

**Bertrand Township Board Public Hearing Minutes**  
**Special Assessment District for Emergency Medical Services**  
**Through Southwestern Michigan Community Ambulance Service, District #1**  
**Thursday, September 14, 2017**

Bertrand Township Hall  
3835 Buffalo Rd., Buchanan, MI 49107

Supervisor Hicks called the public hearing to order at 7:03 p.m.

Members Present: Hicks, Payton, Vite, Zelmer  
Members Absent: Kuhn

Guests present: Brian Scribner, SMCAS Executive Director

**Purpose:** To inform township residents of the intention to create a Special Assessment District to help fund the Southwestern Michigan Community Ambulance Service (SMCAS).

Public notice was given in the forms of a First-Class letter sent to the address of every parcel in the township qualifying to be assessed as well as two publications in the South Bend Tribune.

**Discussion:** Supervisor Hicks introduced Brian Scribner who made the presentation and provided time for questions and answers.

Here are some quick facts:

- Six owner-municipalities operate SMCAS (established in 1976) – Buchanan City, Buchanan Township, Bertrand Township, Niles City, Niles Township, and Howard Township
- The current Special Assessment District (SAD) expired in December, 2016.
- An assessment of \$20 per qualifying parcel will be made annually.
- The former SAD made a special assessment on every parcel containing a residence. This is illegal under PA33, which states every qualifying parcel must be assessed.
- There is a Special Assessment District for each owner-municipality, and each has the same language.
- Last fiscal year 2016/2017, they reported positive numbers.

**Public Comments**

Five residents had comments / questions, including:

1. Why an assessment when the ambulance service charges for their services?

A: Mr. Scribner responded that it costs roughly \$500,000 per ambulance per year to operate. SMCAS has a \$2.6 million operating budget. Most expenses with the ambulance service are tied up in *being ready* to respond, no responding. The \$20/parcel *funds the gap* between revenues and expenses.

2. How much revenue will the additional assessments generate?

A: \$90,000 – \$130,000

3. How have other municipalities voted?

A: All other owner-municipalities have voted and passed the resolution. We are the fifth and final to vote.

4. How long will the assessment remain \$20?

A: 5 years.

**Board Member Comments**

Trustee Zelmer asked Mr. Scribner if there is any language in the Special Assessment on how the money is to be used. He said the resolution states it will be used for general operating expenses.

**Motion** made by Hicks to close the meeting at 7:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



September 17, 2017

Don Vite

Dated

Bertrand Township Clerk