

APPROVED 11/25/14

City of Benton Harbor Receivership Transition Advisory Board Meeting
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CITY OF BENTON HARBOR
RECEIVERSHIP TRANSITION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
October 29, 2014

City of Benton Harbor Receivership Transition Advisory
Board Meeting held October 29, 2014, at Commission
Chambers, Benton Harbor City Hall, 200 East Wall
Street, Benton Harbor, Michigan at 11:00 a.m.

REPORTED BY: Lauret Henry, CSR 6469
Certified Shorthand Reporter

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BOARD MEMBERS:

City of Benton Harbor Receivership Transition Advisory Board Meeting

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3 CARY J. VAUGHN (Chairman)

4 SHARON HUNT

5 MARVIN RAGLON

6 BRET WITKOWSKI

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TREASURY STAFF:

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10 ROBERT WIDIGAN

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BENTON HARBOR STAFF:

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14 DARWIN WATSON

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Benton Harbor, Michigan

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Wednesday, October 29, 2014 - 11:00 a.m.

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MR. VAUGHN: It is 11 o'clock. I'm calling

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the Benton Harbor Receivership Transition Advisory

City of Benton Harbor Receivership Transition Advisory Board Meeting
5 Board meeting to order. Mr. Widigan, would you please

6 call the roll?

7 MR. WIDIGAN: Yes.

8 Cary Vaughn?

9 MR. VAUGHN: Here.

10 MR. WIDIGAN: Bret Witkowski?

11 MR. WITKOWSKI: Here.

12 MR. WIDIGAN: Sharon Hunt?

13 MS. HUNT: Here.

14 MR. WIDIGAN: Marvin Raglon?

15 MR. RAGLON: Here.

16 MR. WIDIGAN: Quorum is present.

17 MR. VAUGHN: I'd like to remind the public

18 that if you want to speak at the end of the meeting,

19 you have to sign the sign-in sheet or you will not be

20 recognized.

21 The first item is the approval of the agenda. We

22 all have a copy of the agenda. Are there discussions

23 or modifications needed?

24 MR. WITKOWSKI: I make a motion to approve.

25 MS. HUNT: I second.

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1 MR. VAUGHN: All those in favor, say aye.

2 MR. WITKOWSKI: Aye.

3 MS. HUNT: Aye.

4 MR. RAGLON: Aye.

5 MR. VAUGHN: All those opposed, say no.

6 Motion is passed.

7 The next item on the agenda is the approval of the

City of Benton Harbor Receivership Transition Advisory Board Meeting
8 September 24 RTAB meeting minutes with notes, with

9 noted corrections. Is there discussion on this?

10 MS. HUNT: I move to approve the September 24
11 RTAB minutes with the following corrections, the noted
12 corrections.

13 MR. RAGLON: Second.

14 MR. VAUGHN: Very well. All those in favor,
15 say aye.

16 MR. WITKOWSKI: Aye.

17 MR. RAGLON: Aye.

18 MS. HUNT: Aye.

19 MR. VAUGHN: All those opposed, say no.

20 Motion is passed.

21 Old business is an operational plan, a five-year
22 budget. Mr. Widigan, do you have any information for
23 the Board?

24 MR. WIDIGAN: Yes. Last month the RTAB
25 postponed the operational plan requesting that the City

5

1 include a forecast for all enterprise funds and major
2 funds, along with identifying which fiscal year the
3 City plans on beginning each key initiative. And as
4 of -- it wasn't tabled, it was just tabled until the
5 City resubmitted. So as of this time, the City is
6 still working on that, so we will tentatively address
7 it next month here if one is submitted.

8 MR. VAUGHN: Okay. So we don't need to take
9 action on that?

10 MR. WIDIGAN: No action is required because

City of Benton Harbor Receivership Transition Advisory Board Meeting
11 we tabled it, postponed it until it's submitted, so we
12 are all set.

13 MR. VAUGHN: Okay. Are there any questions
14 on that?

15 MR. WITKOWSKI: No.

16 MR. VAUGHN: The next item of business is the
17 Approval of Resolutions and Ordinances for City
18 Commission Meeting for September 15. The regular
19 meeting items include the minutes of September 2,
20 resolution approving the execution of the Benton
21 Harbor-St. Joseph Water Connection Agreement, the
22 resolution approving the MDOT Trunk Line Maintenance
23 Contract, the resolution approving the City's support
24 for the Conservancy Grant Application. Do we have any
25 questions, any discussion?

6

1 MS. HUNT: I move to approve the City
2 Commission's resolutions from September 15, 2014.

3 MR. WITKOWSKI: I'll second that.

4 MR. VAUGHN: Very well. All those in favor,
5 say aye.

6 MR. WITKOWSKI: Aye.

7 MS. HUNT: Aye.

8 MR. RAGLON: Aye.

9 MR. VAUGHN: All those opposed, say no.

10 Motion is passed.

11 The next item on the agenda is October 6 regular
12 meeting. These minutes include the resolution
13 approving the City Manager Evaluation Form, the

City of Benton Harbor Receivership Transition Advisory Board Meeting
14 resolution approving the request for a higher

15 investigation, the resolution approving the fee
16 schedule for abatement applications, the resolution to
17 pull the agenda item approving the Union Field grant
18 scope, adopt a resolution approving an amendment to the
19 council rules regarding citizenship representation on
20 committees. I think we have some discussion that we
21 want to have for this topic. Commissioner Adams, did
22 you have some input for us?

23 MS. ADAMS: Good morning, everybody. I just
24 basically would ask that the RTAB board would okay this
25 resolution to move forward for an investigation. Thank

7

1 you.

2 MR. VAUGHN: Thank you, Ms. Adams.
3 Any further discussion on this topic?

4 MR. WITKOWSKI: I make a motion to approve.

5 MR. RAGLON: Second that.

6 MR. VAUGHN: Is the motion to approve with an
7 exception?

8 MR. WITKOWSKI: I mean, I'm not going to,
9 but -- I'm going with as is.

10 MR. VAUGHN: I'm going to further the
11 discussion after the motion has been made.

12 I would recommend an exception for the resolution
13 approving the City Manager Evaluation Form to be
14 discussed directly after this motion. I think we need
15 to separate that out from this motion.

16 MR. WITKOWSKI: why is that?

City of Benton Harbor Receivership Transition Advisory Board Meeting
17 MR. VAUGHN: There's a disagreement on the

18 wording of the contract for the City Manager Evaluation
19 that needs to be worked out. We can talk about the
20 details of that now.

21 MR. WITKOWSKI: Yeah, I'd prefer to do that.

22 MR. VAUGHN: Okay. Mr. Widigan, why don't
23 you give us an update on that?

24 MR. WIDIGAN: So the city manager's contract
25 with the City of Benton Harbor states the following:

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1 "Darwin Watson shall be evaluated by the City
2 Commission during the term of this agreement. The City
3 shall annually, or sooner, review the performance of
4 Darwin Watson subject to a process form criteria and
5 format," and here would be the key part, "for the
6 evaluation which shall be mutually agreed upon by the
7 City and Darwin Watson." It goes on to explain how the
8 process should be. So after staff evaluation, and the
9 last item in the city manager's report given to the
10 RTAB, staff believes that the City and the city manager
11 should meet and mutually agree upon this process and
12 format for the evaluation and then submit it to the
13 RTAB for approval. So our staff recommendation is
14 postponement of this resolution until -- until format
15 can be agreed upon by both the city manager and the
16 Commission.

17 MR. WITKOWSKI: Okay. Is there a committee
18 that's working on it, or is it just a commission?

19 MR. WATSON: Member Witkowski, it was

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20 predominately a single person that did this, this whole

21 exercise. There was a -- there was a format they
22 basically modeled after the City of Lapeer.

23 MR. WITKOWSKI: Okay.

24 MR. WATSON: But there are some -- there's
25 some components of that that are going to be -- that

9

1 you can't really evaluate, so we're going to -- I'm
2 asking that the RTAB postpone this until we can get
3 together, the City Commission and myself, to actually
4 hash out the actual form that will be submitted and
5 utilized for the evaluation.

6 MR. WITKOWSKI: I'll amend my motion to
7 reflect that.

8 MR. RAGLON: To exclude that part of it?

9 MR. WITKOWSKI: Exclude that part of it until
10 they can work it out.

11 MS. HUNT: Do we happen to know when that
12 might occur or when you might get together with the
13 City Commission?

14 MR. WATSON: It will probably be right after
15 the election, right after the 1st of -- the 4th of
16 November, so probably that week. Yes, ma'am.

17 MR. WITKOWSKI: Okay.

18 MS. HUNT: Thank you.

19 MR. VAUGHN: Is there a second to approve the
20 amendment?

21 MR. RAGLON: I'll second.

22 MR. VAUGHN: With no further discussion, the

City of Benton Harbor Receivership Transition Advisory Board Meeting
23 motion to approve all City Commission resolutions from
24 the October 6, 2014, meeting with the exception of the
25 resolution approving the City Manager Evaluation Form

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1 is approved.

2 The next item on the agenda is the resolution
3 approving the City Manager Form. We have to postpone
4 that.

5 MR. WITKOWSKI: Do we have to vote, though?

6 MR. WIDIGAN: Vote on the last.

7 MR. VAUGHN: Oh, sorry. Thank you. All
8 those in favor of the motion, say aye.

9 MR. WITKOWSKI: Aye.

10 MR. RAGLON: Aye.

11 MS. HUNT: Aye.

12 MR. VAUGHN: All those opposed, say no.

13 Motion is approved.

14 The resolution approving the City Manager
15 Evaluation Form, we discussed that already. Do we need
16 to have more discussion on that?

17 MR. WITKOWSKI: No, just like to have it done
18 within the next month or so.

19 MR. WATSON: Yeah, we'll move on it
20 expediently, so it will be done.

21 MR. VAUGHN: Okay. I can entertain a motion
22 on this.

23 MR. WITKOWSKI: On which resolution?

24 MR. VAUGHN: On the city manager.

25 MS. HUNT: I move to approve the resolution

1 that we have decided to postpone for --

2 MR. VAUGHN: Motion to postpone?

3 MS. HUNT: Motion to postpone, yes.

4 MR. VAUGHN: Okay. Is there a second?

5 MR. RAGLON: Second.

6 MR. VAUGHN: Great. The motion to postpone
7 the resolution approving the City Manager Evaluation
8 Form from the October 6 meeting, all those in favor say
9 aye.

10 MR. RAGLON: Aye.

11 MS. HUNT: Aye.

12 MR. WITKOWSKI: Aye.

13 MR. VAUGHN: All those opposed, say no.

14 Motion is approved.

15 The next few items on the agenda are the city
16 manager items. The City Manager Evaluation has already
17 previously been discussed. The next item is the
18 resolution approving the appointment of C.F. Jones to
19 the vacant commission seat. Mr. Widigan, do you have
20 any information for us?

21 MR. WIDIGAN: The city manager submitted his
22 report requesting us to, while these items aren't
23 normally under -- would be under this meeting's
24 approval process, because it's the appointment of a
25 commissioner, just like we did with Commissioner

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1 Donald, to pull it forward and approve it just so we
2 don't hinder the process to get that commissioner sworn
3 in. So staff recommends to the RTAB to review this and
4 approve as recommended.

5 MS. WITKOWSKI: I'll make that motion to
6 approve.

7 MS. HUNT: I second.

8 MR. VAUGHN: All those in favor, say aye.

9 MR. WITKOWSKI: Aye.

10 MS. HUNT: Aye.

11 MR. RAGLON: Aye.

12 MR. VAUGHN: All opposed, say no.

13 The motion to approve the resolution approving the
14 appointment of C.F. Jones to the vacant commission seat
15 from the October 20 meeting is approved.

16 The next resolution is to approve the application
17 of Alutech for the Industrial Facilities Exemption
18 Certificate. Mr. Widigan, do you have any information
19 for us?

20 MR. WIDIGAN: Yeah, again, this is another
21 resolution from the October 20 meeting. And Darwin,
22 the city manager, expressed interest of requesting us
23 to pull it forward. There is a timeline for this
24 application to provide the paperwork to Alutech before
25 October 31, and so approval of this resolution is

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1 recommended.

2 MR. RAGLON: I recommend that we approve the
3 resolution for Alutech for the Industrial Facilities

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4 Exemption.

5 MR. VAUGHN: Is that your motion?

6 MR. RAGLON: Yes.

7 MR. WITKOWSKI: I'll second it. Real quick,
8 though, where is Alutech located?

9 MR. WATSON: It's out on Paw Paw Avenue, the
10 old bowl water site.

11 MR. WITKOWSKI: Oh, sure.

12 MR. WATSON: It's right there before you get
13 to the Whirlpool Media Center.

14 MR. VAUGHN: What's the initial tax that was
15 going to be levied and what's the discount?

16 MR. WATSON: In the report, the initial
17 estimated taxes were 27,179.21. The abatement amount
18 is \$13,589.60.

19 MR. VAUGHN: Okay.

20 MR. WITKOWSKI: This is on the personal
21 property?

22 MR. WATSON: Yes, sir. This is a one-year
23 personal property --

24 MR. WITKOWSKI: Starts in '16 automatically?

25 MR. WATSON: Yes. Again, this doesn't have

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1 an impact on our budget because we did not anticipate
2 these revenues coming in. This is an investment by the
3 company, so it wasn't utilized in our revenue
4 projections for the fiscal year.

5 MR. RAGLON: '15?

6 MR. WATSON: Correct. Correct.

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7 MR. VAUGHN: Further questions? It's been
8 moved and seconded. All those in favor, say aye.

9 MR. RAGLON: Aye.

10 MS. HUNT: Aye.

11 MR. WITKOWSKI: Aye.

12 MR. VAUGHN: All those opposed, say no.

13 Motion to approve the resolution approving the
14 application of Alutech for the Industrial Facilities
15 Exemption Certificate on the October 20, 2014, meeting
16 is approved.

17 The next item is our non-action items,
18 Budget-to-Action Report Ending September 30.

19 Mr. Widigan, do you have any information for us?

20 MR. WIDIGAN: Okay. So staff has reviewed
21 this report and has no further questions. During the
22 last meeting, I believe Board Member Witkowski asked
23 about equipment rental expenditures. I don't know if
24 you had any further follow-up on that.

25 MR. WITKOWSKI: No, they were answered.

15

1 MR. WIDIGAN: Okay. Staff is okay with the
2 report submitted.

3 MR. VAUGHN: Ms. Lundquist, I have a question
4 for you. Would you come up to the podium?

5 (Pause in the proceedings.)

6 MR. VAUGHN: Thank you. How is your
7 financial audit coming?

8 MS. LUNDQUIST: The on-site portion of the
9 audit was completed earlier this month, and although I

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10 have preliminary draft financial statements, we're
11 looking forward to having the finals here within the
12 next week or two, and the auditors are intending to
13 present at your November 25 meeting.

14 MR. VAUGHN: Okay. Will they present to the
15 Commission prior to that date?

16 MS. LUNDQUIST: That's in -- the timing of
17 the Commission presentation is currently being
18 discussed.

19 MR. VAUGHN: Okay.

20 MR. WITKOWSKI: I would hope they would
21 present to the Commission before they present to RTAB.
22 That's just me personally.

23 MR. VAUGHN: Did they give you a listing of
24 adjusting entries for your book?

25 MS. LUNDQUIST: I have not yet received it,

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1 but from the draft financial statements and the quick
2 review that I did prior to this meeting, it looks like
3 we are already on the same page.

4 MR. VAUGHN: All right. If they do give you
5 a listing of the adjusting issues, I would like to get
6 a copy of that.

7 MS. LUNDQUIST: Okay. I will make you then
8 aware that a majority of the adjusting entries are in
9 relation to closing of the two pension funds with, of
10 course, GASB you're aware. We did a transfer and close
11 our pension funds during fiscal year 2014, so the --
12 from an accounting standpoint, those funds needed to be

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13 closed with connection to the transfer of assets to
14 MERS. Of course, next year with GASB changing again we
15 have to reopen them, so that will be a fund. But
16 otherwise those are the only issues that I was aware
17 of.

18 MR. VAUGHN: All right. Any other questions
19 for Ms. Lundquist?

20 MR. WITKOWSKI: Just a couple. And I had
21 talked with you previously with Darwin and yourself.
22 Is it possible on these reports to get like what the
23 fund balance is?

24 MS. LUNDQUIST: Yes. And I did take a brief
25 look --

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1 MR. WITKOWSKI: And the reason I ask is
2 obviously like on street projects there's years where
3 you're going to spend money and run a negative, but if
4 you have got a fund balance, it's not an issue.

5 MS. LUNDQUIST: With our -- historically with
6 the City, Darwin can correct me if I'm wrong, the Major
7 and Local Street Funds have carried a zero fund
8 balance. Basically any money that we receive from the
9 state is utilized in the fiscal year for current
10 operations. We did have some fund balance in each of
11 the funds at the end of last fiscal year.

12 MR. WITKOWSKI: I think if we can include
13 those, I think it's good for the public to see that the
14 City is on the right track by having fund balances.

15 The other issue that I was concerned about is the water

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16 and sewer fund, and I assume it's more in the water
17 fund that it ran a deficit -- it appears to have ran a
18 deficit last year, and wondering what the City's -- if
19 that's going to be correct or if there is -- if I'm
20 looking at that incorrectly.

21 MS. LUNDQUIST: You are correct, there was an
22 operating deficit shown in the reports in front of you
23 approximately \$480,000 which is almost equal to the
24 depreciation expense that was booked, so we're moving
25 depreciation expense over to net zero. We're making

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1 every effort here at the City to track down any water
2 loss from the water treatment and billing side versus
3 any runoff that might be entering our sewer system and
4 which we're paying then for at the wastewater treatment
5 plant, to help getting both the billing up and the cost
6 down.

7 MR. WITKOWSKI: what percent of what's, like,
8 sent out is getting billed, or what percent is lost?

9 MS. LUNDQUIST: I will be happy to provide
10 you with that information.

11 MR. WITKOWSKI: Okay. I know it's like --
12 usually I think most plants shoot for 10 percent, no
13 more than that.

14 MR. WATSON: The last, Member Witkowski, the
15 last number that we had, actual hard number, was during
16 the bonding period, and that number was at 40 percent.
17 I talked with our water plant operator, I mean
18 superintendent, Mr. Stewart Beach. He's been

19 addressing leaks pretty much the last month, month and
20 a half. Our usage has dropped basically with those --
21 fixing those leaks from about 1.2 million gallons
22 produced daily to about 1.01, so it's dropping
23 significantly. There are some that we know are major.
24 There's one major one we have, and that one we're still
25 trying to figure out a way to attack it because it's in

19

1 Martin Brothers, so there's an issue with all the stuff
2 that they do in there and how we can attack it. But
3 for the most part, a lot of the leaks that we're
4 finding are from the lead side when there's abandoned
5 homes or places where we have knocked down a house and
6 the service wasn't taken care of correctly back to the
7 water main. We're finding leaks that are surfacing
8 from there. So it's an ongoing process.

9 MR. WITKOWSKI: I know last winter was brutal
10 with the freezing, not just here, but everywhere.

11 MR. WATSON: Yeah, last year's -- earlier
12 this year, late last year, the frost made it -- it was
13 terrible. It wasn't as much from the leak side; it was
14 from the frozen water main side.

15 MR. WITKOWSKI: Right. Break.

16 MR. WATSON: Yeah, so that's where the breaks
17 were coming from, but we attacked them as soon as we
18 found them or they surfaced up, so they were kind of
19 attenuated to very quickly.

20 MR. WITKOWSKI: And I would assume that added
21 to your cost, too, because if I remember right you had
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22 contractors working.

23 MR. WATSON: Yes, sir. Yes, sir. A lot of
24 them were, you know, beyond the capacity that we have,
25 you know, we had to bring in excavators and things of

20

1 that nature. Yeah, you're absolutely right.

2 MR. WITKOWSKI: Well, if you don't mind
3 looking into those things, because, you know, I know
4 the one point if I remember right when they redid Main
5 Street, there was wood pipes still, water mains. I
6 can't imagine those being real tight. I'd like to see
7 a city be able to start putting money away to -- as a
8 street gets redone. Now, are you redoing any of the --
9 like when you redo Colfax in the spring, are you going
10 to redo those water mains and stuff?

11 MR. WATSON: No, the infrastructure is not
12 being touched in that one. Neither is it in Broadway
13 when we are going to have -- actually they're paving
14 today.

15 MR. WITKOWSKI: And those would be things --
16 those would be things to me as you open the street up
17 to evaluate because I'd hate for a new street to go
18 down and three weeks later we have a busted water main
19 because of all the pounding and stuff.

20 MR. WATSON: Uh-huh. Right.

21 MR. WITKOWSKI: Those answered my questions
22 on the financials. Thank you.

23 MR. VAUGHN: The next item is the quarterly
24 reports. You might want to just take --

1 had been asked to obtain a report to include quarterly
2 figures. Because we do operate on a fiscal year, July
3 1 through June 30th, this quarterly report corresponds
4 directly with the first quarter of our fiscal year. I
5 have for the quarterly report included two new columns.
6 It looks very similar to your monthly report with the
7 exception of these two new columns that isolate the
8 activity for the quarter. So you'll see the second
9 column of the second page of the report that I
10 distributed has activity for the quarter through
11 9-30-2013, so that you can then compare that with
12 activity, year-to-date activity for the quarter
13 9-30-2014. Of course since activity year-to-date
14 corresponds with the quarter activity, those two
15 columns are equal. I will note that the 9-30-2014
16 balances are slightly different than the monthly report
17 that was distributed to you earlier this month just as
18 virtue of bills continue to be received and posted to
19 the prior month.

20 So I did update for those. Then I did separate
21 out a written narrative following each page that
22 separates the funds. So, for instance, on the third
23 page, you'll find a summary of activity that differs
24 substantially from 25 percent of budget. For instance,
25 one of the main being property tax revenue, since we

1 receive the majority of that in the first quarter of
2 the fiscal year with our levee being July 1. I believe
3 that percentage was 69 percent.

4 MR. WITKOWSKI: which is a lot higher than
5 the year before. When you look at the previous
6 quarter, it's like a half a million more.

7 MS. LUNDQUIST: with the -- I note that also
8 in the summary, because you'll notice that as well in
9 PPI for the Permit Public Improvement Fund, that's
10 really just a matter of bookkeeping at the time that
11 the journal entry was recorded, moving that activity
12 since it's originally receipted in through our Tax
13 Collection Fund and then recorded a journal entry to
14 move it to the appropriate --

15 MR. RAGLON: I appreciate the summary page.
16 Thank you very much.

17 MR. VAUGHN: Yeah, this is very nice. I like
18 the comparison to the last quarter of the previous
19 year, too. That's very nice.

20 MR. WITKOWSKI: I agree.

21 MR. VAUGHN: Good job.

22 MS. LUNDQUIST: And then a final note, since
23 I do have the draft financial statements, I will say
24 that we began the fiscal year in general fund with an
25 accumulated fund deficit of approximately 1.2 million,

1 and after our changes in fund balance we ended the

City of Benton Harbor Receivership Transition Advisory Board Meeting
2 prior fiscal year with approximately \$2.3 million in
3 fund balance for our general fund.

4 MR. VAUGHN: Very good. Thank you,
5 Ms. Lundquist.

6 MS. HUNT: Thank you.

7 MR. VAUGHN: Mr. Widigan, do you have some
8 input for us?

9 MR. WIDIGAN: Just to kind of go further into
10 what was just said, just for the public, like she
11 pointed out, the -- for right now, you know, July 1 to
12 September 30, it's the same exact thing, but this is
13 just a requirement that was put in the final EM orders,
14 this satisfies the requirement, which is essentially a
15 separate document. So we greatly appreciate that.

16 MR. VAUGHN: Very nice.

17 The next item on the agenda is the city manager
18 update. Mr. Watson, do you have anything for us?

19 MR. WATSON: Nothing further, sir.

20 MR. VAUGHN: Thank you. The next item is
21 public comments. Do we have anybody that wants to have
22 a public comment?

23 Okay. Thank you. The last item is the Board
24 comments. Let's just go down the row if we want to
25 have any comment on our part.

24

1 MR. WITKOWSKI: There was a good article, I
2 don't know if you saw it, in Sunday's Harold Palladium
3 about volunteer firemen and the struggles.

4 MR. WATSON: Yes, sir.

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5 MR. WITKOWSKI: How does Benton Harbor do

6 with long-term voluntary firemen?

7 MR. WATSON: Ironically we have a nice cache
8 of voluntary firefighters, or on-call firefighters.
9 What we're moving toward as Mr. Harris started and
10 Mr. Saunders furthered is the PSO model. So what we're
11 doing is we're gearing up our firehouse to be manned by
12 a public safety officer. So all of them are
13 predominately cross-trained, but if we have issues
14 where someone calls in sick or we can't get the
15 requisite required -- the requisite coverage, then what
16 we'll do is we'll add from our cache of firemen that we
17 have that we get on a daily that are wanting to come to
18 work as traditional firefighters. So some are having
19 challenges, and I think the volunteer part of it for
20 them is the part, because we do compensate ours. So,
21 yeah, we have a nice complement of firefighters.

22 MR. WITKOWSKI: That's good. That's real
23 good.

24 MR. WATSON: Yeah. As well as police
25 officers. So we get the same, you know, for part-time,

25

1 on-call police officers, yes, sir.

2 MR. WITKOWSKI: That's good because I know I
3 talked to other communities, it's becoming more and
4 more of a challenge to find people who are able or
5 willing to do it, so that's good to know.

6 MR. WATSON: Yes, sir.

7 MS. HUNT: I have one comment, and I don't

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8 know, it's going to be directed at you but also at our
9 community director, Marja. But being a resident of
10 Benton Harbor, we've started up block clubs. And we
11 had our first block club meeting, oh, about three or
12 four weeks ago, and I'd like to say it was a huge
13 success. We had a great turnout. I'd like to commend
14 Director Marja for coming out and participating and
15 giving us feedback, taking notes. And I'd just like to
16 know how is that going, how are the community
17 neighborhood block clubs going? Is it a positive for
18 the community? Are people seeming to embrace that?
19 what is -- is there an update on that? Because if we
20 can get the City to -- the people to really embrace
21 what's going on and the City and take part in that, I
22 think they would feel a part of, you know, the
23 importance of what Benton Harbor is going through and
24 where we're trying to go.

25 MR. WITKOWSKI: And feel comfortable.

26

1 MS. HUNT: And feel comfortable with what's
2 going on, so I'd like to know what is some of the
3 feedback we are getting from that perspective, please.

4 MS. WINTERS: Sure, thank you. It's a little
5 bit slower than we anticipated. As you indicated, the
6 meeting that y'all had was a good sort of first start.
7 There were over 20 people gathered at Mr. Joseph's
8 house, so we appreciate that. We did have a city-wide
9 meeting before that, and so we have got some interest
10 from people who are interested. That was really the

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11 first sort of meeting that we had officially been

12 invited to. There is one, the Sterne Brunson in place
13 has expressed an interest, so we'll be going there
14 before the end of the year. So I think as block clubs
15 get more and more, we're also connecting with some of
16 the ones that were started years ago but might be
17 inactive just to sort of see if there is an interest
18 there to get it regoing. But I think there is some
19 synergy around it and we'll keep working it.

20 MS. HUNT: Have you thought about maybe
21 advertising it or maybe putting it in the paper so that
22 people can really kind of read to see that it is
23 something that's seriously being considered versus just
24 having the individual communities to just be aware of
25 what's going on?

27

1 MS. WINTERS: Sure, we can make sure we get
2 it out there and keep it out there. Thank you.

3 MS. HUNT: Thank you.

4 MR. VAUGHN: Thank you, Ms. Winters.

5 MR. RAGLON: No comment.

6 MR. VAUGHN: Great. I'd entertain a motion
7 to adjourn the meeting.

8 MR. WITKOWSKI: I make a motion.

9 MS. HUNT: I second.

10 MR. VAUGHN: All those in favor, say aye.

11 MR. WITKOWSKI: Aye.

12 MS. HUNT: Aye.

13 MR. RAGLON: Aye.

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14 MR. VAUGHN: All those opposed, say no.

15 Motion is approved.

16 (Record closed at 11:31 a.m.)

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1 CERTIFICATE

2 STATE OF MICHIGAN)
3 COUNTY OF ALLEGAN) SS:

4

5 I certify that this transcript, consisting of 28
6 pages, is a complete, true, and correct record of the
7 proceedings held on October 29, 2014.

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City of Benton Harbor Receivership Transition Advisory Board Meeting
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18 LAURET J. HENRY, CSR-6469
Registered Professional Reporter
19 Notary Public, Allegan County, Michigan
Acting in Berrien County, Michigan
20 My commission expires: 07/17/20
Dated: This 5th day of November 2014

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