

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF VAN BUREN**  
**Environmental Commission**  
**Wednesday, March 15, 2023**  
**MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order at **6:00 p.m.** in the Denton Room by **Director Akers**.

Motion Commissioner **Merritt**, Second Commissioner **Yob**, to nominate Commissioner Creal to serve as acting Chairman.

**(4) AYES – Gibson, Merritt, Creal, Yob**

**(0) NAYS**

**ROLL CALL:**

**Present:** Commissioner Gibson, Commissioner Merritt, Commissioner Creal, Commissioner Yob, Trustee Boynton (late arrival)

**Via Zoom:** Commissioner Ross

**Absent/Excused:** Chairman DeBuck

**Staff:** Director Akers, Director Lockett, Secretary Zantop

**Audience:** Two (2)

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Motion Commissioner **Gibson**, Second Commissioner **Merritt**, to approve the agenda of March 15, 2023, as presented.

**(4) AYES – Gibson, Merritt, Creal, Yob**

**(0) NAYS**

**Motion Carried.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Motion Commissioner **Merritt**, Second Commissioner **Yob**, to approve the minutes of January 18, 2023, as presented with spelling correction.

**(4) AYES – Gibson, Merritt, Creal, Yob**

**(0) NAYS**

**Motion Carried.**

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

None.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Various Environmental Related Issues Update

**Fish Kill**

Director Akers stated there were social media postings and news articles regarding dead fish in Belleville Lake. The Ford Lake Dam draws water from the bottom of the river. This process sucks up the fish into the turbines and can kill the fish. The DNR was contacted by the Dam Operator because of the number of dead fish. The DNR took samples and tested them to verify that there were no outside contaminants that might have caused the fish to die (mostly crappie). Commissioner Ross explained that the crappie species do not have a buoyancy system to balance themselves so their internal organs get crushed. The Township is in contact with the MDNR and the Huron River Watershed. This will likely occur for another month.

**US Ecology Concern. Waste from Ohio.**

The US Ecology site stopped accepting waste from the Ohio site. The contaminated soil was at a level they were able to accept into their landfill. There are no future plans to accept the waste. Commissioner Gibson asked if the facility was notified before the solid waste arrived. Republic (US Ecology) indicated the EPA reached out to them prior to the soil arrival. A member of the audience asked if US Ecology accepts other waste that could be worse. It is understood that the soil was within what they are able to take. US Ecology has the capability to process that type of material. The facility is regulated by the State and the EPA. There are random inspections to make sure they operate within their parameters.

**Lilypad and Milfoil**

Director Akers spoke with a Washtenaw County Director who runs a large aquatic weed management program. The first step is to find someone to identify what species of plants there are. If it is an invasive species there could be funding through grants. Typically, the way these types of services are paid for is through a special assessment around the areas being treated. Once you start removing invasive species you will have to continue to do it.

**Willow Run Infrastructure**

Willow Run has two separate stormwater systems. One on the East and the other on the West side. On the west end, they have a couple of dams one is used for pretreatment. Willow Run has received money from the State to do road improvements at the Airport on Tyler Rd.

**Denton Road Bridge**

The Township has an RFP out for engineering design for the Denton Road bridge. State Representative Miller has secured \$10 million as a Michigan infrastructure grant in 2024's state budget. The goal is to start construction in July 2024. It is estimated to take one year for design and one year for construction. Many variables could extend the timeline. There may be a gas line on the bridge that could push back construction. Commissioner Gibson asked about the native mussel species that could hinder the project. The State went out and did not believe an assessment would need to be done. The EPA would make the final call since it is a federally protected species. Wayne County indicated it is safe to boat under the bridge.

**Garbage Contract**

Director Akers gave a brief presentation on the status of solid waste collection. The original Host Community Agreement was established in 1990 and amended in 2018 to expand the landfill. Trash/yard waste disposal will continue to be free and residents will have access to the landfill but free collection service ends July 1st. The Township posted a survey to collect feedback on residents' preferences for waste collection. There was an informational meeting held and public engagement hours are available on March 23rd and March 27th. The Township received 4 bid proposals from Waste Management, Titan National, Priority Waste, and GFL. The cost will be under \$15 a month per household and it is proposed to be put on property taxes split between summer and winter bills. No decision has been made; it will be decided by the Board of Trustees after the bids are evaluated. There is an email list the public can join that will send out communications on waste pickup and recycling.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMENTS:**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to Adjourn **Gibson**, Second **Merritt**, Meeting adjourned at **7:15 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Kendyl Zantop  
Recording Secretary