

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE  
TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES QUARTERLY MEETING  
2009 Township Drive  
Commerce Township, MI 48390  
Tuesday, October 24, 2023, 7:00 p.m.**

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

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

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

**ITEM 1: Public Comments**

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

Supervisor Gray amended the agenda:

Added **Grant Between the State of Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity and the Charter Township of Commerce** as Item 5.

Added the **2024 Employee Benefit Proposal** as Item 6.

Moved **2024 Township Budget Discussion** to Item 7.

Moved **Other Matters** to Item 8.

**ITEM 2: Closed Session for Contract Negotiations Pursuant to MCL 15.268(c)**

**MOTION** by Sovel, supported by Creech, to enter Closed Session.

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Ayes:** Sovel, Creech, Phillips, Weber, Berkheiser, Wagner, Gray

**Nays:**

**Absent:**

**ITEM 2: Closed Session for Contract Negotiations Pursuant to MCL 15.268(c)  
(motion continued)**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Entered Closed Session at 7:02 p.m.  
Returned from Closed Session at 7:20 p.m.

**MOTION** by Creech, supported by Phillips, to adjourn from Closed Session and approve the Closed Session Minutes.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**ITEM 3: IAFF Union Contract**

**MOTION** by Sovel, supported by Creech, to approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Charter Township of Commerce and the Professional Fire Fighters Association Union 2154 for the contract dated January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2028 and to also approve the Letter of Agreement

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**ITEM 4: Oakland County Equalization Contract**

Supervisor Gray brought the Board up to date on where the Township is with the new Oakland County Equalization Contract. He's been speaking with seven other jurisdictions that have not signed contracts and they are all working as a group to find other options. If the Township does sign it, there is a 90-day escape clause in the event the Township finds a better alternative.

**ITEM 5: Grant Between the State of Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity and the Charter Township of Commerce**

Supervisor Gray indicated the Township Attorney reviewed Grant No. Chartertwnship24 with LEO for nonmotorized pathways near the Library and found the grant agreeable without any changes but he offered the following comments:

It will need to be formally approved by the Township Board if it hasn't already been approved.

There are quite a few reporting requirements, which are common for Grants. Katelyn, or whomever is overseeing this project, should be made aware of the reporting requirements.

The State can terminate the Grant for any reason, including budget shortfalls.

Media releases regarding the Grant require prior written approval from the State.

**ITEM 5: Grant Between the State of Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity and the Charter Township of Commerce (continued)**

Supervisor Gray continued with this is a million-dollar contract to extend the nonmotorized pathways from the Commerce Township Community Library and Dodge Park #5 north to the intersection of Commerce Road, S. Commerce Road and S. Carroll Lake Road. A discussion followed regarding the Township's contribution, reimbursement intervals, and who would oversee the grant requirements.

**MOTION** by Weber, supported by Berkheiser, to approve Grant No. Chartertwnship24 with LEO for nonmotorized pathways near the Library.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**ITEM 6: 2024 Employee Benefit Proposal**

The Trustees discussed the proposal as presented by HR/Finance Director Massey. Director Massey said that all employee benefits would remain the same as 2023 with a slight increase in cost. The Firefighters' life insurance and short- and long-term disability coverage changed. Medical, vision, and dental insurance benefits would all remain the same.

**MOTION** by Sovel, supported by Phillips, to approve the health insurance, disability, life insurance, and short-term and long-term disability as presented.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**ITEM 7: 2024 Township Budget Discussion**

The Trustees reviewed the following proposed 2024 budgets:

General Fund – Other

General Fund – General Services

General Fund – Township Grounds and Maintenance

Improvement and Building Fund

General Fund - Revenue

**ITEM 8: Other Matters**

-Clerk Creech asked the Trustees for some direction in dealing with old rotting and falling down trees in the Township's cemetery. She has obtained 3 quotes from tree removal companies.

**MOTION** by Weber, supported by Berkheiser, to provide the Clerk the authority to spend up to \$35,000 for tree maintenance and removal from Curtis Cemetery and the Old Burying Grounds.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Clerk Creech reminded the Trustees that Trail or Treat is happening on Friday, October 27<sup>th</sup> at Scarlet's Smile and the Library.

**ITEM 8: Other Matters (Clerk Creech continued)**

Clerk Creech also reminded the Trustees that while Commerce Township does not have an election on November 7, 2023, Early Voting will begin on Saturday, October 28, 2023 at 8:30 a.m. at the Library for the City of Walled Lake and the City of Wixom. The Library is Regional Voting Site 8 for all future elections.

-Supervisor Gray said he obtained a quote to have approximately 12 dead pines trees near the Township Hall and at 2019 Township Drive removed.

**MOTION** by Berkheiser, supported by Creech, to authorize the Supervisor to spend up to \$12,000 to remove the dead trees near the Township Hall.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

-Treasurer Phillips let the Trustees know that there are petitions being circulated to eliminate property taxes and she knows a lot of people will jump on that without thinking about what property taxes actually pay for such as schools, the Fire Department and police services, the Library, and everything else funded through tax dollars. She asked that if the Trustees hear people talking about it if they would remind people that taxes support services you cannot use as "pay as you go" type services.

-Trustee Weber said he has 2 things:

1. This Saturday is the open house for Silo Ranch, October 28<sup>th</sup> from noon to 4:00 p.m.
2. I don't know if Supervisor Gray has any information on the email from Keenan Gotschall regarding the impact of the changes to the septic inspection ordinance. Jay James said he would bring that up at the Attorney-Engineer meeting.

Supervisor Gray answered that he did and it was discussed. Jay James called him and discussed his concerns.

-Supervisor Gray said he wanted to follow up on a couple of things. Last month Vanessa asked about the Road Commission doing a traffic study at several intersections. The Road Commission says those studies cost \$20,000 to \$30,000 per intersection. You can use tri-party dollars on those. One intersection they will be looking at is Glengary Road and S. Commerce Road. Supervisor Gray asked how much the Village of Wolverine Lake would contribute to that because it is their intersection and he has not heard back on that. The other options are resurfacing Bass Lake Road and adding other right- or left-turn lanes. Supervisor Gray said he thinks the Board needs to look at repaving Welch Road because it's deteriorating badly.

Supervisor Gray also told the Board that Walled Lake Central High School approached him again about the flashing lights in front of Central High School. He keeps going back and forth with Mr. Chatfield and Principal Meteyer. Supervisor Gray asked Mr. Chatfield if the School Board had agreed to pay for the light before he came to the Township?

**ITEM 8: Other Matters (Supervisor Gray continued)**


Supervisor Gray shared the last email he received from Mr. Chatfield. The project will cost approximately \$59,000 and the Township's share would be about \$19,700. He asked the Board how they would like to proceed. After some discussion, Supervisor Gray clarified that the School District wants the Township to approve our Tri-Party Funds to pay for the project and the School district will reimburse the Township. Trustee Sovel said the Township needs a contract written by the Township Attorney. Supervisor Gray said he will continue the conversation with the School District and report back to the Board at the next meeting.

Supervisor Gray reported his conversation with MSP regarding speed limits and crash analyses.

Supervisor Gray also gave the Board information regarding a new service that handles public relations for municipalities. The Board decided to discuss it at their next meeting.

**MOTION** by Creech, supported by Magner, to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 p.m.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

  
Melissa Creech, Clerk  
Charter Township of Commerce