smith, who will be replacing John Juriga, who did not run for reelection. Board members also congratulated Joy Cichiewicz and Alma Hughes-Grubbs, who were re-elected. All three will be sworn in at a ceremony at the January meeting;

- Heard Suchy say the five-year-old library building is having five-year-old maintenance problems, including fixtures in the colored up-lighting in the children's room need to be replaced and the units have been ordered. Also, the large-screen HD monitors in the teen room and over the circulation room desk had to be replaced at a total cost of \$4,998. Suchy said the screens were flashing and getting bluer and bluer;

- Learned the Friends of the Library finished its used-book sale and are gearing up to sell the library's honey once it arrives. Suchy said there are 192 jars, from the beehives on the library roof, which are great stocking-stuffers. Also, at its October meeting the Friends voted to fund the training for the adult literacy volunteers as well as pick up the tab for refreshments and supplies for the library's Memory Café;

- Was informed the next classic movie night will be at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 5, and features Clint Eastwood in "Coogan's Bluff." This is the final movie in the fall series. Also, two book clubs are joining together at 7 p.m., Nov. 21, to discuss "The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store" by James McBride. Also, November is Dinovember at the library and the dinosaur costume is being used for several programs and activities. Also, a new Chess Masters group is meeting from 4 to 5 p.m. every Tuesday for ages 6-12 and their guardians;

and

- Learned the winning art from the recent Belleville Area Council for the Arts community art show is now on display in the library.



Nov. 27 – Sophie Blaharski
Nov. 29 – Linda Endicott

Do you have a birthday soon? Does someone you know have a birthday? Let us know and we will print the name as soon as possible. For more information, call (734) 699-9020.



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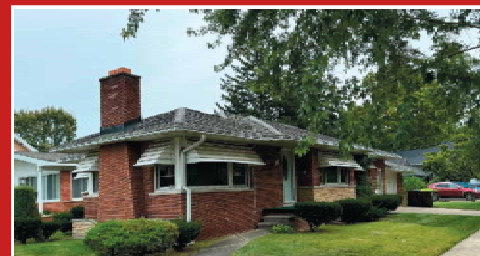
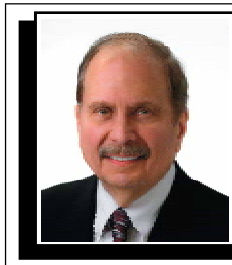
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