

MEMBERS PRESENT: MONTGOMERY, WELLS, BUECHLER, BRUCKNER, ARMBRUSTER AND CRAWFORD
 MEMBERS ABSENT: BRADLEY (LATE ARRIVAL - 7:09 P.M.)
 ALSO PRESENT: MARK VANDERFEYST, FIRE CHIEF
 FIRE DEPARTMENT MEMBERS: JOE STOLTZ, BRENT WOOLMAN, JACOB PLATZER,
 ADAM MARSH, JERRY WOOLMAN, MARK SMITH
 KARYN BELANGER, VP OF MEDICAL SERVICES FOR TRI-HOSPITAL EMS
 TINA BRICKER, DIRECTOR OF ST. CLAIR COUNTY CENTRAL DISPATCH

Motion by Wells, seconded by Bruckner, to approve the Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING of February 19th, 2025; and the SPECIAL MEETING of February 24th, 2025, as printed and posted. Vote, Unanimous. MOTION PASSED.

CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE BOARD: *

The following individuals spoke in opposition to Item #3, New Business, requesting to rescind the directive that the Fire Department be sent to any medical that Tri-Hospital responds to "Emergency Status" in the Fire Department's coverage area:

Joe Stoltz, Fire Department	Elissa Feher	Margaret Allen
Bill Shagena	Vance Richardson	Angela Defrain
Luke Wilhelm	Sandra Richardson	Chris Bageris

7:09 P.M. - TRUSTEE BRADLEY ARRIVED

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion by Armbruster, seconded by Wells, to approve the Agenda, as printed and posted. Vote, Unanimous. MOTION PASSED.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

GENERAL FUND	\$ 3,116,795.10
FIRE DEPARTMENT FUND	\$ 2,394,818.25
FIRE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND	\$ 535,535.84
POLICE PROTECTION FUND	\$ 1,404,733.58
TRASH / RECYCLING FUND	\$ 734,254.36
BUILDING DEPARTMENT FUND	\$ 113,201.76
UTILITY RECEIVING FUND	\$ 1,547,128.55
TOTAL	\$ 9,846,467.44
MISCELLANEOUS PROJECTS	\$ 1,326,937.60
GRAND TOTAL	\$ 11,173,405.04

Motion by Buechler, seconded by Bruckner, to receive the Treasurer's Report, as given. Roll Call Vote, 7/0. MOTION PASSED. TOTAL TREASURER'S REPORT APPROVED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$ 11,173,405.04.

BILLS PRESENTED FOR APPROVAL:

GENERAL FUND	\$ 180,207.17
FIRE DEPARTMENT FUND	\$ 15,901.23
FIRE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND	\$ 8,341.30
POLICE PROTECTION FUND	\$ 0.00
TRASH / RECYCLING FUND	\$ 62,297.80
BUILDING DEPARTMENT FUND	\$ 317.47
UTILITY RECEIVING FUND	\$ 240,094.58
TOTAL	\$ 507,159.55
MISCELLANEOUS PROJECTS (MAINT. & IMP)	\$ 3,893.46
GRAND TOTAL	\$ 511,053.01

Motion by Wells, seconded by Armbruster, to pay bills, as presented. Roll Call Vote, 7/0. MOTION PASSED. BILLS APPROVED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$ 511,053.01.

* According to Section 6 of the Charter Township of Fort Gratiot By-Laws adopted 02/20/2003.

CORRESPONDENCE: NONE

PUBLIC HEARING(S): NONE

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Motion by Wells, seconded by Armbruster, to accept the Introduction of Proposed Ordinance No. 232, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF FORT GRATIOT, by rezoning a vacant lot on Keewahdin Road (ID# 74-20-021-1007-000) from R1B-Single Family Residential to RM-Multiple Residential.

POINTS OF DISCUSSION:

- * Township Planning Commission Public Hearing held 11/12/2024 - Recommended Approval
- * St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission hearing held 11/20/2024 - Recommended Approval
- * Jorja Baldwin, Community Development - Planning/Zoning, was present and presented a map of property zoning and property use along the stretch of Keewahdin Road, from M-25 to M-136; and density allowances between R1B-Residential and RM-Multiple Residential.
- * Township Master Plan calls for this area to be "High Density Residential".
- * Upon Site Plan review before the Planning Commission, entities are notified of the proposed development (i.e., Utility Companies, County Road & Drain Commissions, EGLE, etc.) which would put their own requirements and/or restrictions onto the development, which must be met prior to any building permits being issued and construction could begin.
- * Tim Block, Realtor and Mr. & Mrs. Lopez, property owners were present. Mr. Block stated the property has been listed since 2022, as Residential, with no interest. After research, it was felt the property would be more desirable as Multiple Residential.

Roll Call Vote, 6/1, Bruckner voting no. MOTION PASSED. INTRODUCTION ACCEPTED.

2. Motion by Buechler, seconded by Bradley, to accept, with regrets, Dequan Bowden's *Letter of Resignation* from the position of Probationary Firefighter, effective March 10th, 2025. Vote, Unanimous. MOTION PASSED.
3. Motion by Armbruster, seconded by Crawford, to table the request for support of the Fire Chief in sending a letter to Tri-Hospital EMS requesting to rescind the directive that Fort Gratiot Fire Department be sent to any medical call that Tri-Hospital responds to "Emergency Status" in Fort Gratiot Fire Department's coverage area; and authorize the Township Supervisor to sign the letter on behalf of the Township.

POINTS OF DISCUSSION:

- * 05/03/2023 - Board of Trustee's approved the Fire Department respond to any medical call that Tri-Hospital responds to "Emergency Status".
- * Chief VanderFeyst noted four pillars of justification: 1) Will make the Department a more effective & efficient service, overall by moving to "Critical Status"; 2) Cost reduction for the operation of apparatus; 3) Focus on Fire Rescue, all aspects of Life Safety; 4) Risk Management, with safety being in the forefront.
 - NFPA stats related to incidents involving fire apparatus responding to calls.
 - From 2007 thru 09/22/2023, Fort Gratiot was responding to "Delta" & "Echo" (Critical) calls only.
- * Automatic Mutual-Aid, for any structure fire, with Burtchville, Port Huron Township and City of Port Huron.
- * Option of adding an additional three (3) full-time employees; not budgeted for. Not the Boards intent to raise the Fire Department's Special Assessment each year but it would be necessary in order to add additional members. Departments are struggling to get new members.
- * Currently, if the Department is on a structure fire and receives a medical call, they have to break away and respond to the medical because that is what the Department has signed up to do as "Emergency Status" directive on every call within the coverage area.

NEW BUSINESS, ITEM #3, POINTS OF DISCUSSION, CONTINUED:

- * Karyn Belanger explained the Medical Control Codes and what constitutes an “Alpha” vs. a “Bravo” vs. a “Charlie Delta” or an “Echo” dispatch.
 - Eight (8) Minute Rule - If an ambulance can't arrive within that time, the Fire Department will automatically be called out.
 - Tri-Hospital EMS staffs 11 trucks, 7 days a week during high volume call time, reducing response times in the Township. Ambulances are staged throughout the County.
- * Rescinding the current “Emergency Status” protocol would still require the Fire Department to respond on anything critical or potentially life threatening; or anytime an ambulance cannot arrive to the scene within eight (8) minutes.
- * Tina Bricker explained medical control protocols used when Central Dispatch receives calls and activates emergency services.
- * Fire Protection Special Assessment barely covers the cost to operate the Fire Department now. Assessments can only be increased by 10% annually; or the Board may have to look at going with an Operating Millage rather than a Special Assessment in order to add additional employees.
- * Community expectations.
- * Township receives no recovery fee for calls. A lengthy discussion was held regarding funding of the Department if we do not rescind the directive that Fort Gratiot Fire Department be sent to any medical call that Tri-Hospital responds to “Emergency Status” in Fort Gratiot Fire Department’s coverage area.
- * Difference in response time from a scene vs. from the fire station and related variables.
- * Current department staffing: 16 part-time and 6 full-time Members.
- * If rescinded, the current St. Clair County Dispatch protocol will take effect immediately.

Vote, Unanimous. **MOTION PASSED. ITEM TABLED.**

4. Motion by Buechler, seconded by Bradley, to approve the 2025 User Agreement between Fort Gratiot Charter Township and Fort Gratiot Little League, with the usage fee of \$100.00 per team.

POINTS OF DISCUSSION: * Current usage fee is \$75.00 per team.

Roll Call Vote, 7/0. **MOTION PASSED.**

5. Motion by Armbruster, seconded by Bradley, to approve the amendments made to the Fort Gratiot Charter Township Personnel Policies (Policy #1), reflecting changes to wording on pages 14 thru 16.

POINTS OF DISCUSSION: * Changes affect wording on pages 14 thru 16
* Addressees *Earned Sick Time Leave Act* passed on 02/21/2025

Roll Call Vote, 7/0. **MOTION PASSED.**

BOARD DISCUSSION:

- Ranger Power/Portside Solar update; potential State of Michigan Grant funds available to the Township in the amount of \$350,000.00.
- Possible updates & changes to the Township Solar Ordinance.

CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE BOARD:

Angela Defrain suggested the Board look into any available grant opportunity. As a resident she is concerned that we don't have the Fire Department manpower to handle the solar development after listening to the information under Item #3, New Business.

Sandra Richardson regarding Item #3, New Business and asked that the Board do thorough review before making any changes the current protocol. Curious if Ranger Power/Portside Solar has any concerns with the County Health Department's involvement in the issues of the project. Feels it would be a kick in the teeth to residents if the Township accepts any grant money from the State.

Supervisor Montgomery stated he did ask if they had any concerns about that and they indicated they did not have any concerns, at all.

Vance Richardson stated Ranger Power/Portside Solar probably doesn't have any concerns about anything. He noted the waters flowing through the drainage ditches and concerns about the ugliness, noise and the health of individuals directly affected. Again referred to Item #3, New Business and said the Township should do what is needed in order to save a life.

Motion by Armbruster, seconded by Bruckner, to adjourn. Time, 9:35 o'clock p.m. Vote, Unanimous.
MOTION PASSED. MEETING ADJOURNED.



ROBERT D. BUECHLER, CLERK
FORT GRATIOT CHARTER TOWNSHIP

RDB/RM/v0

ROBERT MONTGOMERY, SUPERVISOR
FORT GRATIOT CHARTER TOWNSHIP