

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
TOWNSHIP BOARD VIRTUAL REGULAR MEETING **-APPROVED-**  
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198  
517-349-1232, Virtual Meeting via Zoom  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2020 **6:00 pm.**

PRESENT: Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Township Manager Walsh, Director of Public Works Perry, Fire Chief Hamel, Police Chief Plaga, Community Planning Director Kieselbach, Information Technology Director Gebes, Parks and Recreation Director Maisner, Finance Director Mattison, Human Resources Director Tithof, Economic Development and Neighborhoods Director Clark, Communications Manager Yates, Principal Planner Menser, Clerk-Elect Guthrie

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor Styka called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor Styka led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Clerk Dreyfus called the roll of the Board.

4. PRESENTATIONS

A. Environmental Commission Program Update

LeRoy Harvey reported on the environmental events held in 2020 and the 2021 proposed projects by the Environmental Commission (report in meeting file).

5. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Supervisor Styka opened public remarks at 6:14 pm.

None

Supervisor Styka closed public remarks at 6:15 pm.

6. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT

Manager Walsh thanked Environmental Commission and volunteers for tree planting project; staff for their assistance in delivering the absent voter ballots to the precincts on Election Night; new restaurant planned for Jolly/Okemos Rd area, a banner is being installed illustrating the new site; Board goal setting session scheduled for November 23; 107 deer have been killed in the Deer Management Program which is a good number, police cadets to go to academy; Winslow Trailer Park consent agreement; HVAC project completed.

## 7. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Clerk Dreyfus November 3, 2020 Election Update:

- 33,980 registered voters in Township; increase of 2,000+ voters
- 18,800 voted Absent Voter (AV) Ballots; 7,011 voters showed up at the polls; total voter turnout of 25,811
- Voter Turnout percentage at 76%; with 73% as Absent Voter Ballots and 27% were in person votes
- 20,349 Absent Voter Ballots were issued; with 18,800 returned; resulting in a 93% AV return rate; statistically this is the approximate same return rate over the last few years
- Township election results, along with proposals, reported. Complete election report provided in packet for next meeting
- AV Counting Board was moved from the Sherriff's Office to the Ingham County Fair Ground in Mason; AV ballots were reconciled on November 2 when the Clerk's office stopped accepting the ballots at 4 pm; ballots transported to Mason by Democrat & Republican in secure van, AVCB started tabulating at 7 am on Election Day; 55 election workers used two high speed tabulators and concluded counting at 8:30 pm - only Meridian Township at the counting board
- Lines reported during the early hours and through the afternoon at all precincts; at several precincts longer lines were due to insufficient tables or voting area spacing issues due to COVID precautions, plus longer ballot, Clerk visited various precincts and reconfigured precinct layout and voting areas, which helped reduce voter lines
- There were no provisional ballots, open carry situations, or threat issues
- One voter did have an issue with the Voter Assist Terminal (VAT) and this has been a re-occurring issue, voter came to office and voted a ballot, raised concerns regarding not having 100% privacy; voter reported the issue to County and State officials, and the Bureau of Elections,
- The VAT was used at several precincts, no issues reported with these terminals
- Tabulator down for two hours at one precinct, replaced it with backup tabulator, called Election Source who have a maintenance agreement for the equipment, but they did not provide assistance nor did they do a service call; the Township now has two tabulators that need repairs before the next election
- There were no voter harassment or intimidation issues or complaints; no complaints on any potential violation of precinct campaign laws; no official challenges; numerous observers in most precincts and no issues reported from any observer; Secretary of State staff person visited precincts and offered suggestions; the individual was accompanied by her daughter who was excited to see the voting process
- When Ingham County Clerk confirmed that Meridian Township was the only municipality having AV ballots counted at the AVCB in Mason, the process should have been changed to allow Meridian Township to take all AV ballots received after 4pm on Monday to the AVCB instead of the time-consuming process of delivering AV ballots to all 19 precincts at the end of the evening; this resulted in 3 hours of additional processing time in each precinct, along with an increase in ballot count errors, it would have been more efficient to have AV ballots delivered to the AV Board at 8 pm where they would have been easily processed in less than 20 minutes.

Treasurer Deschaine reported:

- Attended Environmental Commission meeting; discussed the 2021 projects list
- Attended the Economic Development Corporation
- Treasurer's Report states \$8,842,000 for road improvements investments, the report was prepared in September, the \$1 million dollar CD was spent on the last of the road improvements

project and leaves approximately \$8 million dollars; with \$4 million maturing in 2021 and \$4 million maturing in 2022; the Road Millage allows for the spending of \$4 million per year on road repairs and improvements.

- Additions to the December 2020 Tax Bills; these are delinquencies being moved to the tax bills; there are delinquent utilities on the report in the amount of \$23,120.52; the Township has one of the lower water/sewer rates and it is important to collect these funds; the reason this number is higher than in previous years is because the Township is not doing shutoffs during pandemic; if they remain unpaid, then it is turned over to Ingham County.

Trustee Jackson reported:

- Tri-County Regional Planning Commission published their 25 Year Draft Regional Transportation Plan; the draft plan will be presented at their virtual meeting on November 10; the draft plan will be available and open for public comment until November 24.

Clerk Dreyfus:

- Thanked 150+ election workers, the temporary/full time employees who worked diligently preparing for Election Day and the Clerk's Office full time staff for working long hours; the need for these workers; many of the volunteers are elderly residents and they worked over 16 hours on Election Day; hard work by these dedicated individuals and many new election workers, grateful for cooperation by everyone with COVID safety precautions.

Trustee Wisinski:

- Held a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force meeting with directors discussing the post survey results on what is happening and where the Task Force should go; will be holding a follow up meeting to determine the next steps.

#### 8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**Clerk Dreyfus moved to approve the Agenda as presented. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland Wisinski

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

#### 9. CONSENT AGENDA

Supervisor Styka reviewed the consent agenda.

**Clerk Dreyfus moved to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

A. Communications

**Clerk Dreyfus moved that the communications be received and placed on file and any communications not already assigned for disposition be referred to the Township Manager or Supervisor for follow-up. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

B. Approval of Minutes – October 20, 2020 Virtual Regular Meeting

**Clerk Dreyfus moved to approve and ratify the minutes of the October 20, 2020 Virtual Regular Meeting, as submitted. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

C. Bills

**Clerk Dreyfus moved to approve that the Township Board approve the Manager’s Bills as follows: Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine**

<b>Common Cash</b>		\$	<b>884,912.18</b>
<b>Public Works</b>		\$	<b>28,917.05</b>
<b>Trust &amp; Agency</b>		\$	<b><u>110,984.80</u></b>
	<b>Total Checks</b>	\$	<b>1,024,814.03</b>
<b>Credit Card Transactions</b>		\$	<b>8,162.51</b>
10/01/2020 - 10/14/2020			
	<b>Total Purchases</b>	\$	<b><u>1,032,976.54</u></b>
<b>ACH Payments</b>		\$	<b><u>796,720.36</u></b>

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

D. Ratification of Full-Time Firefighter/Paramedic Appointment

**Clerk Dreyfus moved to authorize the Fire Department to appoint Steven Garelik to Full-Time Paramedic/Firefighter. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

E. Ratification of New Police Office Appointment

**Clerk Dreyfus moved to ratify the appointment of Megan Heinemann to the position of Police Officer contingent upon successful completion of those items stipulated in the conditional offer of employment: Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

F. Treasurer's Quarterly Report

**Clerk Dreyfus moved to approve the Treasurer's Quarterly Report. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

G. Additions to the December 2020 Tax Bills

**Clerk Dreyfus moved to assess the charges identified in the staff memorandum with parcel identification available in the Treasurer's Office dated November 5, 2020 for Delinquent Special Assessments, Utility Bills, False Alarms, Nuisance, Lot Mowing/Code Violation, and Misc. Fees as a tax lien against the subject properties as authorized by Michigan Compiled Laws (MCL) 41.727, 41.728 and Meridian Township Ordinance Code Sections 58-32, 58-33, 78-98, 78-155, 46-5, 82-27, 18-1 and 18-15. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

10. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY – NONE

11. HEARINGS

12. ACTION ITEMS

A. Grettenberger Drain and Meijer Drain Improvements

**Treasurer Deschaine move to approve the Grettenberger Drain Resolution and the Meijers Drain Resolution and authorize the Township Supervisor and the Township Clerk to sign the associated Grettenberger Petition for Maintenance and Improvement of a Drain and the Meijers Petition for Maintenance and Improvement of a Drain as presented. Seconded by Trustee Opsommer.**

Discussion:

- This will be part of the improvements to Grand River Avenue and raising of the road at the intersection; these are necessary improvement in the low floodplain area; it is overdue and a needed improvement to the drain system

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Jackson

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

B. Board and Commission Appointments

Supervisor Styka outlined the proposed candidates for appointment.

**Trustee Opsommer move to appoint Chanelle Russ to the Land Preservation Advisory Board for a term ending December 31, 2023 and to confirm the Supervisor's appointment of Joshua Robertson to the Transportation Commission for a term ending December 31, 2021. Supported by Trustee Jackson.**

Discussion:

- Chanelle Russ's background of landscape experience and ecological designer will be a contribution to Land Preservation Advisory Board;
- Josh Robertson has public policy experience, which will benefit Transportation Commission

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Sundland, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

C. COVID-19 Work From Home Program

Manager Walsh reported on the second round of COVID going around. Positive case in Police Dept. Proposing to purchase equipment for employees to use while they work from home. Municipal buildings are not being shut down; hybrid program to allow some employees to work in the building while others will work from home.

Supervisor Styka reported because Michigan has been experiencing an increase in COVID positive cases and deaths, he felt this item should proceed as an action item instead of as a discussion item.

**Trustee Opsommer moved to approve the Township Manager's Recommendation to appropriate \$69,000 to enhance our efforts in providing a Meridian Township Safe Work From Home Program. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.**

Board Discussion:

- Board member belief that the Township should not be frugal at this time and request more money if needed, Information Technology is an essential component to this program, question about need to provide employees with laptop computers since most people have them, survey indicated that some of the employees do not have access to laptops, some had children that used them extensively, some employees stated they did not want to use their personal equipment; not every employee will need equipment.
- Concern noted about a utility staff person using their personal phone from home to call residents on utility issues, this would not be a good practice.
- COVID cases have increased and based on projections, there will be an increase in case numbers during the winter months.
- Work at home will likely begin next week.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Walnut Hills Update

Manager Walsh reported the buyer and seller have reached an agreement on the purchase price, which includes demolition costs and the purchase will be closing on Monday. The purchasing family reported the clubhouse will be demolished immediately and the other Township recommendations will be addressed immediately.

B. Hickory Island Alley

Deputy Township Manager Perry for the past 6 months, staff has been working with residents on Lake Lansing public access sites around the lake such as road ends, county park, etc. and the access points vary according to their location. One access point is in the southeast corner of the lake known as Hickory Island access point. It is an alley that was created when the subdivision was

developed and is known as "Paper Street." Overview of issues regarding public access and homeowner concerns, including encroachment into the public space, along with options.

Board Discussion:

- Question regarding maintaining public access no matter what outcome is reached, Deputy Township Manager Perry replied yes, unless the Township Board would like a different outcome. The goal has been to maintain the public access while assisting a property owner with his issues.
- Neighbor reports on activities on the public alley such as launching kayaks, how people use the ingress and egress, permissible public activities, posted notices regarding lake access, history of alley and adjacent parcel, role of Ingham County Road Department.
- Staff will be working with legal team and will bring back when a resolution is available.

14. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Styka Opened Public Remarks at 7:20 pm.

Joshua Patterson, 5879 Bayone, Haslett, thanked the Board for his appointment to the Transportation Board and offered a summary of his background.

Bill McConnell, 4376 Manitou, Okemos; supports recycling work and tree-planting events by Environmental Programs Coordinator LeRoy Harvey, and partnering with local agencies is superb. He referenced a communication in the board packet on the Noise Ordinance and asked the Board to consider the exception on the yard equipment and music being performed.

Supervisor Styka Closed Public Remarks at 7:24 pm.

15. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Positive thoughts and best wishes from Trustee Wisinski to the police officer who tested COVID positive.

16. CLOSED SESSION - NONE

17. ADJOURNMENT

**Trustee Opsommer moved to adjourn. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 7-0.

**Supervisor Styka adjourned the meeting at 7:25 pm.**

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RONALD J. STYKA,  
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

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BRETT DREYFUS,  
TOWNSHIP CLERK