

McMorran at a crossroads



McMorran Civic Center Authority is reaching its term limit at the end of June. The authority members want to extend their terms by 90 days to complete a new business plan for the facility. MARK R. RUMMEL/TIMES HERALD

Authority members want time to review business plan

Fort Gratiot gets help for hall

Huron Consultants hired for project

By Beth LeBlanc
Times Herald

Fort Gratiot has made a large investment in plans for a new township hall.

The township approved a \$248,000 contract with Huron Consultants at its board meeting Wednesday evening, Supervisor Jorja Baldwin said. The contract was approved 7-0.

Township officials met with about eight firms before settling on Huron Consultants.

Baldwin said rough estimates from each of the firms were similar in price. She said Huron Consultants' commitment to environmental sustainability, and the firm's experience building fire halls, stood out to Baldwin officials.

"All eight firms brought great proposals," Baldwin said. "But it really boiled down to the experience."

Daren McLaughlin, owner of Huron Consultants, said his company started in Port Huron in 1999, and has done environmental work for Fort Gratiot property or grants in the past.

"It's a very important project and I think it's a



By Holly Setter
Times Herald

Members of the McMorran Civic Authority want to extend their terms by 90 days so they can review a business plan.

The current iteration of the authority was established 18 months ago and is supposed to expire at the end of the month. If council does not act to extend the term,

the authority will cease to be, and all decision making for the facility will revert to City Council.

The authority makes recommendations to council for final action.

Bruce Brown, Port Huron city manager, said City Council will at its June 24 meeting determine the fate of the authority and whether to hire a professional management firm for the facility.

Patti Samar, the authority chairwoman, told council the authority has "a lot of balls

in the air" right now and requested it extend the authority's term by 90 days to wrap up those projects.

Brown said the authority's business plan for the civic center is the primary project.

"The authority hired a consultant out of Washington, D.C., to help them consider new uses for the building," Brown said. "That report won't be back until June 30, and they need time to review that report, review where they are and make a

recommendation to the City Council. Regardless of their terms, they need to be extended."

He said staff will recommend the McMorran Authority's tenure be extended for five years while the current board members' terms be extended until Dec. 31 of this year.

Brown said he doesn't want to hurry them into a decision.

Samar said the business

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ject, and I think it's something they've been working on, on and off, for many years," McLaughlin said.

The current township hall was tacked onto the existing fire hall and garage in 1950. In the 1980s, modular offices from St. Joseph Mercy Hospital were added to the structure to create more space.

"Technically we've never built a municipal office since the township was incorporated in 1866," Baldwin said.

She said office and meeting spaces at the current building are limited, and the hodgepodge layout isn't helpful for residents visiting the location.

"This building is no longer functional to work efficiently in, and then to properly serve the people who come to see us," Baldwin said.

The proposed development will include a new fire hall, as the current structure is too small.

"The biggest problem with the fire hall is that it's built to its capacity," Baldwin said. "There is zero room for growth."

The township board will be working with Huron Consultants during the next six months to prepare a package for poten-

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Bids needed for convention center work

County looking for contractors

By Holly Setter
Times Herald

St. Clair County is looking for contractors to do site work for the Blue Water Area Convention Center.

The first request for pro-

posal was posted on the Michigan Inter-governmental Trade Network at www.mitn.info on May 31.

Dena Alderdyce, accounting manager for the county, said the RFP includes milling, resurfacing and re-striping the existing main parking lot; installing a sewer; moving underground utilities where the convention center will be; and other improvements to the

MORE INFORMATION

» Questions regarding the bid process? Contact Dena Alderdyce at (810) 989-6324.

existing site.

Bids are due by 3 p.m. June 14. A public bid opening will be shortly thereafter.

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DEATHS, 4A

Marilyn Joyce Baker, 81
Russell C. Burkhardt, 91
Dominic W. Chmielewski, 86
Judith "Norine" Dimon, 71

Marilyn L. Gates, 79
Elizabeth K. Glencer, 91
Bernard Hartel, 82
Leonard Raymond Kaake Sr., 66
Jay F. McCartney, 78

Duane Harry Michaels, 66
Russell A. Mitchell, 73
Dorothy Mae Muse, 90
Carol Chappelle Ogden, 73
Marie Lynn Piche, 28
Lyle William Scheffler, 88
Lillie Simmons, 83

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Opinion/7A
Sports/1B
TV/7B
Weather/2A

COMING SUNDAY

Who do you call when you get whip-lash from a railroad crossing?

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Treasury Department, Gov. Rick Snyder said.

The money comes from the Hardest Hit Fund and will be used in Detroit, Flint, Grand Rapids, Pontiac and Saginaw. The fund was created in 2010 to help states struggling through the economic and mortgage crisis.

It isn't clear how much money each city will receive.

Flint had more than 5,800 vacant homes and

GETTING IT RIGHT CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

The St. Clair County Senior Olympics will be 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. June 13 at the Blue Water YMCA. The date is wrong in The Blue Water Summer special section.

The Times Herald strives for fair and accurate reporting, and we regret it any time an error

will go a long way toward enhancing our blight removal program and increasing the number of vacant structures that we can knock down," he said. "Currently, we are on track with our 4-year-old demolition plan to tear down 10,000 dangerous structures by the end of this year."

Detroit — and Michigan itself — were among the most affected places by the national foreclosure crisis, as thousands of people lost their jobs and then their homes when mortgage payments could not be met. Left empty, the houses often become havens for drug use, prostitution and other crime.

LOTTERY THURSDAY'S NUMBERS

» Midday daily 3: 5-6-5
» Midday daily 4: 0-0-7-8
» Daily 3: 1-1-2

HALL

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tial bidders.

Baldwin expects the project to be ready for bid in January 2014.

» The next three to four weeks will be devoted to programming, during which Huron Consultants sit down with township departments to determine their spatial, or organization, needs.

"They're trying to get a good understanding of how the flow and functionality needs to work," Baldwin said.

» During the programming phase, Huron Consultants also will perform site surveys, geotechnical services and hazardous materials surveys.

» From mid-July through Sept. 1, the township will develop a schematic design with Huron

Consultants. A schematic design includes preliminary floor layouts, facades and building plans.

Baldwin anticipates holding open houses toward the end of the schematic design phase to get feedback on the designs.

» From mid-September to mid-October, the township will finalize schematic designs in the design development phase.

» From mid-October to mid-November, Huron Consultants will prepare a building demolition package to outline the demolition of the current structures on the planned development property.

» Huron Consultants will assemble a construction document from mid-November to mid-January to outline the vision for the planned building for bidders.

» Bidding will take

place from mid-January to mid-February, with construction following.

» Baldwin said the township expects construction to be finished by the end of November 2014.

The township will utilize various funds to pay for the building.

Officials have been setting aside money for the hall for more than 15 years, Baldwin said. They also could pull money from capital improvement funds and savings accounts.

Baldwin said the estimated cost of the construction is \$150 to \$165 per square foot, not including the Huron Consultants' contract cost.

Fort Gratiot will have a better idea of the building's square footage after the programming phase.

Baldwin said the township will require 75 per-

cent local labor and suppliers in its bidding documents.

McLaughlin said the firm wants to incorporate the property's topographical features into the project, including the area's wetland.

"We focus on environmental sustainability, and those are things we bring to the table. There seems to be a connection there," he said. "The things that are important to us at the firm or our team, are important to the township."

Contact Beth LeBlanc at (810) 989-6259 or eleblanc@gannett.com. Follow her on Twitter @THBethLeBlanc.

KRAFFT 8
Granddick
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excludes Fashion events & digital 3D

No passes Stadium Seating
SHOWTIMES 6/7 - 6/11