

**BIG RAPIDS CHARTER TOWNSHIP BOARD
REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY JULY 1, 2025
BIG RAPIDS TOWNSHIP HALL, 14230 NORTHLAND DR.
BIG RAPIDS, MI 49307
7:00 PM
APPROVED**

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 p.m. ROLL CALL: Borkovich, Bechaz, Everett, Marek, Saez, Teceno, present. Welch absent.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Borkovich – Introduction of new Grounds Manager, Steve McKay.

Mark Baker – Contacted by Drain Commissioners attorney, up to judge to decide on jurisdiction over tax appeals, 12-18 months to be heard, rarely charge costs of appealing. The Drain Commissioner can file a motion to dismiss, and the judge decides who to hear.

Rudy Bogioian – Nick Matthews with Fahey sent out a threatening letter telling those that had appealed to withdraw appeals, waiting to hear back from the personal attorney. Rudy will share a phone number on Facebook page regarding appeals. Independent Bank Big Rapids branch to donate for Tonkin appeal costs.

Brad Deal – Question on what happens if Tonkin does/does not go through – Borkovich to get to answer

Jared Christiansen – Spoke on transparency issue and issue on Northland drive property that the Drain Commissioner originally discussed with the past property owner. This was a much smaller cost and would have reduced the cost of this project significantly.

SPECIAL APPEARANCE: Chris Zimmerman

CORRESPONDENCE: Noted.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. **June 3, 2025 Meeting Minutes:**
2. **June 11, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes:**
3. **June 25, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes:**
4. **May Financial Report:**
5. **Sheriff's Report:**
6. **Cemetery and Grounds Report:**
7. **Sewer Department Report:**
8. **Water Department Report:**
9. **Building Department Report:**
10. **Supervisor Report:**

A motion to approve of the consent agenda was made by Saez. Supported by Everett. Motion passed unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. **Fire Department Sign/Building Update:** Update from Borkovich on Request for Proposal for updates.
2. **Wastewater Treatment Agreement:** Update from Borkovich that they meet on Monday 7/7 to discuss. The city just unveiled funding and a project of a treatment plant of nearly 8 million dollars – there may be an amendment looking at a rate increase.
3. **Other:**

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Steve Schroeder – Fire Department Quarterly Update:** The first 7 months focused on operations. Looking at employment, onboarded most of the BRT fire dept. Familiarized BRT into City equipment and City into Township, and standardized procedures. Transferred licenses, updated equipment inspections. Quite a few repairs were made to engine 1, all completed and all operational. Station 2 has 2 trucks, and it's not staffed full-time but it's great to have for those that live south of town. Having the stations in a good geographical position puts trucks on route quicker, which is great. No stats on calls but currently onboarding new record management systems and merging records. 29 firefighters, 19 paid on call, without any onboarding and making sure all personnel trained on equipment. Anticipates doing recruiting drives, partnering with the career center, hosting fire academy this year. Future building and expanding on the drone team. Create more 107 pilots and include the sheriff office, City PD - seeking a grant currently to purchase new drone with advanced capabilities. Purchased a new fire engine, which has 690 days until delivery. It is set up to be a rural fire attack engine, designed to be able to pull water out of other sources making it more efficient. Secured a grant for battery powered excavation equipment (jaws of life) in process of approving and redesigning a new patch as part of fire contract - adamant about just becoming Big Rapids Fire rather than City/Township.
Next steps - operations moving along well, plans for some cleaning/organization and inventory. Plan to use the back portion or Fire Hall for training and operations that can be left set up. Plan to use the meeting room for fire training as well once complete. Fire inspections/fire codes - haven't brought adoption of international fire code yet, a little delayed at the city, didn't want to adopt here before adopting in the City. Looking at something different with the way of administering fire inspections. Complaint based fire inspection in City, extended into Township.
2. **Tom Sage – Survey Quote for Industrial Park:** A motion was made by Teceno to approve of Tom Sage's bid proposal as printed. Supported by Bechaz. Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote. Welch, absent.

3. **Special Appearance – Chris Zimmerman** - Want to bring everyone up to speed at county level regarding business with Tonkin drain. Wants to ask County Commissioners not to give a raise to the Drain Commissioner. All civil servants here took Oath to protect the Constitution. In 1957 the Michigan drain code was ratified. This gave the drain commissioner complete autonomy. A couple of us here narrowed it down to the 5th amendment- guarantees due process. Plans to present a Resolution to the County Commission. Rudy touched on lawyer Matthews for tax tribunal. They're denying due process. File a complaint with the MI bar association. The bond went from 2k to 15k denying us our due process. The County Commissioner meeting will have a closed session Thursday to discuss options. Volunteering on a County Committee to ensure this never happens again.
Question/answer session proceeded. Working with Tom Kunse and John Moolenaar to help amend the Drain Code, opting for an elected board to have a quorum.
4. **Resolution 2025-10 Nonsupport of Tonkin Drainage Assessment and Mecosta County Drain Commissioner:** A motion was made by Bechaz to approve Resolution 2025-10. Supported by Teceno. Motion passed on a roll call vote.
Discussion on terms of paying assessments - due by July 25th without interest. If the Drain Commissioner stopped it now there would still be an assessment to pay current costs of an estimated 2.5 million. If property is sold or passed down to a family member, the assessment must be disclosed in the seller's disclosure.
5. **MCDC Property Tax Exemption Applications:** Update by Saez on Elder's suggestion to file for MCDC properties.

Financial

1. **Payroll: (Not entered until 6/30 – will be on next meeting packet for approval)** A motion was made by Marek to approve of Payroll in the amount of \$25,420.45. Supported by Teceno. Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.
2. **Accounts Payable:** A motion was made by Marek to approve of Accounts Payables in the amount of \$149,915.04. Supported by Bechaz. Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Bechaz - Has never seen an elected public official not be transparent and seem not to care about the public. Trying everything they can do as a board. Feels it's a good resolution that needs to be heard.

Borkovich - Hopes there is a legal avenue for this. Wants the public to know that the Township has officially asked for a pause of this project, to see if there are some grants out there. The Drain Commissioner has refused and stated she is officially moving the project forward. Those in assessment have until July 25th to decide on how to pay for it.

Marek - If anyone wants to pay without added interest it must be paid by July 25 at the drain commissioner's office. After that date it will be levied on December taxes, and at that point paid as part of normal taxes. Still have not heard the final interest percentage - letter said they are unsure.

Borkovich - If Karla decided to abandon the project - we would still owe about 2.5 million dollars - still would be an at large assessment. All would still have the burden of paying that without one shovel in the ground and without improving anything. We don't want people to miss this - all of them must be paid by July 25th and moved to the December tax roll.

Mark Waldron- Concerned about who keeps track of the bookkeeping for this at the Drain Commissioner's office.

Tom Jackson - Concerned about getting money returned if the project doesn't move forward. Asked if we could still utilize the work done by engineers and attorneys if the project is stopped now. Directed to ask these questions to the Drain Commissioner.

Mark Baker - Concerned about malpractice of the Drain Commissioner's attorney.

Kathy Deal - Asked about a website with information on the Tonkin Drain. Rudy Bogoin answered.

Lori Brock - Thinks situation is a travesty. Feels nobody had due process, it was pushed through, no supporting documentation. When they had problems in Green Township, they started a recall. Hopes this ends up in the residents' favor but believes this must be stopped - due to the recent election we can't start until November, plans to start organizing now. A large group of people that are very willing to help everyone here with the recall process. Asks for information from those willing to help.

Ormand hook - States the people have the legal angle, governmental angle, citizen angle - citizens have the legal right to recall officers in MI. Suggests a leadership team, volunteer team, willing to help the leadership team.

Denine Cole - question on who to talk to - total assessment, which is the exact same parcel as mother, she got the exact same bill with her name on the exact same parcel - she got billed for it - exact same amounts. Redirected to Drain Commissioner.

Carman Bean - The drain commissioner has no boss, but the voters are the boss. Personal decision on your part to participate. Takes an effort to recall but that's your only choice. She reports to only the people.

Pam Gilbert - Got a packet from the drain commission, went through the appeal process. Found it very interesting where they posted notices of meetings. One was posted at ace hardware, another at Wesco gas station.

Margaret Gingrich - Asked if texts could be sent out regarding meeting notices from the County.

Ron Gilbert - Concerned about millions of dollars going to the Drain Commissioner's office - would hope it would go to the County Treasurer.

Brad Deal - Concerned about Representatives saying they will help only to get elected.

Ron Gilbert - Asks for MTA's involvement to help get Drain Code Authority amended.

Brad Deal -Suggests everyone do some research acronym WEF - world economic forum.

Borkovich - States the recall process is nothing township forwards or takes part of, can't pass a resolution to support a recall, but the Resolution shares the concerns of citizens and Township board.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:33pm

Big Rapids Charter Township will provide necessary and reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audiotapes of printed material, if individuals with disabilities, upon five business days' notice to the township. Individuals requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact Hannah Saez, Big Rapids Charter Township Clerk, 14212 Northland Drive, Big Rapids, MI 49307- call 231 796 3603 or fax request to 231 796 2533.