

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
TOWNSHIP BOARD REGULAR MEETING – **REVISED, AS AMENDED 5.2.2017**
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198
853-4000, Town Hall Room
TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2017 **6:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Brixie, Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer
ABSENT: Trustee Sundland
STAFF: Township Manager Frank Walsh, Assistant Township Manager/Director of Public Works and Engineering Derek Perry, Director of Community Planning & Development Mark Kieselbach, Police Chief David Hall, Fire Chief Fred Cowper, Parks and Recreation Director LuAnn Maisner, Director of Information Technology Stephen Gebes, Finance Director Miriam Mattison, Communications Director Deborah Guthrie, Human Resources Director Joyce Marx, Associate Planner/Economic Development Coordinator Ben Motil

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
Supervisor Styka called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS
Supervisor Styka led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. ROLL CALL
The Clerk called the roll of the Board.
4. PRESENTATION (None)
5. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS
Supervisor Styka opened Public Remarks.

R_x Harrington, 825 Piper Road, Haslett, believed the Board has not solved the problems of Meridian Township's Redi-Ride system. He noted the letter of intent states Redi-Ride was established to provide transportation for elderly people to attend doctor appointments, trips to pharmacies, grocery shopping, etc. Mr. Harrington stated the goal of Redi-Ride was to fill gaps in the Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA) system. He added the letter of intent also indicated Meridian Township had adequate school transportation systems, and Redi-Ride would not be used to transport students to and from school. Mr. Harrington remarked students from two school systems make up approximately 30% of the rides, namely Okemos and St. Marthas. He suggested the Board pass a resolution which prevents students from using Redi-Ride, effectively returning the service to its original intent.

Leonard Provencher, 4824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, pointed out the Treasurer's quarterly report shows \$4.8 million going to CATA from Meridian Township. He voiced his sentiment that the Police and Fire millage to be placed on the August, 2017 ballot should be separated into two questions, one dealing with the unfunded pension liability and the other addressing the Police and Fire staffing needs and equipment. Mr. Provencher suggested a provision be placed in the sale of Meridian Township's School Street property to Haslett Public Schools for \$1.00 so the school system cannot flip it for a profit. He believed the Local Officials Compensation Commission to be an "inflationary loop" in that Board approval of salary increases for staff sets the policy for compensation of elected officials throughout the future. Mr. Provencher spoke in support of the Parks & Recreation grant applications.

Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood Drive, Haslett, speaking on behalf of the Liaison for Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation (LINC), addressed “needs” vs “wants” relative to the proposed Police and Fire Millage. He believed there is a need to fund the pension legacy debt as well as new vehicles for the police and fire departments. Mr. Bowlby showed a bar chart he created which questioned whether there has been a 30% increase in calls for service by police in the past five (5) years as shown in the Township’s Powerpoint presentation. He alleged there has not been an increase in the calls for service by the Meridian Township Police Department as annual reports for the last two years included the total number of Ingham 911 dispatch calls as the total number of Meridian Township police calls for service. Mr. Bowlby stated the citizen survey showed there has not been a dramatic decline in the satisfaction of citizens with the service provided by the Township’s police department. He questioned retiring police cars every three (3) years, instead of keeping them for five (5) years or more and the necessity of a new ladder truck for the Fire Department. Mr. Bowlby also questioned the need to replace all five (5) ambulances in the next ten (10) years. He recited the previous mission statement in part: “...through the most effective use of available resources”, alleging that concept is gone with the revised mission statement. Mr. Bowlby believed the Township should not ask taxpayers for “more than we need.”

Rene Korrey, 4633 Okemos Road, Okemos, agreed with the letter from LINC, and stated success of the Fire and Police millage will only occur if the millage questions are separated. She noted she is uncomfortable with the proposed millage language as it leads taxpayers to believe this does not relate to the pension issue. Ms. Korrey indicated she would like to see verbiage about paying off the pension deficit specified in the millage language.

Supervisor Styka closed Public Remarks.

6. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT

Manager Walsh reported the following:

- Possibility of a fifth contract being settled in the coming month
- First quarterly report draft will be available on March 31st
- Chick-fil-A ribbon cutting on March 30th at 9:00 AM
- March 30th Joint Meeting with Local Governments and School Districts at 6:00 PM
- Recommendations from the Planning Commission regarding the Walnut Hills rezoning and Hannah Lofts expected to come to the Board within the next two (2) to three (3) weeks

7. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Treasurer Brixie reported on delinquent personal property tax collection totals for 2012 through 2016 tax years, total 2016 tax year collections, 2016 tax year distributions total and current fixed and non-fixed investments as of February 28, 2017. She reported her attendance at the Tri County Transportation Commission and Land Preservation Advisory Board (LPAB) meetings last week, adding the LPAB is currently busy evaluating different properties. Treasurer Brixie noted a flyer in the packet announced a seminar on vernal pools will be held on March 25, 2017 at 10:00 AM in the Town Hall Room. She reported her attendance at the Michigan Municipal League Capitol Conference (along with Manager Walsh, Trustee Jackson and Clerk Dreyfus), during which a press conference was held regarding dark store legislation. Trustee Brixie expressed appreciation to the Supervisor for writing letters of appreciation which were included as communications in the Board packet.

Trustee Deschaine announced the Parks and Recreation Volunteer Appreciation Night was held March 16th to recognize the 1,500 volunteers in a given year who donate their time. He reported his attendance at the March 9th Township Branding event.

Trustee Jackson stated one of the featured speakers at the Michigan Municipal League press conference was Township Manager Walsh, who discussed bringing together 25 other municipalities who supported the amicus brief going before the Supreme Court challenging the current dark store taxation policy.

Clerk Dreyfus inquired if copies of the union contract being voted upon tonight were being provided to Board members as he previously requested.

Township Manager Walsh explained the process used by the Township in bringing only the changes in the tentative agreement to the Board, as he stated it takes approximately two (2) to five (5) weeks to incorporate the changes into the final contract once voted upon.

Supervisor Styka announced a May 18th fundraiser at Henry’s Place from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM to raise \$10,000 through the Community Resources Commission to help those citizens who are in need of financial assistance. He reported the Pancake Fundraiser, hosted by the Meridian Township Firefighters Union and several Boy Scout Troops, raised \$1300, a portion of which will go to the Muscular Dystrophy Association and the remainder to the scouts’ various scholarship funds. Supervisor Styka also reported his attendance at the Parks and Recreation Volunteer Appreciation Night and the first meeting of the Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA).

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Clerk Dreyfus moved to approve the agenda amended as follows:

- **Add Agenda Item #9G: Purchase of New Voting Equipment**
- **Move Agenda Item #13E to #13A**
- **Move Agenda Item #9C to 12A**

Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-0.

9. CONSENT AGENDA (SALMON)

Supervisor Styka reviewed the consent agenda.

Treasurer Brixie moved to adopt the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

A. Communications

(1) Board Deliberation (BD)

12B Liaison for Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation (LINC), PO Box 40, Okemos; RE: Proposed Police and Fire Millage

(2) Board Information (BI)

BI-1 Jack Pollard, 5730 Academic Way, Haslett; RE: Trails of Meridian Parks

BI-2 Paul and Judy Kindel, 2915 Margate Lane, Ease Lansing; RE: Opposition to Rezoning #16060 (Summer Park Realty)

BI-3 Kathy Bozyk, 4111 Spinnaker Lane, Okemos; RE: Deer in Meridian Township

BI-4 George Orban, Chair, Ingham County Historical Commission, PO Box 319, Mason; RE: Congratulatory letter on Meridian Township’s 175th Anniversary

BI-5 Supervisor Styka; RE: Appreciation letter to MSU Dairy Store for its donation of ice cream to the Meridian Township Warming Shelter at the Central Fire Station

BI-6 Supervisor Styka; RE: Appreciation letter to the staff and volunteers of the American Red Cross for their efforts towards the Meridian Township Warming Shelter at the Central Fire Station

BI-7 Supervisor Styka; RE: Appreciation letter to Panera Bread for its donation of treats to the Meridian Township Warming Shelter at the Central Fire Station

(3) Staff Communications (SC)

SC-1 Manager Walsh; RE: Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) Denies Utility Status to DAS Companies
 SC-2 Director Kieselbach; RE: Site Plan Review Decisions as of March 1, 2017

(4) On File in the Clerk’s Office (OF)

Material handed out at the March 7, 2017 Board Meeting

Township Manager Frank Walsh; RE: Letter from Warren M. Creamer, III, Managing Director, Robert W. Baird & Co., Inc., 1001 Bay Street, Traverse City; RE: Available options of the Township to address unfunded pension liabilities

Treasurer Brixie 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 Clerk Dreyfus.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer, Supervisor Styka, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
 NAYS: None
 Motion carried 6-0.

B. Minutes

Treasurer Brixie moved to approve and ratify the minutes of the March 7, 2017 Regular Meeting as amended. Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer, Supervisor Styka, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
 NAYS: None
 Motion carried 6-0.

C. Redi-Ride Policy Change

Treasurer Brixie moved to recommend to CATA for implementation the change to the Redi-Ride policy for a cancellation notice to be at least four (4) hours before the ride is scheduled. Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer, Supervisor Styka, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
 NAYS: None
 Motion carried 6-0.

D. Greater Lansing Area Regional Stormwater Memorandum of Agreement

Treasurer Brixie moved to approve the Greater Lansing Area Regional Storm Water Program Resolution and associated Memorandum of Agreement. Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer, Supervisor Styka, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
 NAYS: None
 Motion carried 6-0.

E. Authority to Open Account (Name Changes)

Treasurer Brixie moved to adopt a resolution entitled “Authority to Open an Account” at: Commercial Bank (formerly Mason State Bank) and MI Class-administered by Public Trust Advisors (formerly MBIA Class). Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer, Supervisor Styka, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
 NAYS: None
 Motion carried 6-0.

F. Purchase of New Voting Equipment

Treasurer Brixie moved to approve the resolution applying for and accepting up to \$160,000 in grant funding from the State of Michigan to purchase new election equipment. Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

10. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY (None)11. HEARINGS

A. Kansas Road Public Sanitary Sewer Improvement Special Assessment District #52

Supervisor Styka opened the public hearing at 6:42 P.M.

Assistant Township Manager/Director Perry summarized the proposed Kansas Road public sanitary sewer special assessment district (SAD) as outlined in staff memorandum dated March 17, 2017.

- Public

Piotr Lupa, 3575 Kansas Road, Okemos, stated his property was divided after the initial hearings on the sewer improvement to become side-by-side parcels, both with frontage onto Kansas Road. He stated he will now need to participate in the assessment cost of the project for both parcels, although only one (1) parcel currently has the "Y" connection installed, which he subsequently ran the lateral to the home. Mr. Lupa requested the Township provide him with a connection to the second parcel if he is going to be assessed costs for both parcels.

Steve Freemire, 3622 Kansas Road, Okemos, voiced his appreciation for the Board's vote last fall to provide sewer on Kansas Road. He stated just a few weeks ago when the weather warmed and there was significant rain, odor from a neighbor's septic system released into the air. He provided his thoughts on what should happen if four to five acre parcels were developed into multiple parcels in the future relative to potential refunds to other property owners on Kansas Road.

- Board and staff discussion:

- 17 lots rather than 16 reduced the size of the assessment for each lot
- Township is reviewing how it can make the situation equitable for Mr. Lupa as he did not receive a lateral for the second parcel
- No payback district exists so there would not being any "rebate" to other property owners
- As lots are split or further developed, the sewer becomes part of the public infrastructure once the special assessment district is completed and connection fees are required

Supervisor Styka closed the public hearing at 6:51 P.M.

12. ACTION ITEMS

A. Bills

Treasurer Brixie moved to approve the bills. Supported by Trustee Jackson.

Board discussion:

- Trustee Deschaine asked to abstain from voting on the bills as one of the bills is to pay for a flag subscription to the Kiwanis Club, of which he is an active member
- Positive comments from the public when the flags are placed in front of the Township Municipal Building

- Board member belief Board members cannot abstain from voting
- Board members have the option to recuse themselves by leaving the room during the vote if they believe a conflict of interest exists
- Belief of a majority of Board members the explained situation does not constitute a conflict of interest

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer, Supervisor Styka,
 Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
 NAYS: None
 Motion carried 6-0.

- B. Rezoning #16070 (Singh), 1954 Saginaw Highway from RR (Rural Residential) to RDD (Multiple Family)
 Director Kieselbach summarized the rezoning request as outlined in staff memorandum dated March 17, 2017.

Trustee Jackson moved to adopt the resolution to introduce for publication and subsequent adoption Rezoning #16070. Seconded by Trustee Deschaine.

Board discussion:

- Planning Commission recommended rezoning of this property from RR to RDD based on the location on a principal arterial and adjacent to commercial areas to the northeast and industrial on the south as well as the rezoning represents a logical and orderly development pattern consistent with the Master Plan
- There are differing visions of Saginaw Highway’s highest land use and the most sustainable approach to development along this principal arterial
- Board member belief Saginaw Highway is going through a transformation
- Single family housing exists to the west of the subject property
- Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designates the subject property as commercial
- Property zoned commercial is adjacent and around this parcel
- Concern with a multi-family environment on Saginaw Highway
- Statement by the applicant that the size of the parcel prohibits him from a commercial use on this parcel
- Possibility of acquiring adjacent parcels to construct a contiguous commercial development
- Board member belief realization of the vision in the Master Plan would result in commercial businesses surrounding this parcel and be a less than desirable place to live
- RDD zoning district allows for a planned unit development (PUD)
- Encouragement to the property owner to explore construction of a PUD

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer, Supervisor Styka,
 Treasurer Brixie
 NAYS: Clerk Dreyfus
 Motion carried 5-1.

- C. Police and Fire August Millage 2017-2026
 Manager Walsh provided a summary of the Powerpoint presentation given at the March 7, 2017 Board meeting.
Treasurer Brixie moved to adopt the resolution for a Police and Fire Protection Millage 2017-2026, in the amount of 1.483 mills, to be placed on the ballot for the Tuesday, August 8, 2017 Election. Seconded by Trustee Opsommer.

Board and staff discussion:

- Board member preference for two mills each for police and fire, but will accept this “lean” proposal
- Interest savings realized when paying off debt in ten (10) years
- Aging population requires first responders and the need for them is essential
- Board member belief that separating the millage language is not a good idea, as designating one mill for paying pension debt and just under .5 for expansion of police and fire staffing would likely confuse voters
- Millage will allow Meridian Township to provide benefits and remain competitive as an employee
- Board member belief that improving the staffing ratio will improve morale
- Board member belief there is not a “lot of discretionary funding” in the Township
- Board member belief separating the millage into two questions “fine tunes” the choices available to voters
- Board member belief two millage questions would be easier for voters to understand than combining the two questions into one millage
- Legal counsel drafted the ballot language before the Board
- Concern what would happen if voters approved new funding for additional police and fire personnel but did not approve the millage paying off the pension debt
- Fire Chief stated ladder truck is expensive, but it’s the “bread and butter” of fire services
- If the Township does not have a ladder truck, insurance costs for homeowners would increase
- Ladder truck is used to block traffic on the highway in the case of an accident and for big fires and rescues
- Current ladder truck is 18 years old and the typical lifespan is 20 years
- Ladder trucks are heavy and experience a lot of strain during use
- “Funding for the future” would be a great gift for the Fire Chief to give to his successor
- Township currently have 12 road cars which are rotated every 4 years at 100,000+ miles, considered to be the industry “standard.”
- Cars experience significant idle time which mileage doesn’t include
- Need to provide officers with safe cars in good condition when responding to calls
- Staff provided the attorney with the list of items which would be addressed through the proposed millage
- Money generated from the millage could not be used to retire the debt included in defined benefit plans outside of police and fire
- Summary of union negotiations to date to reduce the multiplier for current employees and new hires
- Information put out by the Township will cover the uses of the millage in detail, including the plan to pay off pension liabilities

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

D. Sale of Property to Haslett Public Schools

Manager Walsh summarized the proposed sale of property to Haslett Public Schools as outlined in staff memorandum dated March 21, 2017.

Trustee Deschaine moved to approve the resolution to authorize the sale of property known as 5681 School Street, Haslett MI, parcel no. 33-02-02-10-432-007. Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.

Board discussion:

- Board member belief the school district will find good use for it
- House located on the property is vacant
- Many complaints were received by the Township for activities on this property
- Property is adjacent to Ralya Elementary School

- Limitations on what can be done with a tax-foreclosed property
- Concern with including a qualifying use clause in the resolution as Meridian Township and its school districts have always worked well together

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

E. Findings of the Local Officials Compensation Commission (LOCC)

Trustee Opsommer moved that the Board respectfully decline the recommendations proposed by the Elected Officials Compensation Board in shared sacrifice. Seconded by Trustee Deschaine.

Board and staff discussion:

- THIS MOTION IS BEING MADE IN CONSIDERATION OF THE TREMENDOUS SACRIFICES THAT CURRENT AND FUTURE EMPLOYEES HAVE MADE IN RENEGOTIATING THEIR PENSIONS AND BECAUSE WE ARE PROPOSING A PUBLIC SAFETY MILLAGE WE ARE ASKING OUR RESIDENTS TO CONSIDER IN AUGUST
- Recommendation is for a 2% increase for elected officials
- Recommendation requires a two-thirds vote of the Board to reject the LOCC's findings
- Board member belief many concessions have been made by employees during the negotiation process
- Board member belief that as elected officials, the only sacrifice to be made is their salary compensation
- ~~Reminder~~ Board member belief that all Township staff, ~~including the Manager~~, have received a 2% increase for three (3) years
- Board member belief the motion to reject the recommendation from the public body is a "political maneuver"
- Board member belief that in 2012, ~~the salaries of the Clerk, Treasurer, Supervisor and Board Trustees~~ were cut due to "political lobbying" directed at the LOCC
- LOCC is a public body which extensively researched the issue over two months prior to making its recommendation and worked with the Township's Human Resources Department on compensation for elected officials
- Board member belief the proposed 2% increase is a small increase – appropriate and fair to keep up with the cost of living
- Board member ~~statement~~ BELIEF that comparatively speaking, the various Board member compensation amounts are less than what is paid by other similarly sized communities
- Board member belief the Township is in overall excellent financial condition, with a \$6 million surplus fund, and a 2% increase will not cause any financial hardship for the Township
- Board member preference to not act on this motion, which would allow the recommendation of the LOCC to stand
- ~~Requirement for a super majority (2/3 vote) to overturn the recommendation of the local public body~~
- ~~Concern with the message being sent to the public by receiving a raise when the Board is asking voters to pay an approximate 1.5 mill increase in taxes~~
- BOARD MEMBER BELIEF THAT VOTING IN A RAISE FOR BOARD MEMBERS IN THE SAME MEETING AS VOTING TO PUT ON THE BALLOT A APPROXIMATELY 1.5 MILLAGE INCREASE ON THE BALLOT IS WRONG AND DISTURBING
- BOARD MEMBER BELIEF THAT THE TOWNSHIP IS IN A CRISIS WITH THE UNFUNDED PENSION LIABILITY AND THERE IS AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO SENT TO VOTERS THAT WE TAKE IT SERIOUSLY AND WE ARE GOING TO OUR PART BY REFUSING OUR RAISE AND TO MAKE A SACRIFICE
- Board member belief the purpose of the LOCC is to take the issue of Board salaries out of the hands of politicians

- Board member belief that although the proposed salary increase is warranted, and elected positions are underfunded compared to similar communities, he will vote for the motion because of the circumstances faced by the Township relative to the unfunded pension liability
- Board member belief the public will “see through” this action as political grandstanding
- Board member belief the pension for new DPW hires will be 40% less than current DPW employees and pension for new firefighter hires will be 36% less than current firefighters

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer, Supervisor Styka,
Treasurer Brixie

NAYS: Clerk Dreyfus

Motion carried 5-1.

F. 2017 Proposed Grant Applications for Park Development

Director Maisner summarized the grant applications for park development as outlined in staff memorandum dated March 8, 2017.

(1) Treasurer Brixie moved to approve the resolution supporting submittal of a grant application to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Program for construction of a universally accessible pavilion facility and access sidewalks in Meridian Riverfront Park/Harris Nature Center with an estimated total project cost of \$100,000, providing a 50% local match of \$50,000 from the Township’s Park Millage Fund. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

Board and staff discussion:

- Appreciation to the Parks staff for its vigilance in submitting grant applications
- Without the new Parks millage, the Township could not apply for the grants due to the match requirement

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

(2) Trustee Jackson moved to approve the resolution approving submittal of a grant application to the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program for construction of a waterless restroom and access sidewalks in Meridian Riverfront Park/Harris Nature Center with an estimated total project cost of \$100,000, providing a 50% local match of \$50,000 from the Township’s Park Millage Fund. Seconded by Trustee Opsommer.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

G. 2017-2019 TPOAM Non-Supervisory Professional Employees Contract

Manager Walsh summarized the changes to the current contract as outlined in staff memorandum dated March 13, 2017.

Treasurer Brixie moved to approve the 2017-2019 collective bargaining agreement as tentatively agreed to and further ratified by the TPOAM Non-Supervisory Professional employees. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

Board and staff discussion:

- Board member belief it is best to do all union contracts at once due to heavy workload involved in the process

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

[Supervisor Styka recessed the meeting at 8:20 P.M.]

[Supervisor Styka reconvened the meeting at 8:33 P.M.]

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Amendment to the DDA Loan Installment Payment Schedule

Associate Planner/Economic Development Coordinator Ben Motil summarized the proposed amendment to the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) loan installment payment schedule as outlined in staff memorandum dated March 13, 2017.

Board and staff discussion:

- Proposal would delay annual principal payment of \$25,000 from 2020 until 2022
- DDA no longer has the Celebrate Downtown Okemos event as a revenue source
- Potential for a significant increase in the DDA's tax base with future development
- Chair of DDA stated the DDA thought paying down the debt was the best thing to do at this time
- Debt was acquired through installation of the downtown Okemos streetlights and Meijer's retroactive reduction in its tax assessment through the Tax Tribunal
- Intent of the DDA to pay off the debt earlier in the event construction of a large development results in an increase in tax capture
- This situation is a reminder of how the dark store issue negatively impacts municipalities
- Interest payments have been and will continue to be paid annually
- Potential to increase foot traffic due to park improvements in the downtown area

It was the consensus of the Board to place this item on for consent at the April 4, 2017 Board meeting.

B. Sleepy Hollow Infrastructure Improvements

Assistant Township Manager/Director of Public Works and Engineering Perry summarized the proposed Sleepy Hollow infrastructure improvements as outlined in staff memorandum dated March 21, 2017.

Warren Creamer, Managing Director, RW Baird, 1001 Bay Street, Traverse City, presented bonding information for the special assessment

Board and staff discussion:

- Bonding options and costs
- Interest rate through the Township Improvement Revolving Fund (TIRF) fund would be 5%
- Assumption made by the bond advisor that homeowners would be paying 5%
- Special assessment bonds are currently being issued at a rate of approximately 2.75%
- If the Township used the bonding mechanism over a 15 year period, the interest would be estimated at 2.75%
- If the Township used the bonding mechanism over a 20 year period, the interest would be estimated at 3%
- Township typically adds on 1% to the interest
- Township would use the special assessment billing process to collect the funds from homeowners
- Assumption by the Baird Co. that homeowners will take advantage of the low rates and pay over time to minimize their cash flow burden

- Homeowners would be able to pay the full assessment without interest (levied on July 1st) until September 14th, after which interest would accrue on the unpaid balance of 1% over the bond rate
- Baird uses the projected revenue stream and structures the bonds in an amount sufficient to be paid by the revenue stream when due, similar to setting up an escrow account
- Board member statement that experience by the Township shows at least one homeowner will pay the assessment in full up front
- Inquiry as to how variables fit into the special assessment approval process
- Bonding will be handled through a separate resolution, between Resolution #3 and Resolution #4 in the five-resolution special assessment process
- Estimated cost takes into account the variable for homeowners paying the special assessment in full
- No effect on the interest rate for the bonds if a special assessment is paid in full
- Board member preference to provide a 20-year repayment schedule as requested by the residents of Sleepy Hollow
- Staff suggestion to facilitate a neighborhood meeting with residents of Sleepy Hollow to show them the figures for a 15 and 20 year special assessment

It was the consensus of the Board to continue discussion on this issue at a future meeting.

- C. Rezoning #17010 (Portnoy & Tu), rezone of a .56 acre parcel north of 2476 Jolly Road (Parcel I.D. #33-352-001) from RA (single Family-Medium Density) to PO (Professional and Office)

Director Kieselbach summarized the rezoning request as outlined in staff memorandum dated March 17, 2017.

Board and staff discussion:

- House is adjacent just north of the subject site
- Owner of the adjacent property requested the site plan be conditioned on the rezoning
- Office district adjacent to residential requires at 50 foot setback for the building and a 20 foot landscape buffer
- Impervious ratio of the proposed plan complies with the Township's ordinance requirement
- If rezoned, office is a use by right and would be handled through the site plan review process

It was the consensus of the Board to place this item on for action at the April 4, 2017 Board meeting.

- D. Harkness Law Firm Contract
Manager Walsh addressed the potential continuation of the Township's contract for prosecutorial services with the Harkness Law Firm as outlined in staff memorandum dated March 16, 2017.

Board and staff discussion:

- Police Chief believes Mr. Harkness is providing exemplary service to the Township and has an excellent rapport with police officers
- Mr. Harkness' law firm is located in the Township
- Renewal of the contract remains at \$80,000

- Board member belief a competitive bidding process benefits taxpayers by providing an opportunity to lower costs or gain improved services
- Certain efficiencies exist by continuing the current contract for two additional years
- Cost and time involved in the request for proposal (RFP) process
- Contract expires at the end of April and the RFP process should have already commenced if it was to be utilized
- Suggestion to extend this agreement for two (2) additional years (Clause #28) and begin the RFP process in early 2019

It was the consensus of the Board to place this item on for action at the April 4, 2017 Board meeting.

E. Meridian Township Vision and Mission Statements

Director Guthrie addressed the Meridian Township Vision and Mission Statements as outlined in staff memorandum dated March 17, 2017.

Board and staff discussion:

- Inquiry as to why the word “environment” was left out
- Belief the Board should take its time to carefully consider and think about the impact of the vision statement
- Surprise that the word “prime” is not found in either statement
- Board member preference to send various ideas to the Communications Department for compilation and future discussion
- Brand development committee (BDC) used several brand descriptors in the vision and mission statement
- Inquiry as to where mission and vision statements will be utilized
- Previous Township Board voted to have the mission statement placed on the agenda
- Communications staff comment that during the rebranding process, a decision was made to standardize the agendas, packets and minutes and include the mission statement on every agenda
- Mission and vision statements should be concise as citizens may not pay attention to them but would “get” the Township tagline
- Inquiry as to the current use of the vision statement other than on the Township website

It was the consensus of the Board to continue discussion on this issue at a future meeting.

14. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Styka opened Public Remarks.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, challenged the time frame used to ascertain the assumed rate of return in calculating the Township’s Municipal Employees Retirement System (MERS) pension liability. He continued to question how much of the ten-year police and fire millage would be eroded by the Headlee override.

Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood Drive, Haslett, believed politics were involved by certain Board members in making the motion to reject the findings of the Local Officials Compensation Committee (LOCC). He demonstrated how much money would be lost by each of the various positions on the Board, indicating that the four (4) part time Trustees AND THE SUPERVISOR would lose very little by rejecting a 2% raise while the other ~~three (3)~~ TWO (2) positions would lose a more significant amount. HE STATED THAT THE TREASURER HAD A SPOUSE WITH A PROFESSOR SALARY, BUT THE CLERK DID NOT IS MARRIED TO A UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR AND FROM A DUAL INCOME HOUSHOLD, AND THE CLERK IS SINGLE. He MR. BOWLBY stated that if Board members wanted to make a sacrifice for the Township, they should accept the recommendations of the LOCC, and then simply donate the 2% increase back to the Township.

Mr. Bowlby also stated if the police and fire millage proposal passes, Meridian Township residents would be paying 6.915 mills in taxes. He noted the comparison to East Lansing and Lansing was unfair, as both cities provide many additional services not realized by Meridian Township residents.

Supervisor Styka closed Public Remarks.

15. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Trustee Jackson announced Faith Lutheran Church is showing a film titled "13" on March 23, 2017 at 7:00 P.M. and a community forum on Schools to Prison Pipeline on March 30, 2017 at 6:00 P.M.

Manager Walsh responded to earlier public comment regarding MERS' assumed rate of return by stating the benefit modifications that are going to be in place from negotiations were factored in the scenario.

Trustee Deschaine announced the Transportation Commission will meet on Thursday March 23, 2017 at 6:00 P.M. He noted the Township Treasurer was silent on the issue of the LOCC recommendation. Trustee Deschaine stated HIS BELIEF that in 2008, the Township Treasurer voluntarily took a 20% pay cut and her wages have still not "recovered." He believed this "sacrifice" was made for the good of the Township.

Supervisor Styka responded to earlier public comment by stating he believed, by law, CATA could not deny certain groups of individuals use of the Township's Redi-Ride transportation services.

Clerk Dreyfus ~~addressed the alleged~~ STATED HIS BELIEF THE Treasurer's "voluntary salary cut" in 2008 ~~stating that the cut~~ included a 20% reduction in the amount of hours worked, meaning that it was not really a salary cut but rather a reduction in the Treasurer's working hours to 32 hours per week. He noted the only purpose of the LOCC is to make a recommendation relative to salaries of elected officials. Clerk Dreyfus agreed with earlier public comment that any "sacrifice" should be personally made by each Board member. He reiterated that Board members can individually decide to give back their salary increase if desired.

Treasurer Brixie ~~clarified~~ STATED HER BELIEF that she has worked 40 hours per week since 2010 when staff members were laid off in the Treasurer's office. She noted the mechanism allowed by law to reject salaries recommended by the LOCC.

16. ADJOURNMENT

Treasurer Brixie moved to adjourn. Seconded by Trustee Deschaine.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-0.

Supervisor Styka adjourned the meeting at 9:49 P.M.

RONALD J. STYKA
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

BRETT DREYFUS, CMMC
TOWNSHIP CLERK

Sandra K. Otto, Secretary