

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
SPECIAL TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING - **APPROVED** -
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198
853-4000, Town Hall Room
TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2012 **6:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Supervisor McGillicuddy, Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie, Trustees Dreyfus,
Ochberg, Veenstra
ABSENT: Trustee LeGoff
STAFF: Township Manager Gerald Richards

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor McGillicuddy called the meeting to order at 6:06 P.M.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor McGillicuddy led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

The secretary called the roll of the Board.

4. PUBLIC REMARKS*

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, believed reconsideration of Board agenda items (i.e., membership dues for LEAP, Inc. and rental housing registration fees) should come before the public as a discussion item before being placed on as an action item on the agenda. He spoke to adherence of the established standard of posting Township Board agendas on the web and the availability of minutes to the public prior to Board approval.

5. GOAL SETTING AND POLICY GOVERNANCE

Eric Craymer, Growth Management Consulting, Inc., 2704 Teri Terrace, Suite 100, East Lansing, highlighted his background and experience in policy governance in response to Board member request. He gave an overview of the concepts and principles of the Township's governing system, noting Policy Governance is a tool to help the Board be more effective which creates better results.

Mr. Craymer offered the following:

- Policy Governance gives the Board a tool to choose how they delegate authority to management without losing control of the safety factor
- Ten underlying principles empower and guide excellence in government
- 4 categories within policies: ends, executive limitations, governance process, and Board-Manager linkage
- Manager utilizes interpretation of the Board's policies through monitoring reports
- Board self evaluation on occasion
- Board holds group authority; no individual authority
- Policy Governance is the framework which gives guidance for any decision made in the Township and delineates who is responsible
- Policy Governance clearly defines roles and the chain of accountability
- Board makes strategic decisions as a group which are archived in written policy, carried out by the Township Manager who then reports back to the Board through monitoring reports
- Board sets direction through ends and executive limitations and, as a result, leads every decision in the Township and is completely "entwined" in all strategic planning
- Limitations deal with either ethical issues or imprudence
- Monitoring reports contain the Manager' interpretation of the Board's policy, along with data which shows policy is being followed

Board members and staff discussed the following:

- Issues which come up relative to policy during the year need to be archived for discussion at a future session
- Possible strategic sessions on a quarterly basis
- Some Boards set aside a portion of the beginning of every meeting for strategic issues
- Policy Governance needs to utilize more communication streams among Board members
- Between 1996 and 2000, policy governance did not exist and 14 Board subcommittees existed
- Logistics of subcommittees were problematic and any action took a great deal of staff time and a long time to come to fruition
- Implementation of policy governance allowed time for regional outreach by the Board
- Board now hosts annual Intergovernmental Meetings
- Sufficient support staff to subcommittees would be problematic during these difficult economic times with reduced staff
- Speed with which the Deer Management Plan was able to move forward under policy governance
- Policy Governance allows for transparency in government to the public
- Importance of the benefit to the resident
- Many topics on the agenda are governed by state law
- Without subcommittees, the Board does not always get sufficient information on the details of an issue
- Appreciation that staff generally provides in-depth reports to the Board
- Make-up of this Board rarely provides unanimity
- Challenge for policy governance when there are many different opinions among Board members
- Appreciation for an open feedback system with the Manager
- Committee structure made Board discussion more difficult as each Board member was not operating with the same amount of information
- Staff presentation to the Board at the Board meetings is more expeditious than when subcommittees existed
- Policy governance needs to have more communication streams built into it to enable Board members to communicate with one another more freely in “real time”
- Open Meetings Act runs counter to spontaneous communication among Board members
- Monitoring reports lack data
- Carver’s have addressed this weakness through what is termed “operational definition” (defined to an extent to which is can reasonably be measured)
- Township Manager has modified his monitoring reports over time to be much more detailed
- Handling calls/emails from residents to Board members
- Board has created a list of priorities which it diligently works on
- Board holds complete authority to make any changes in the current system within the confines of the law
- Discussion of the group effectiveness model
- Examples of the Board’s effectiveness
 - Haslett Library move
 - Recycling program
 - Deer Management Plan
 - When Board members had a shared vision and similar beliefs on an issue
- The Board’s job is to reach out to the community to find clearly defined needs
- Too many regulations within the Township are obstacles to businesses
- Role of government is to regulate human nature when it runs “amok”
- Meridian Township works hard to balance the interests of the various groups who reside and do business in the Township
- Board ineffectiveness primarily due to a fundamental difference in beliefs held by members
- Incumbent upon Board members to solicit public opinion on any big issue
- Presenter to provide information on the mutual learning model to Board members

- Goal oriented v. process oriented
- Exception is addressing individual properties regarding the urban service boundary
- Board unification in protection of the natural environment
- One big obstacle to Board decisions is items continually pulled off the consent agenda
- Conscious Board decision for group discipline regarding authority
- Rationale needs to be given when Board members change their vote on an issue
- Hard to discuss difficult issues regarding Board conduct when aired on television
- Relative to recycling, all Board members live in single family homes while half of the Township population lives in multiple dwellings

Board members and staff discussed the following suggested additions, deletions and changes to the current Policy Governance Policy Manual:

- Policy 1.1.2:
 - Consensus to add h – “Manage deer population”
- Policy 1.1.5
 - Consensus to add c – “Reduce carbon emissions”
- Policy 1.1.6:
 - Consensus to add “and ordinances” after “decisions”
- Policy 1.2.4:
 - Consensus to change a. by deleting “Increased liaison and” and inserting “Effective”
- Policy 1.2.5:
 - Consensus to change g. by adding “and off-road pathways” after “trails”
- Policy 1.3.2:
 - Consensus to delete “b. Increased ratio of home ownership to rentals” and reletter the remaining subsections
- Policy 1.3.3:
 - Consensus to add “i. Well maintained, attractive structures and property”
- Policy 1.4.1:
 - Consensus to add “c. Public Art”
- Continued Board member discussion:
 - Possible review of the Personnel Policy relative to step increases and anniversary dates
 - Step increases and anniversary dates are under the purview of the Township Manager
 - Possible inclusion of language which states: The manager shall not fail to annually provide the Board a copy of the personnel policy
 - Possible Board discussion on the inequitable distribution of communication devices among Board members
 - Openness to the public when adding items to the agenda
 - Board member preference for availability of draft minutes to the public prior to Board approval
 - Board member preference for the Board packet to be available on Thursday

6. PUBLIC REMARKS (None)

7. ADJOURNMENT

Supervisor McGillicuddy adjourned the meeting at 9:30 P.M.

SUSAN MCGILLICUDDY
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

MARY M. G. HELMBRECHT, CMC
TOWNSHIP CLERK

Sandra K. Otto, Recording Secretary